



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Gordie Gosse

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Fifth Session

TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2013

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2013

Sixty-first General Assembly

Fifth Session

12:00 NOON

SPEAKER

Hon. Gordie Gosse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am rising in accordance with Rule 29 (1) and raising a matter of privilege at the first opportunity for which I request your consideration, and in accordance with Rule 29 (2) I have provided you with notice of my intention to raise this point of privilege prior to the meeting of the House today.

During Question Period, prior to the tabling of the budget, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development refused to answer questions falling under her responsibility. Her rationale for not answering was that she would be addressing these matters in the Committee of the Whole House on Supply. However, last night during Committee of the Whole House on Supply, the minister again refused to answer questions, arguing that she would not answer these questions relating to the estimates and directly under her responsibilities until after such time as she had organized a press conference.

Mr. Speaker, in 2011 when the Conservative Government in Ottawa failed to disclose information, the Speaker found that this was in contempt of Parliament. Here today we are in a similar situation with the Nova Scotia NDP Government as this Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is refusing to disclose information to this House with regard to her departmental estimates. By refusing to disclose information directly related to her departmental expenditures, the Education Minister has made full deliberation on the estimates a difficult task. This act of non-disclosure by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is impeding the ability of members of this House to discharge their duty.

Mr. Speaker, these acts have been committed both in this House and in committee. While it is clearly in your jurisdiction to decide on whether a *prima facie* case of privilege has been committed in the House, Maingot tells us, “The practice of the Speaker not interfering in committee matters . . . was not an absolute one and that in very serious or special circumstances the Speaker may have to pronounce on a committee matter without the committee having reported to the House.” Page 222.

The continual obstruction by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to members in their duty to fully examine and debate the estimates is one such circumstance. Additionally, the minister has refused to disclose this same information in the House, therefore obstructing the members in the discharge of their duties both in committee and in the House.

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

Therefore be it resolved that the matter of the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development’s repeated refusals to provide information to the House of Assembly be referred to the Standing Committee on Internal Affairs to determine whether she has breached the privileges of the House and that the committee findings be reported back to the House without delay.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I was here through estimates for the four hours last evening and I’ve never seen the minister at one point refuse to answer any of the members’ questions, so I hope you take that into account.

MR. SPEAKER: I will take the matter under advisement and report back to the House at my earliest possible convenience. I will ask my overworked staff, again, to look at another point of privilege.

Before we get to the daily routine, the subject matter for late debate has been chosen and I will now read it:

Therefore be it resolved that the Premier, while in Opposition, called user fee hikes “across the board tax increases” but turned around and hiked 1,400 user fees twice, a 2 per cent hike in 2011 and as of April 2, 2013, Nova Scotians are now facing a further 6 per cent increase from the Minister of Finance on user fees, for a total 8 per cent hike in what the Premier called across the board tax increases, further squeezing Nova Scotians and making life less affordable under the NDP Government.

We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

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

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I would like your permission to make an introduction before I read my resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Most certainly.

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw the attention of the House to the gallery opposite, where we are blessed today to have in attendance Member of Parliament Peter Stoffer. I would ask Peter to stand and receive a warm ovation from the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: We welcome all of 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. 191

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 Yarmouth Jr. A Mariners, with community partners and in consultation with Events Nova Scotia, were recognized as one of the most successful hosts

of the 2012 World Junior A Hockey Challenge, attracting about 1,000 visitors, media, and hockey enthusiasts from across Canada; and

Whereas Hockey Canada has announced that the Town of Yarmouth will once again host the World Junior A Hockey Challenge in 2013, making Yarmouth the first community to host the event for two consecutive years; and

Whereas the province supported Yarmouth's initial bid for the 2012 championship, and will again provide support for the 2013 championship, which will bring more economic benefits to southwest Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Town of Yarmouth, the local host committee, and volunteers for the exceptional work put into hosting and attracting the World Junior A Hockey Challenge, a major international event, to Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 192

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

Whereas landscape horticulture is a Nova Scotia industry with high standards of professionalism, and is now also a Red Seal-designated trade - a nationally-recognized standard; and

Whereas in order to support a landscape horticultural apprenticeship program in Nova Scotia, there need to be enough certified journeypersons in the trade to mentor apprentices; and

Whereas there are now approximately 20 journeypersons who have passed the Red Seal exam, one of whom is Mr. George Coupar of Elmsdale, and all will be issued a Nova Scotia Certificate of Qualification with the Red Seal endorsement on their certificate;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate George Coupar and other journeypersons on receiving their Red Seal designation, and take this opportunity to encourage more Nova Scotians to become landscape horticulturalists.

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. 193

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

Whereas Const. John Kennedy of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police received the Minister's Award for Leadership in Crime Prevention for his work with the Adopt-a-Library literacy program; and

Whereas Const. Kennedy noticed over the years that many criminals have poor literacy skills, and with statistics indicating this could lead to low self-esteem and lack of choices that could lead to crime, in 2000 he worked with Nova Scotia public libraries to create the Adopt-a-Library Literacy Program to encourage and mentor children and youth to read often and well; and

Whereas Const. Kennedy was one of 20 community-nominated Nova Scotians recognized with this award, which was presented at a provincial crime prevention symposium held in Halifax on March 28th;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Const. John Kennedy on receiving the Minister's Award for Leadership in Crime

Prevention and on his efforts to encourage literacy for all Nova Scotians, and wish him all the best and much success with this program 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 Minister of Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 194

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

Whereas Acadian Seaplants Ltd. is the recipient of the 2012 Mainstay Safety Award of Excellence for its commitment to safety, which is embraced at all levels of the seaplant processing organization; and

Whereas the Mainstay Safety Award of Excellence is the highest safety honour bestowed upon an organization or group in Nova Scotia, recognizing the very best practices in the prevention of workplace injury and demonstrated leadership towards a culture of workplace safety in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Acadian Seaplants Ltd. was presented with the 2012 Mainstay Safety Award of Excellence on December 21, 2012, by Nova Scotia Minister of Labour and Advanced Education and the WCB Chief Executive Officer Stuart MacLean, at its Cornwallis facility;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Acadian Seaplants Ltd. for receiving the 2012 Mainstay Safety Award of Excellence and applaud their efforts for fostering a commitment to safety among their workforce.

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. 195

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 today marks the 96th Anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, a three-day fight during the First World War in which more than 20,000 soldiers were involved and close to 3,600 Canadians were killed; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Highlanders from the mainland and their Cape Breton counterparts served in the 85th Battalion under the leadership of company commander Capt. Percival William Anderson of Baddeck; and

Whereas it was the 85th Battalion that forced the Germans off of Hill 145, winning the battle but not without losing 58 men and wounding several hundred more, some of whom died later in hospital;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House mark this important anniversary by recognizing the brave efforts of the 85th Battalion, who many consider to be the champions of World War I, and remember all those who gave their lives to help ensure victory for Canada, Britain, and the Allied Forces.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

RESOLUTION NO. 196

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

Whereas 96 years ago today, for the first time, all four divisions of the Canadian troops began a joint assault northeast of Arras, France, called Vimy Ridge; and

Whereas almost 3,600 Canadian soldiers died and over 7,000 were wounded in the battle for an escarpment that had previously proved impenetrable to French and British capture attempts; and

Whereas historians credit the success of the Canadian corps to a mixture of tactical and technological innovation, something Canada has become known for in so many other areas since that time;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly pause to remember the brave Canadians whose courage and ultimate sacrifice during that fateful battle, which drew Canada out from under the shadow of Great Britain, helped establish Canada as a country of greatness and honour, and recognize one of our country's defining moments.

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. 197

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

Whereas on this day in 1917 the Battle of Vimy Ridge began and the brave Canadian troops from the Canadian Expeditionary Force captured most of the ridge during the first day of attack; and

Whereas the victory at Vimy Ridge is considered to be a defining moment for Canada when the country emerged as a formidable force capable of greatness; and

Whereas Vimy has become a symbol of the sacrifice of our young dominion since that victory came at the cost of 3,600 lives lost and another 7,000 wounded;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House remember the victory at Vimy Ridge and give thanks to the brave Canadians who sacrificed so much in the cause of freedom.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

RESOLUTION NO. 198

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

Whereas on April 9, 1917, one of the greatest battles in Canadian history began at Vimy Ridge, France, an event that was considered a turning point in World War I; and

Whereas for the first time all four Canadian divisions fought together on the battlefield as the Canadian Army under the command of Sir Arthur William Currie; and

Whereas victory at Vimy Ridge on April 9, 1917, has been noted by historians as the day that Canada became a nation with casualties totalling over 10,602, of which 3,598 made the ultimate sacrifice, with four Canadians awarded the Victoria Cross and the entire Canadian Army commended for bravery;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature recognize the significance of the battle of Vimy Ridge.

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. 199

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 2012-13 Bantam B Provincial Hockey Tournament was held in Cheticamp on March 22-24, 2013; and

Whereas Nicole Downing of Grand River, Richmond County, is a goaltender with the Strait Richmond Pirates; and

Whereas Nicole Downing of the Strait Richmond Pirates was named All-Star Bantam B Goalie for the 2012-13 season at the Bantam B Provincials;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Nicole Downing for receiving the All-Star Bantam B Goalie Provincial Award, and wish her success in her hockey career and future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 200

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

Whereas Stephen Smith started his path towards becoming a sound engineer as a DJ at Mabou Consolidated School and was mentored at Strathspey Place while attending Dalbrae Academy; and

Whereas Stephen has travelled across Canada and Europe over the past 10 years for some of Atlantic Canada's most well-known musicians; and

Whereas Stephen was nominated for the 2013 East Coast Music Award in the category of Live Sound Engineer and was recognized as Technician of the Year in 2011 with a Nova Scotia Music Award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Stephen Smith for his commitment to develop a music career and become one of Atlantic Canada's best.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton North.

RESOLUTION NO. 201

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

Whereas the Clifford Street Youth Centre hosted a soft launch for cbyouthcentres.com, a site that features information on Cape Breton youth centres in North Sydney, Sydney Mines, Waterford, and Glace Bay; and

Whereas Cape Breton Regional Police Service Community Officer, Const. Paul Ratchford, says the site will allow the public to know where the centres are and what the facilities hope to accomplish now and into the future; and

Whereas Const. Ratchford estimates that on a typical day each centre provides a fun and safe environment to about 30 to 50 children;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly thank the army of volunteers that made youth centres in Cape Breton a reality, and recognize the spirit of co-operation that has made the community a safer and much better place to live.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 202

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

Whereas RRFB and Valley Waste Resource hold an annual Nova Scotia Recycles Contest to raise awareness about waste reduction and recycling in our province; and

Whereas this contest is a valuable, hands-on project to learn about the fragile nature of our environment and the importance of having the best quality of air, water, and soil as we reuse, recycle, and reduce for the benefits of future generations; and

Whereas Jonathon Frontain of West Kings District High School in Auburn is a runner-up in the 2013 Nova Scotia Recycles Contest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Jonathon Frontain on this achievement and wish him every success in his future commitment to a healthy 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 Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 203

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 Nova Scotia Junior C Hockey League has named Barrington Sea Star Ice Dogs Head Coach Tyler Symonds Coach of the Year; and

Whereas Tyler Symonds has been behind the bench as head coach for the past two years and prior to that as assistant coach; and

Whereas Tyler Symonds has also played with the Ice Dogs for three seasons, including the 2008-09 season when the team won both Provincial and Maritime North Championships;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tyler Symonds on being chosen Head Coach of the Year, thank him for his dedication to the team, and wish him continued success in his future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Preston.

RESOLUTION NO. 204

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

Whereas Kathleen Mitchell has lived all her life in Nova Scotia and it is here where she met and married her husband and raised their two daughters; and

Whereas she has been involved for many years teaching Sunday school at St. John's Anglican Church and for the past eight years she has been superintendent of the New Beginnings Ministry Sunday School program; and

Whereas she has been involved in the East Preston Ratepayers Association, the East Preston Trails Committee, and for the past three years has been fundraising through golf for the Gideons as well as the Teen Challenge;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House join me in recognizing the many contributions that Kathleen Mitchell has made to our community and to our province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

RESOLUTION NO. 205

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

Whereas Karley Bussey of Louisbourg, who is a member of the CB Attackers U16 volleyball team, recently won the gold medal; and

Whereas Karley is the daughter of David and Melinda Bussey; and

Whereas Karley Bussey also received MVP for the tournament, which was held in Sydney River at Malcolm Munroe Junior High;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Karley Bussey and all the CB Attackers U16 members on their accomplishments.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

RESOLUTION NO. 206

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

Whereas Monday, April 8th, residents and staff at the Tideview Terrace seniors home will celebrate 40 years of caring for loved ones; and

Whereas in 1973 the Tideview Home for the Aged and Infirm opened with the first guest moving into the Water Street site on November 28th; and

Whereas celebrations will take place at the new facility located on St. Mary's Street, with guests, music, great food, and the staple of any celebration - cake;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tideview Terrace on 40 years of committed care and wish them all the best 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 Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 207

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

Whereas Cabot High School in Neil's Harbour was awarded a \$10,000 Band Aid musical instrument grant from MusiCounts; and

Whereas MusiCounts is a non-profit trade organization that represents the major record companies in Canada and offers the grant to applicants from across Canada and to areas that need it most; and

Whereas Cabot High, with a very small music budget and being a very rural high school, was selected for the award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Cabot High music teacher Tara Coombs and all students and staff on receiving the Band Aid musical instrument grant, and wish them success in the school 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 Richmond.

RESOLUTION NO. 208

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 Richmond Rize under-15 girls volleyball team competed at the Howard Jackson Memorial Volleyball Tournament on March 2nd in Truro; and

Whereas the Richmond Rize under-15 started strong, winning their first and second round-robin against the Dartmouth A and B teams, finishing with a second-place win; and

Whereas the team consists of players Keely MacLean, Bailey Sampson, Nikita Savoury, Taylor Sampson, Gabrielle Sampson, Amber Keating, Ali Fraser, and Hailey Covin, and coaches Shauna Sampson, Carla Sampson, and Mike Hawke;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating the coaches and players of the Richmond Rize under-15 girls volleyball team for winning silver at the Howard Jackson Memorial Volleyball Tournament, and wish them continued success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 209

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

Whereas volunteer firefighter John MacLellan could be found at countless emergency calls over the years supporting and protecting the community of Inverness and surrounding area; and

Whereas John has invested countless hours in training and practice so that he is prepared to aid in his community's safety and protection; and

Whereas he was awarded a medal for 25 years of service by the Inverness Volunteer Fire Department on February 23rd;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge John MacLellan for his continued commitment to the fire service and for the volunteer time he has given for the good of our province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 210

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

Whereas RRFB and Valley Waste Resource hold an annual Nova Scotia Recycles Contest to raise awareness about waste reduction and recycling in our province; and

Whereas this contest is a valuable hands-on project to learn about the fragile nature of our environment and the importance of having the best quality of air, water, and soil as we reuse, recycle, and reduce for the benefit of future generations; and

Whereas Isabella Smith-O'Neill's class at Berwick and District School are runners-up in the 2013 Nova Scotia Recycles Contest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Isabella Smith-O'Neill's class on this achievement and wish them every success in their future commitment to a healthy 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 Argyle.

RESOLUTION NO. 211

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 on December 11, 2012, the Musée des Acadiens des Pubnicos et Centre de recherche hosted a book launch for J. Donald Doucette of Lower West Pubnico; and

Whereas Donald Doucette's new book is entitled *The Schooner Era & Harpoon Swordfishing*; and

Whereas Donald Doucette is originally from Surette's Island and wrote another book in 2009, entitled *Surette's Island, West Pubnico & Georges Bank - my memoirs*;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Donald Doucette on the launch of his new book, thank him for sharing his stories for all to enjoy, and wish him 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 Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 212

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

Whereas Terra Lanteigne, a Grade 8 student at Bedford Academy, won a gold medal in the Canada-Wide Science Fair, held in May 2012 in Charlottetown, for her science project entitled “Cold Play: What will keep the puck cold for the entire play?”; and

Whereas Ms. Lanteigne was one of only 40 Nova Scotian students selected to advance to this prestigious national competition; and

Whereas Ms. Lanteigne’s gold medal entitles her to a share of prizes and scholarships, as offered to medal winners in the Canada-Wide Science Fair;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Terra Lanteigne on her academic prowess, and encourage her to continue her scientific pursuits.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton West.

RESOLUTION NO. 213

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

Whereas Elizabeth MacDougall of Main-a-Dieu was recently presented the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal; and

Whereas Elizabeth MacDougall spent many years being involved with her community, and helping several organizations in many capacities; and

Whereas Elizabeth has spent her whole life devoted to her family, her church, and all organizations in Main-a-Dieu;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Elizabeth MacDougall on receiving the Queen's Jubilee Medal, and wish her continued success as she continues to put others first.

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. 214

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

Whereas 28-year-old Millville resident Mark Boutilier is Cape Breton's representative in CBC's Searchlight contest for Canada's best new artist, and one of 24 Searchlight finalists from across the country; and

Whereas Mark is a graduate of the Music Technology program at McKenzie College in Sydney; and

Whereas Mark has one album under his belt, and the song *Lose Another Day* from that album is his entry in the Searchlight contest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly wish Mark the best of luck in the Searchlight contest and in all of his musical endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

RESOLUTION NO. 215

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

Whereas the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia is the largest art museum in Atlantic Canada, offering a wide range of exhibitions and programming; and

Whereas over 60,000 Canadian children face the chronic pain that comes with the diagnosis of childhood arthritis; and

Whereas in a collaborative effort, the AGNS and the Arthritis Society of Nova Scotia hosted ARThritis, an exhibition of creations made by young artists with childhood arthritis;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate all the young artists who participated in ARThritis on May 3rd, and recognize the organizers for bring healing and happiness through the arts.

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. 216

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 Bantam Boys Division 4 Provincial Basketball Championship Tournament was held over the weekend of April 5th to April 7th; and

Whereas the Yarmouth Thunder Bantam boys basketball team consisting of Dylan Smith, Brayden Moses, John Atwood, Skyler Baxter, Riley Challoner, Brad Jones, Walter Vanbuskirk, Lucas MacIsaac, Mitchel Wilcox, Brogan O'Brien, Ben Wyman, Ryan LeBlanc, and Dwayne Crowell, under the guidance of coaches Murray Judge and Gary Baxter, competed in this tournament; and

Whereas the Yarmouth Thunder went undefeated throughout the tournament and won the championship game, defeating the Sackville Storm by a score of 60-41;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Yarmouth Thunder Bantam boys basketball team on their championship win and impressive performance throughout the provincial tournament, and wish the team every future success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Bedford-Birch Cove.

RESOLUTION NO. 217

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

Whereas local rock 'n' roll band the Corvettes gave its final performance at a Valentine's dance on February 9, 2013, at the Halifax Forum; and

Whereas the Corvettes, with lead singer and band manager Don Flemming at the helm, have performed locally over the past seven years, offering popular music from the 1950s to 1970s and have lent their talents to many charities, including CTV's Christmas Daddies; and

Whereas all proceeds from this event went towards the Cobequid Cultural Society, a not-for-profit organization which aims to create a cultural centre to showcase local and visiting visual and performance artists in the Bedford-Sackville area;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate the members of the Corvettes on their musical career and their generosity.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 218

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

Whereas on April 4, 2013, Halifax West High School welcomed ECMA and Juno Award winner Joel Plaskett to their school to perform on stage in support of the 10th annual Head for a Cure event for the Terry Fox Foundation; and

Whereas the evening event helped greatly in the students' goal of raising \$12,000 to fight cancer and wouldn't have been possible without Joel's willingness to return to his high school and share his music and memories of growing up in Clayton Park with a particularly enthusiastic audience of students, family, and friends; and

Whereas Joel reminisced during the performance about his years as a student at the old Halifax West, from which he graduated in 1993, and took time for questions from the students, as well as staying to meet fans and sign autographs;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly thank Joel Plaskett for his support of the students' fundraising efforts through the generous gift of his time and talent, and also recognize the coordinated letter-writing campaign that the students of Halifax West undertook to persuade Joel Plaskett to revisit his roots in Clayton Park and Halifax West.

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

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

Is it agreed.

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The time is now 12:43 p.m.; we will finish at 1:43 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition.

PREM.: EMPLOYMENT REDUCTION/INCOME TAX REVENUE INCREASE - EXPLAIN

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, on one hand we have government telling us there will be fewer Nova Scotians who will be employed in the coming year and that nominal GDP will rise by 2.3 per cent next year and 3 per cent the following year, yet on the other hand the Premier is telling Nova Scotians that personal income tax revenue will have a surge of 7 per cent next year.

Mr. Speaker, with fewer people working, how is the government going to get an additional \$145 million in personal income tax revenue?

THE PREMIER: Well, Mr. Speaker, two problems with the question. One is that unemployment can go up and the number of people who are working can also go up. It's because the labour force expands and that, in fact, is what is happening in Nova Scotia.

The second problem with his question is it doesn't account for the fact that incomes are also increasing, both of which drive things like personal income tax and HST.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, two problems with that answer: there are more part-time workers than full-time workers and I don't know what Nova Scotians he has been talking to but the salaries in this province aren't increasing 7 per cent across the board.

Mr. Speaker, we know that last year labour and income growth was at a slower pace than was observed during the recession in 2009, so think about that: labour income growth was at a slower pace than was observed during the recession of 2009. When you think about that, remember his answer in the last question.

Population has slowed, retail sales are the weakest since the recession, and inflation has been faster than the national average - none of the data points to a spike in personal income tax, so how does the Premier expect that there is going to be such a high level of tax revenue in the coming year?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the assumptions that are put into the data were tested and confirmed by rating agencies across the country, by the Conference Board of Canada, by the Auditor General's Office, by most of the economic academics across the country, and in fact even yesterday the Auditor General was on the radio saying that these assumptions are a perfectly reasonable set of assumptions in line with what has always been done in the past - the first time in a decade that he has issued an unqualified opinion with respect to the assumptions put into the budget.

This is a government that observes the very highest standards of transparency, the very highest standards of accounting principles with respect to our budget, and I am very proud of the work done by the Minister of Finance, thank you very much.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, I think what the Auditor General said is that he had no opinion when it came to the revenue assumptions that the government was going to try to achieve. What he has been saying now for months is that this government had a \$27 million mistake in the previous budget, which they knew about when they stood in this House and tabled the budget - he has also raised the issue that that's why Nova Scotians have some concerns about anything coming out of this government because, quite frankly, it's hard to believe.

This government has said that we'll have a slower economy (Interruptions) I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if they want to talk or you want me to finish my question.

The government has said that we will have a slower economy, higher unemployment, and greater exposure to international risk, so how can the Premier tell Nova Scotians that we'll have a 7 per cent surge in income tax revenue next year?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, quite the opposite. In fact every rating agency says that in terms of economic growth after 20 years of the worst economic growth in the country we are now going to move into the middle of the pack. You are going to see many new projects starting this year, whether it's the investment in the offshore - people only have to look around Halifax to see that there are more than 30 building cranes over Halifax right now, major projects on the way. On top of all that, if we didn't need anything else, on top of all that Statistics Canada reported just last month a growth of 5,600 full-time jobs in Nova Scotia.

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

PREM. - BALANCED BUDGET: HIDDEN TAXES - EXPLAIN

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Look, the answer to the Liberal Party Leader's question is that the budget contained a hidden tax increase as a result of bracket creep - it's going to yield them tens of millions of dollars. That is part of what Nova Scotians are discovering about the NDP: it's very expensive to live in NDP Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, when in Opposition the member for Halifax Fairview said of bracket creep that it is ". . . as much of a tax grab as if the Minister of Finance reached into your pocket, or into your wallet or into your purse and took out the money." I will table that quote for the benefit of the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, \$300 more per person out of the pockets of each and every Nova Scotian this year as a result of the budget last week. My question to the Premier is, how is reaching into the pockets of Nova Scotians through more hidden taxes, and for another \$300 a year, a balanced plan?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party should reflect on the fact that the budget of Nova Scotia with respect of income tax used to be linked with the federal government, and I believe when he was chief of staff for the former government they decoupled from the federal income tax rules specifically so that they would not have to pay any increase with respect to inflation and with respect to the so-called bracket creep. I would say, to quote a much more famous person than I, that if he has a problem with this he should start by looking at the man in the mirror.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, if the Premier is going to give us a history lesson, he should at least check the history books before he does, because the government at that time decoupled from the federal government because the federal Liberal Government of the day

was raising taxes and we didn't want to have any of that here in Nova Scotia. That's what happened - how convenient to forget that. (Interruptions)

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL: So the federal Liberals were doing something, so you decided to screw every Nova Scotian. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I remind the honourable Leader of the Opposition that that word is unparliamentary, and I'd ask him to retract it please.

MR. MCNEIL: I certainly will - they decided to fleece every Nova Scotian.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party on a continuation of his second supplementary.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, obviously I hit a nerve on many sides of the House with that statement of the historical fact.

When he was in Opposition, the member for Halifax Fairview said it's “. . . the most insidious one of all, the bracket creep, where they get higher tax revenues by stealth . . .” You know, Mr. Speaker, I miss him more every day, the member for Halifax Fairview, but I will table that for the benefit of the Premier.

My question to the Premier is, why not be upfront with Nova Scotians, that getting higher taxes by stealth is not a transparent and balanced plan?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that budgets are about choices, and we watched for years while the Progressive Conservative Governments made choices. They increased their budgetary spending by hundreds of millions of dollars and then overspent it by hundreds of millions of dollars. This created a situation in this province where there was no elasticity in our budget whatsoever; in fact when the financial crisis hit in 2009 and essentially washed away the budgets of provinces, states and jurisdictions, not only across North America but across the world, it meant that now budgets had to be rebuilt - which is what we did in this province.

In the first opportunity that we have to balance the books and to make sure that it's balanced not only financially but socially, we decided to refund the taxes for lowest income seniors. I think that was the right choice.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, if the Premier was serious about balancing the budget in all the ways that it means, he wouldn't have repealed the balanced budget law that was on the books of Nova Scotia when he came in so he could table all those deficit budgets and raise the taxes on each and every single Nova Scotian, taking with one hand and giving a little bit back with the other.

The Nova Scotian economy is struggling and jobs are being lost because we have the highest taxes in all of Canada. In the meantime the Premier's response is to spend ever more money bailing out large companies and others with Nova Scotia's hard-earned tax dollars. It reminds me of something that Margaret Thatcher once said when she said "The problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other people's money."

How often can you quote the member for Halifax Fairview and Margaret Thatcher in the same question?

AN HON. MEMBER: Not often.

MR. BAILLIE: That's tough to do. In any event, Nova Scotians have run out of money paying for the NDP, so my question to the Premier, will he finally admit the truth, the only answer he has to his own budget problems is to dig ever deeper into the pockets of Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, almost half of the people in this province pay lower taxes now than they did when we came into office in 2009; whether it's through HST, because it's through rebates like Affordable Living Tax Credit, like the disability tax credit, like the refund of senior citizens' income tax - which has been increased again this year - all of these mean that these citizens have more money in their pockets than they did before 2009 because, as I said, budgets are about choices.

We choose to invest in the welfare of the people of this province. We choose to understand that investment in businesses in communities means that the people of those communities have paycheques to take home to support their families, that their families have food on the table and that they are able to support the local economy because they have a job. We realize that he is running on a platform that says stop more jobs. We disagree.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

ERDT: INCOME TAX REVENUE/NOMINAL GDP GROWTH - EXPLAIN

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, we know that we are facing employment declines in the coming year and we are facing a slowing economy. We know there has been a shift from full-time to part-time employment for workers in Nova Scotia. We know that in the years following the recession, our economy has grown at a slower rate than the rest of the country.

The budget states quite clearly that growth and nominal GDP is expected to be 2.3 per cent in 2013 and 3 per cent in 2014. Population is lagging behind the rest of the country as well, Mr. Speaker, and of course labour income growth last year was slower than what was observed during the recession. All of these things affect the tax base but yet with all

these weak indicators, the Premier and the government expect a surge in personal income tax revenue in the coming year.

My question, will the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism tell Nova Scotians how provincial income tax revenue can be expected to grow at a rate of 7 per cent in the medium term when nominal GDP growth rates are forecast to be 2.3 per cent and 3 per cent respectively in the next two years?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, what I do know for sure is that the latest statistics coming out of the labour workforce shows that Nova Scotia was the only jurisdiction in Canada that had a gain. That's because we are doing things differently.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is correct, tough times have been here but we are about to turn the corner. We got the ships contract. For the next 30 years we are going to peak 11,500 jobs. That's tax revenue.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the federal government is expecting slower nominal GDP growth to cut into their own revenue. The feds have downgraded the revenue projections to 3.8 per cent growth. This is down from 6 per cent last year and down from 5 per cent growth projection they had in their last Fall update. In short, the federal government is expecting their tax base to contract. Will the minister explain how Nova Scotia is the exception?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, the short answer to that question is because here in Nova Scotia what we have is an NDP Government led by the best Premier in the Country of Canada.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, as we've seen in those recent StatsCan numbers, the unemployment rate in Cape Breton is now 18.6 per cent so I wonder if the minister will come and smile and talk about the NDP Government at the chamber of commerce with an 18 per cent unemployment rate.

This Premier and this government have a history of promising much more than they can deliver, shifting payments from one fiscal year when it is convenient, and failing to disclose revenue overstatements when it doesn't suit their narrative. Now we have a budget that tells us there is going to be higher unemployment and slower economic growth but still the government is telling Nova Scotians that revenues will be up.

Mr. Speaker, after this government's track record, how can Nova Scotians trust the minister and his government's revenue projections now?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in my place in response to that. Do you know what? Nova Scotians believe in this government. I heard the member mention the chamber of commerce, but I want to table something here by the Halifax Chamber of Commerce.

This is a bulletin by the Halifax Chamber, “Nova Scotia’s jobsHere Strategy has assisted small business through many incentives, and we are pleased that the government will continue to fund this strategy for Chamber members.” The chamber goes on to say, “We commend the government for following through on its commitment to further reduce the small business tax from 3.5% to 3% . . .”

Four years in a row we have reduced the small business tax - a government that does things differently.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

SENIORS’ PHARMACARE: DRUG COSTS - PAYT. PERCENTAGE

MR. LEO GLAVINE: As of March 26th, 109,676 seniors were enrolled in the Seniors’ Pharmacare Program. This program was originally designed as a 75/25 program, with 25 per cent being in the form of premiums and co-pays from seniors. In 2010 this government - not any other government, this NDP Government - changed regulations to increase the seniors’ percentage to 28 per cent so that they could avoid reducing the premium and co-pays for seniors. The same regulations remain in effect today.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, could the minister please indicate what percentage of drug costs seniors are paying now?

HON. DAVID WILSON: I’m very proud of the work we’ve done to support our seniors across the province. We’ve worked on a number of initiatives to ensure that there is more money in the pockets of seniors in Nova Scotia today than there ever has been in the past. We’re working extremely hard as a department to ensure that drug costs, not only for seniors but for all Nova Scotians, are lower today than in years previous, and I’m proud of that work that we’ve done.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is exactly right: budgets are about choices. What they have done to seniors and the Pharmacare Program is take out of one pocket and give a little bit back in the other. Based on a freedom of information request, I can tell you that in 2010-11, seniors paid 28.4 per cent; in 2011-12, 29.2 per cent; and as of mid-March of this year, seniors were paying 32 per cent in the Pharmacare Program. Each and every year seniors were paying more than their share of the cost, and this NDP Government has been paying less. I’ll table that document.

Could the Premier please tell us why seniors have not seen a reduction in their premium or co-pay despite the fact that they should have?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, this is a government that will put money into the budget again this year to ensure that seniors do not see an increase in Pharmacare cost. But over and above that, this is also a government that has been working to ensure that there is

fair drug pricing so that all seniors who have to depend on medication to deal with any issue they may have with their health has cheaper prices.

That is a commitment that we made, and one that we worked on not only within the province but that I have worked on as the chairman of the Council of the Federation, along with the Premiers of Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan, to ensure that drug pricing, whether it's in our jurisdiction or across the country, is approached fairly and provides moderately-priced drugs for seniors, who obviously face the preponderance of the kind of health issues that physicians would see.

MR. GLAVINE: Well, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that seniors are paying a lot more, and government is paying even less. We have seen unrealistic economic assumptions with this budget; we have seen prepayments to universities despite how repugnant government found these prepayments to be when they were in Opposition; and now we see government balancing the books by charging seniors more on premiums and co-pays. My question to the minister is why is it fair for seniors to be paying more in premiums and co-pays than they should when government continues to pay less?

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, another example of the Liberal Party misleading Nova Scotians. We've worked hard to reduce our drug costs here in the province. Governments across the country recognize we needed to support our seniors and what's even more shameful is when we brought legislation to this House, the Fair Drug Pricing Act, the Liberals voted against it. They voted against ensuring seniors paid less for drugs in this province. They should be ashamed of themselves.

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

PREM.: TIM HORTONS HOSP. OUTLETS - SUBSIDIZATION CEASE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Tim Hortons outlets at our hospitals here in Halifax continue to get a subsidy from this government of \$1.5 million, something that the Minister of Health and Wellness has previously called spending on health care. Subsidizing Tim Hortons is not spending on health care so I will ask the Premier, will the Premier finally cancel the Tim Hortons subsidy and direct that money back into actual front-line health care?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I guess like many people, I saw the story that was on CTV, I believe, at the time. I asked some questions about it and it turned out that the information that was being conveyed to the public was, in fact, incorrect. In fact, some of those franchises make a profit. For the information of the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, I'm going to table the budget breakdown for this that actually shows that there was a small deficit of about \$12,000 between all of the franchises. I would also remind the Leader that it is because that franchise does not sell any of the usual products from Tim Hortons. In fact, it's a healthy food outlet for people waiting for either loved ones

or those who are in the hospital. No matter what kind of a kitchen or cafeteria you have, they run at a deficit and this one runs at a very small one.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier might want to check the business plans of his own Capital District Health Authority because for four years in a row they have begged the government to stop subsidizing those outlets so they could use that money for actual health care.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, they had the exact same situation, \$1.5 million subsidizing Tim Hortons in their hospitals but they did the right thing. The health board CEO in Newfoundland and Labrador, Ms. Kaminski, says, "We cannot continue to subsidize those non-direct care services, when we know that they can be provided more effectively and efficiently and we can apply that money [elsewhere]." I'll table that for the benefit of the Premier. I will ask the Premier again, will he accept the commonsense approach of Ms. Kaminski and the Newfoundland and Labrador health board and stop bailing out the hospital Tim Hortons so that money can go where it actually belongs, real health care?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it's an odd thing because the decision to put the Tim Hortons in there belonged to the hospital and to the district health authority. They were the ones who made the decision at the time. They continue to make these decisions. The only thing that we had said is that they're not going to affect the livelihood of the employees who work there, who support their families through the jobs they have there. They're not going to contract those out simply to run down the wages of a few poor people who happen to work there at decent jobs. We're not going to allow that to happen. We care about those people.

This is a very small deficit in the Tim Hortons franchise there and it's not even all of them, some of them make surpluses. I understand that this question was motivated by the stories that appeared. I think maybe he ought to just rethink his line of questioning.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, in the Premier's first answer he says no, we're not really subsidizing them and then in his second answer he defends the very subsidy that he denied in the first answer. Do you know what people want? They want spending on doctors and nurses, they want more money for those things, not a defence of the subsidy of the Tim Hortons at our hospitals. It shouldn't take a surgeon to know that if you cut that subsidy, you can put that money, \$1.5 million, into actual health care - you could do more insulin pumps, you could do more CF screening. You could do a lot more things with that money if you'd stop subsidizing the Tim Hortons.

I'll ask the Premier, will he explain to the people of Nova Scotia why he insists on continuing that subsidy, when that money could go to actual health care?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I thought I explained to him that obviously there is not a subsidy there; in fact there is a very small deficit being run, I think in one of the locations. I also explained to him that this was a decision that was made by the district health authority because they were trying to cut costs associated with other operations that they took on.

Mr. Speaker, what we are doing is ensuring that the people who work there do not become the scapegoats in this story and have them and their families penalized because they make \$12 an hour giving services to patients in hospitals and their loved ones. We're not going to penalize them for doing their jobs.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

EECD: MIN. SCH. CLOSURE PLAN - SCH. BDS. ADVICE

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, tonight the South Shore Regional School Board will make a decision about the fate of several schools in their board in light of the Education and Early Childhood Development Minister's recent request to halt school reviews - the same item is on the agenda for Chignecto-Central board when they meet tomorrow night.

My question to the minister is, what direction will the minister give to the boards if they do not honour her request?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to hearing back from the boards and the decision they're making with the requests that I made.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I guess that means that the minister has no plan, one more time.

Mr. Speaker, parents, teachers, communities, and school boards have dedicated hundreds of hours to this school review process. Classrooms are already feeling the impact of this government's \$65 million cut in the last two years, and an \$11 million-plus cut this year, and communities are wondering how the minister's request will affect the delivery of public education in their schools.

My question to the minister is, will the minister give those school boards more money to keep schools open if they choose to honour her request?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I made a request to the school boards about a week ago to suspend the process because we've been hearing back from parents and community members of how adversarial and non-productive the discussions have been around the school review process, so I look forward to hearing from the boards with the decisions that they're making - and I'm also looking forward to working with Nova Scotians and communities to find a better way forward with our school review process.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, the minister in legislation in 2010 had an opportunity to make things right in that process and chose not to do that, and allowed boards and communities to go through three more years of agony. Boards are being forced to weigh decreasing budgets against increasing needs; funding has been slashed by this government while costs continue to rise. The South Shore board alone pays nearly \$1 million in power bills, and boards are having to choose between operations and direct classroom supports for students - and now they are faced with political interference in the review process.

My question to the minister is, if boards honour the minister's request and if the minister refuses to provide additional resources, what advice does she give those boards to cover those increasing costs?

MS. JENNEX: We have provided our budget targets to our school boards early on in the process and we have made sure that we have increased our spending in special education. I'm looking forward to hearing back from the boards on their decisions around the school review. Again, I will restate, I am looking forward to working with our community and our families to find a better way forward with the school review process which will benefit each and every one of our children in our schools. Thank you.

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

ERDT: ECON. PLAN - CB EFFECTS

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We learned last week that unemployment in Cape Breton has soared to 18.6 percent. That means that one in six who want to work, cannot find a job. My question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, will the minister admit that their economic plan has been an absolute disaster for the people of Cape Breton?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, you talk about disaster? I will give you an example of a disaster - 1993, when the PCs were in power, when unemployment in Cape Breton reached an all-time high of 29.1 percent.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, we can't live in the past with that. We're now in 2013. There are nearly 44,000 unemployed people in Cape Breton. Along with the loss of jobs, people are losing hope. Cape Breton's population has decreased by almost 4 per cent in the last four years, due to the hardships the NDP have inflicted. So my question to the minister is, will the minister admit that life is so tough in NDP Cape Breton that hard-working people are being forced to leave our beautiful island?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned yesterday, we are working in the opposite direction of our federal counterparts. Where are Veterans Affairs going in Cape Breton? Where is Revenue Canada going? Where are all these contact centres that are run

by the government going in Cape Breton? The PC counterparts in Ottawa are killing jobs, while we are creating good jobs in Cape Breton.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, the number of unemployed people has increased by almost 7 per cent in the last four years. The NDP have created a perfect storm of high taxes, the highest power rates, and no real plan for creating jobs.

Will the minister admit that in order to get our economy running again, we need to cut taxes, stop wasteful government spending, in order to create good-paying jobs?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is saying that our investment in East Coast Metal Fabrication was a waste of money. What the member opposite is saying is that our investment in Billdidit in Cape Breton is a waste of money. What the member opposite is saying is that our investment in Port Hawkesbury NewPage and saving 1,400 jobs was a waste of money. What the member opposite is saying is that our investment in the future of Maritime Link, to create jobs and sustainable energy in Cape Breton, is a waste of money. Shame. Shame.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

EECD: NEW MATH PROGS. - MATERIALS

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister of Education, would she please tell members of this House what materials the department currently has in its possession to deliver the new math programs that are being introduced and implemented in September of this year?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Thank you very much for the question. I had a lovely meeting this morning with Ann Blackwood in the department, and she assures me that all of the materials that are needed for the new math program that we're rolling out are delivered in the schools from the current year's budget, and the forward year's are for the Grade 10. Everything has been tendered and everything is coming in on time. Thank you.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, there is a difference between tendered and delivered, so I may have to ask the minister that. Last night, the minister told this House that the department had some materials to deliver the curriculum, however, we have learned that the request for proposal for such materials was issued on March 6th and March 8th, and it suggests otherwise.

The tender documents call for "Student and Teacher resources (print and electronic) to support the Grade 3 Mathematics Curriculum," and "Student and Teacher Resources (Print and Electronic) to support the Grade 10 Mathematics Curriculum." So according to these requests, the initial delivery dates for these materials are May 31st and June 7th of this year. In fact, those tenders have not even closed.

Will the minister please clarify, does the department have the materials that teachers and students will need, or is there still an open tender to get them?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I will just repeat what I said. The materials for the younger grades are in place already, and their tenders are out for other materials. This is a big initiative, and there have been many materials already put in place. Materials are tendered and they will be in the hands of the teachers.

I would also say that the teachers have been in-serviced during this year for the implementation of the program starting in September. There will be ongoing in-servicing for the teachers as this rolls out over a three-year time frame. But some materials are in place, and some are being tendered. This is a big project, and teachers will have their materials.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, every time the minister stands up we get two different messages, so will the minister please be clear? On the one hand, the minister told us last night that the department had materials to support the programs that would be introduced, and she told us that in-servicing had already begun. Later she said the in-servicing would be held in the summer. She also said the department had the materials to support the program, and now we know the tenders are still open for those materials.

My question to the minister is, how can parents, students, and teachers have any confidence that this minister has a plan when her responses continue to be conflicting and contradictory?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I'm really proud of the work that the department has done around the implementation of the new program that we are going to be introducing for the students in this province, to make sure that they are getting the appropriate math that they need to be successful in this world. We know that materials are in the department for some of the grades. There is a tender out for other materials. It is a work in progress. There has been ongoing in-servicing, and there will continue to be ongoing in-servicing, and on top of all the in-servicing that has already been done there will be summer institutes for teachers offered at the school boards on a regional basis.

I will repeat the same thing I've been saying. There are materials in place; materials are continuing to come; in-servicing has been ongoing; and there will be continuing in-servicing to make sure that we provide the very best program that our students in this province can have. We are going to make sure that our children are going to be successful, unlike the remarks our children were getting when we came into government. We want our children to succeed.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

HEALTH & WELLNESS - INVERNESS HOSP.: CT SCAN - PURCHASE

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. We are just into debate on the budget now, as we know, but I already have a recommendation for the minister, so new into this budget year, to save money. The hospital in Inverness needs a CT scan. It will save over \$700,000 a year in transport costs of shipping patients down to Sydney. In a year and a half it will pay for itself, and from then on it will start saving the government upward of \$700,000 a year in transportation costs. Will the minister act to make the purchase of this CT scan?

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, we've worked extremely hard over the last number of years with our district health authorities to ensure that we provide the services for our patients, no matter what community they live in. We are going to continue to do that.

The district health authorities bring forward lists of each of the requests that they have around the province for capital projects or for equipment that is needed. We have a committee that looks through that and reviews it. I look forward to ensuring all Nova Scotians know exactly how we're going to move forward to ensure that they can gain access to the services they need.

MR. MACMASTER: Well, Mr. Speaker, as the minister will know, I certainly talked to the DHA, and of course I've asked him this as well, but we do know that it is actually the Department of Health and Wellness that makes decisions to purchase equipment in the order of \$90,000 or more. So really the buck does stop with the minister, and the recently commissioned report on surgery at Inverness Hospital recommended that the CT scan be purchased - why not accept the recommendation and get on with saving money?

MR. WILSON: That's exactly what we're doing. When we came into government in 2009 we had, the Department of Health and Wellness and the Province of Nova Scotia, had one of the, if not the highest costs for health administration in the country. We've worked hard to reduce that to today we're below the national average. What we've done with that is redirect those funds, we redirected them to front-line services so that we could expand services - expand services like insulin pumps for children. We're going to continue to work in that manner.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, these are good things, and I hope the minister takes my recommendation today and he'll make people back in Inverness very happy.

The physicians caring for people at the hospital need the CT scan. The average age of the population on the western side of Cape Breton is in an age category that has the highest instances for stroke, and the earlier stroke is identified and addressed when it happens the better the outcome for the patient - and that's going to save the government money as well in reduced care costs. The community has raised \$2 million and we need the

CT scan to recruit future physicians - why is the minister delaying the decision which has obvious benefits for everyone involved?

MR. WILSON: We have a process in place that allows district health authorities to come forward with their requests to the department with the equipment that they need, with the services that they want. I'm very proud of our commitment to work with the district health authorities to find those health administrative costs, for one, and we recognize the importance of having those decisions made on the local level. That's why we're committed, unlike the Progressive Conservative Government who would rather have those decisions made in Halifax. We're not going to take that route, we're going to ensure local decisions are made, they're going to bring their request forward to the Department of Health and Wellness. We have a process and a committee in place that will evaluate that and, as we are able to ensure and provide the funds for those pieces of equipment around the province, we're going to do that.

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

JUSTICE - SEXUAL ASSAULT STRATEGY: RELEASE - TIME FRAME

MS. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia has the highest rate of sexual assault and some of the lowest charge, conviction, and sentencing rates in Canada. In a letter to the Dal Gazette in March of last year the executive director of the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre reiterated her call on this government to "implement a province-wide strategy to address sexualized violence" - and I'll table that. The needs assessment on sexualized assault services in Nova Scotia found the province lacks comprehensive sexual assault services - we knew this a year ago. My question is to the Minister of Justice is, where is the sexual assault strategy and when can we expect it?

HON. ROSS LANDRY: Any type of violence in our society is unacceptable, and I have great confidence in the police, in the courts, in the Public Prosecution Service, that when allegations are brought forward they are properly investigated, that there is compassion, that there is understanding, and that each issue is addressed and dealt with in its own manner.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program is only available in Halifax and Antigonish and, sadly, assaults are happening across the province. What advice does the Minister of Justice have for women who experience sexual violence in Yarmouth, for women in Cape Breton - how can they access these services?

MR. LANDRY: Once again, as the Minister of Justice I am responsible for policing in the province, and for these types of allegations in each of the hospitals there are proper procedures and protocols in place that deal with sexual assault. I have great confidence in the police that when an allegation is brought forward that they conduct the appropriate investigations, and when those investigations are completed I also have great confidence in

the Public Prosecution Service that they will bring those who should be held accountable, accountable for their actions.

On the issue overall, violence in society in any form is unacceptable and we do not accept that in any form.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, sexual assault services are not available across the province. Those that exist are under-resourced, accompaniment in the justice and medical system is available only on an ad hoc basis, in most areas.

Mr. Speaker, today Nova Scotians woke up to a horrifying story in the paper of a young girl who was the victim of a brutal attack, but let's face it, we have woken up to story, after story, after story, after story, after story, after story of sexual assault in this province and I'll table those stories.

This morning's story shows the ineffectiveness of this government's anti-bullying initiative and its timid response to combatting sexual assault. My question is, will the Minister of Justice take a stand and commit today to implementing a province-wide strategy to address sexualized violence?

MR. LANDRY: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to come up with an answer to this question. We are a government that has been committed to dealing with issues such as domestic violence, the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, poverty, housing, crime prevention framework, the alcohol strategy, the action plans on bullying and cyberbullying. The difference between us, as a government, and the Opposition, is that they don't have confidence in our police, that they don't have confidence in our Public Prosecution; they don't have confidence in our court. We have confidence. We believe in those processes and that they do their jobs.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

ERDT - SWSDA: CREDITORS - PAYMENT DETAILS

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the NDP Government has still failed to live up to their responsibilities to cover the outstanding creditors of SWSDA. The NDP has had no trouble handing over hundreds of millions of dollars to large corporations that, in many cases, turned around and laid off Nova Scotians, nor do they mind using heavy-handed tactics to ensure that RBC, a SWSDA creditor, was paid their due.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the small businesses that are creditors for this organization, this government has done nothing. My question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, will he take the necessary measures to ensure that the small businesses and their employees receive the money they are owed from SWSDA, an organization that he killed?

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, I can stand here in my place and say that I am proud of the action that this government took with respect to SWSDA. If governments in the past had looked at what was going on in SWSDA in a more conscientious effort, we wouldn't be in this situation today.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the situation is we have a lot of businesses that are left with outstanding monies owed to them because of this government's actions. We're just wondering when they are going to be paid.

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, if it hadn't been for this government's actions, hundreds of thousands of dollars would have been just dropped into a deep hole. It was this government that put a stop to the wasteful spending when it came to SWSDA.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, SWSDA is gone right now but we are left with a lot of small businesses that are creditors of that defunct organization that require reimbursement for the services rendered. In the case of Garian Construction alone, they are owed over \$367,000 on construction work. Why won't this minister help those small businesses when he came to the plate and ensured that RBC, the largest creditor, was paid their money?

MR. PARIS: Mr. Speaker, the record will show that the taxpayers of Nova Scotia paid for those initiatives once. What the member opposite is asking is if the taxpayers of Nova Scotia would not only pay a second time but also for every other little small business in the Province of Nova Scotia that the taxpayer should be on the hook for.

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

EECD: CHILD CARE FUNDING - DETAILS

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Community Services was responsible for child care, she was all over the map. After a friendly press conference with CUPE, she said they'll be adopting a Liberal P.E.I. model which phases out private child care facilities. Then on the other hand, she would say they had no plans to change the funding at all. She went back and forth seven times. It was enough to make you dizzy.

My question for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is, will the new minister responsible for child care clear up the confusion caused by your predecessor and explain what it will be?

HON. RAMONA JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, I have to say that this is an integration of services over at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and we're in transition at this time. I'm very proud of the work that the department has been doing - and all departments - to make sure our youngest citizens of the Province of Nova

Scotia are going to be viewed in a holistic manner, from birth right straight through their whole life. We are looking forward to this integrated service that we are now providing at the Education and Early Childhood Development office. Thank you.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, last Spring I asked the Minister of Community Services this same question. At that time I pointed out on seven different occasions within four months where she flip-flopped on the government's position on this issue. Today we still don't have any answers.

On February 5, 2013, the Standing Committee on Community Services hosted the Department of Community Services to discuss the funding model for private and non-profit daycare centres. At that meeting the Deputy Minister of Community Services said, "There is no planning around . . . actually moving away from our existing model." I will table that.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, can the minister guarantee that the statement made two months ago by the Deputy Minister of Community Services is still true today?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, we're making a very strong commitment to our children in this province to make sure we are having a plan put in place that is including all of our stakeholders, our parents, and our families. We have a plan that we are moving forward with in this transitional time as we're integrating services over at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MR. BAIN: Mr. Speaker, given the fact that child care has been shifted to a new department, you have to wonder if the government is going forward with the Liberal P.E.I. model they suggested last year. Nova Scotian families and small-business owners have been confused and in the dark because of this government. They have been fed contradictory stories by the minister who once had child care in her portfolio. Parents reserve and deserve the right to choose which child care facility they send their children to, and the child care program operators deserve to know what plans this government has.

My question through you to the minister is, will the minister assure parents that they will continue to have a choice about the kind of child care they want for their children?

MS. JENNEX: Mr. Speaker, our children deserve the very best possible start in life, and this government is going to make sure that we are going to ensure that every child has that best start and the services that families need as they're raising their children. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

ERDT - YAR. TOURISM SECTOR: RETENTION - PLANS

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, when the NDP made their reckless decision to cut the Yarmouth ferry with no plan to reinstate the service, they did damage to the economy of the province far beyond what I'm sure they expected. Today towns and communities are still struggling with that NDP cut.

The Town of Yarmouth has sent a letter to the Premier indicating that the situation has reached a critical point in Yarmouth and we are at risk of losing more of our tourism infrastructure. We have already lost half of our rooms in Yarmouth since this government's decision to cut the ferry and we risk losing even more. My question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is, what will he do to ensure that there is a tourism sector in place in Yarmouth and southwest Nova Scotia when a ferry comes back.

HON. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, this government is well aware of the tourism industry, not only in southwest Nova Scotia but right across this province. This government has made significant investments to assist tourism in the southwest region. I read a resolution today about the Hockey Challenge, those are two significant investments that we made in the southwest region to bring people in. I think about the Rodd Hotel in southwest Nova Scotia, another investment that we made in the area of tourism in the Province of Nova Scotia. When I hear the member talk about investments, and certainly in the ferry, we love nothing more than seeing a strong, viable ferry operation in southwest Nova Scotia.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, we did appreciate the money that was given to the Junior A Challenge and the Rodd Grand Hotel. The reason why that money was given to the Grand Hotel was because our last hotel, that one, was going to close without that money covering their losses. They lost money because the ferry was gone. We are having other tourism operations that are on the brink of closure. We have lost over 400 rooms since that NDP cut the ferry service.

We have a tourism sector on the brink of collapse and we need this government to step up to the plate and support it, so that when a ferry comes back, we have rooms for people to stay here, plain and simple, that's it. Ask the owners of Pictou Lodge how much the ferry meant to them. They lost 700 rooms annually because of this government's decision. Ask the operators in Baddeck, who lost 20 to 30 per cent of their business, what the ferry meant to them. Ask the operators in Shelburne, who've lost 50 per cent of their business. Ask White Point, who lost 50 per cent of their American room bookings, what that ferry meant to them. When is this minister going to . . .

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

The honourable Minister of Energy on an introduction.

HON. CHARLIE PARKER: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce this afternoon, in the west gallery, my nephew Ryan Parker who is up behind me. Ryan is a student at Dalhousie University studying commerce, or business, and I'd ask him to stand and for the House to give him a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Government Motions.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Supply unto Her Majesty.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

MR. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I certainly appreciate this opportunity, going into Supply, to speak about an important issue for me and for many members in the Legislature, as we are, after all, the Province of Nova Scotia and the provincial government have a very serious situation on their hands and that is with respect to the economy in our native Cape Breton. We heard the Speech from the Throne read by the Lieutenant Governor to open up the session and it was based on hope. It was based on prosperity and turning the corner and that seems to be the line that is going to lead this government into the election and that is the pre-election banter that we are hearing. We are turning into what I've always noticed in my time here in the Legislature is that the government takes issues and takes important things and turns them into a marketing campaign.

I think that's where we are with this Speech From the Throne. However, I don't want to belabour that today, Mr. Speaker, because the issue with Cape Breton and the unemployment rate is too important to spend time talking about that - I've got to talk about the Island and what we're seeing on the ground.

I'm going to paint the picture for the members of the House with respect to the Cape Breton economy and what's happening on the ground here. First of all, I have to say I mentioned the 18.6 per cent. It's an alarming rate and when I asked the question of the minister today about the unemployment rate in Cape Breton his response was to read an

excerpt from a Halifax Chamber of Commerce line that was put into the public, so it was certainly disappointing.

I would hope that with such an important portfolio and one that we're seeing - I mean the numbers represent what's happening on the ground and I just wish that the minister would be more engaged with these files, and rather than reading the rhetorical talking point, really give an answer. If it's 18.6 per cent in Cape Breton, things are tough and that's obvious but we've got to get some kind of answers from this government on what the approach is when you're looking at 18.6 per cent growth. Obviously they've had an objective outlook on the economy and our economic prospects looking forward. Well, if that's the case, then let's do something for Cape Breton and let's amp it up here.

One thing I want to make very clear is that there's no "poor us" mentality in Cape Breton - that's not the mindset of people. People are working, they're looking for work, they're doing their very best to survive, as the Cape Breton MLAs would certainly see that on a daily basis. So the alarm and the concern is not necessarily coming only from the residents of Cape Breton, it's coming from those elected representatives of all levels of government.

Certainly we've all been speaking on this issue and when these numbers came out via Statistics Canada, the job outlook is not good at all, it's very troubling for Cape Breton. It's a crisis; we are in crisis mode. I don't think that's crying foul or overstating the significance. If you look at two very key numbers, obviously the unemployment rate of 18.6 per cent, Mr. Speaker, a very troubling number itself, but when you look at the amount of Cape Bretoners who are working out West, on a two-week-on, two-week-off, three-week-on, one-week-off kind of rotation, they figure into employment numbers so they are employed as long as they obviously have a Cape Breton address, which they do because they travel back and forth - ask the Sydney airport, they can tell you what kind of traffic has increased there with this phenomenon of working West and coming home to see your family and be home at the Cape.

If you took those numbers and looked at what they mean, you're really looking at one-quarter of Cape Bretoners who are unemployed. That's 25 per cent unemployed and, Mr. Speaker, that excludes the participation rate which people are leaving the labour force every day, so if they're not looking they don't even factor in these numbers. Believe me, in Glace Bay there are lots of those, as there are in many other parts of the Island. So it's very concerning - 18.6 per cent.

Again, another important piece to remember - that's the average for the Island so that's not looking at some of the remote communities that would have even higher unemployment than that. So very concerning and that's something that we've got to tackle as a province, and as an economy that's important.

Of course there's the issue and the concern of out-migration. I was looking at some of the population numbers and it's staggering that we've lost 3,000 over the last three or four years - 6,000 since the late 1990s. Mr. Speaker, you are hit with that in your community, and we all feel the impact of that. It's something that when you lose that amount of people over such a short time in the snapshot of history - you know, 15 years is not that long a time - your community loses a bit of its identity. I think that anyone that sort of faces that kind of out-migration, coupled with the unemployment, can feel that every day. I feel it at the restaurants and down on Commercial Street, at sporting events and those types of things. Families just aren't around unless you hope to hook them on a good rotation where everybody is home and that makes a big difference.

The reality is that our society is changing and it's becoming very bleak, and the prospects are bleak. Again, the Cape Breton mentality is to soldier on, and we're not crying "poor us," but there are some things that we can do as a province. I think that with the challenges, there are certainly opportunities, Mr. Speaker. I just want to talk quickly about some of those things.

Certainly a fragile economy, looking across the board and the outlooks as we viewed some of the numbers today in Question Period, the outlooks for growth and for employment stability aren't looking too favourable, and obviously those pressures hit all parts of Nova Scotia, the metro area and Halifax being the most shielded from those - but when you look at the fragility of Cape Breton, you have to look at some of the additional pressures. First of all, we've got immense pressures in terms of our crumbling infrastructure. The CBRM has been identified to bear the costs, or will have to bear the costs, of 20 per cent of the Atlantic Canada Wastewater requirements for infrastructure - 20 per cent of that \$454 million has to be paid for by, and is the responsibility of, the CBRM, so it's very important. Our streets are in extreme decay. Sidewalks are crumbling. Some of the wastewater infrastructure we have under the ground is a century old. We have to look at that and make sure those things are being considered.

Community infrastructure, one of the treasures of the province, in my - biased, of course - opinion, would be the Miners' Museum with the underground mine and the many great histories. It's alive. You walk into the old building and you can feel the presence of the miners. Those who do the tours represent it well, but that place needs a facelift. The Savoy Theatre would be up there with the same sort of requirements, but the coffers are empty for the CBRM. These are things that we have to address if we're going to sustain our communities.

Energy prices. It's no secret, we've talked about the social aspect of energy prices many times. They hit people's pocketbooks, but of course they hit businesses, and they have been identified as some of the key costs for small businesses. How do you grow an economy that is struggling, that has 18.6 per cent unemployment at the best case scenario, with energy costs that are a severe impediment to business growth and business stability? It certainly becomes an issue for entrepreneurs who are looking to expand or even start up.

The education cuts that have taken place - the reality is that the first concern with those cuts is obviously the classroom, and that has an impact, again, when you're talking about such a fragile economy. Education cuts take people out of the workforce. It bumps back those young, educated teachers who are graduating from CBU, from the Mount, from St. F.X., from Memorial, who want to teach and want to live home. When you see those reductions, there's obviously less need for teachers, and those substitute lists get longer. People give up and they go out West and work in Alberta in the oil patch, rather than using what they've been educated to do. Obviously, the staff and the outside workers and all those support employees for the school boards feel this as well, so certainly that impacts our economy, and we're feeling it, without question.

We have two significantly-sized projects in Cape Breton that are wrapping up in the not-too-distant future. A tremendous number of skilled trades and skilled individuals, who are making a pretty good wage, will be removed from our workforce. One of those is the Devco remediation project. As we all know, the Devco sites and the Devco properties have been remediated. They've been slowly piecing them off and putting them into community developments. That's about to sunset, as is the tar ponds cleanup. So that's two significant industrial-sized operations that will be coming to an end very shortly. They are cause for concern. We're now 18.6 per cent, best case scenario. What happens when those two initiatives go away? It's going to hurt.

Finally, not to be understated is the impact of EI cuts. These EI cuts are going to be devastating, and I certainly know that the Cape Breton MLAs from the PC Party are concerned about those as well. I'm hoping the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party will take issue with this and take this fight to Ottawa, because this is going to hurt Cape Breton. There's not a person in Cape Breton who doesn't feel the impacts of those already. I've got teaching assistants; I've got people connected with education; certainly seasonal workers of all stripes are concerned about how this is going to affect them. If they have a short layoff or they draw EI to sustain their households, then what happens if they have to go search for work? They're being investigated to see if they've actually done that search. It's pretty troubling.

We have to continue to fight that, although with the federal majority it doesn't look like Atlantic Canada is on the priority list for that. The national shift of the workforce out West only supports that, because people, when they're fed up and they're at their wits' end, they go take a trade or industrial training and they jump into the patch. That's what they have to do for their families to survive, and it's understandable. I think those EI cuts were applied hastily, and I think we shouldn't be punishing seasonal workers in Nova Scotia, and that's just the reality of it. That has hit Cape Breton pretty hard.

Madam Speaker, How much time do I have left?

MADAM SPEAKER: You have 59 seconds.

MR. MACLELLAN: Okay, so finally, those are some of the indicators and some of the pressures we have as a fragile economy, and it does seem like a perfect storm. But I think there are also opportunities, Madam Speaker, and I'll quickly, in the time that I have remaining, talk about some of those. The port development in Sydney, and the harbour dredge that was supported by all three levels of government, I think, was an opener for that opportunity. My fellow MLAs from the PC Party were at the Port Summit, and I tell you, it's a complicated file, no question, and the more you peel off the layers, the more complicated it gets. But having said that, I think there are tremendous opportunities with the port, and there are private sector suitors. When the global shipping sector recovers, as we all hope and pray that it will, then I think that Sydney Port becomes very viable, and that's an opportunity.

The Donkin mine, of course, the reality is you make strides to curb greenhouse gas emissions and apply renewable energies to your energy grid, but at the end of the day the world is still going to need coal, and there are buyers for the coal that Donkin could potentially produce, and when Xstrata finds a suitable-sized buyer for that, that mine will be in play. So I think we look forward to that, and that looks like probably in the vicinity of 1,000 jobs total with spinoff.

Also the tourism sector, without question, when the northeastern U.S. economy rebounds and people start to spend money on tourism and travel again, you've got to think that Nova Scotia and Cape Breton are destinations. With Louisbourg 300 coming next year, that's going to be an incredibly historic celebration on the Island, and I would hope that thousands and thousands of Nova Scotians who have never experienced Louisbourg - for that matter, thousands of Cape Bretoners who have never experienced Louisbourg - get out to take that in.

And of course, something that's very important to us, and we've been learning about it in recent weeks, the CBRM capital plan that's been put forth by the mayor and council. I really think, put the politics aside, I think this plan is something that we could take a look at. When you look at those infrastructure requirements, and it's not unique to the CBRM, all municipalities have those pressures. So when you look at what those pressures are, when you put together a comprehensive plan, which is one that's very unique to the Island, I think it could be used as a template, because it provides, basically, 25 cent dollars for the provincial government, whoever that provincial government is. When you have a municipality that's kicking in \$15 million a year, when you're going to the feds to look for \$150 million - half of that \$300 million - then I think that it is incumbent on the province to jump in there.

Given those unemployment numbers that we've seen, and what that looks like, I think it is - if we have those long-term prospects of growth, and I mentioned some of those, then this could be almost a bridge to get some people working, keep the tradespeople on the ground in Cape Breton, as opposed to travelling back and forth to Fort Mac, and keep things going. This will require a bit of innovative thinking, I think, in terms of the province

and the provincial government, but this is a real plan, and it's therefore, I think, a template for municipalities, and it's not going to hurt us.

Madam Speaker, government can't save industries and they can't run the economy by themselves, that's not our job, that's not the government's job. The job is to set the environment and get out of the way and I think if we take some of these steps and make sure that entrepreneurs are supported, municipalities are supported, we'll get there. And with that I'll take my place. Thank you.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and I just want to bring everybody's attention to an individual in the west gallery, Mr. Kent Blades, from Lower Clark's Harbour. Pretty good gentleman, just recently got the Liberal nomination in the beautiful constituency of Argyle-Barrington. I just want to welcome him to the House, and give him a warm welcome. (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: We welcome all of our guests to today's proceedings, we hope you enjoy yourselves.

The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think the question we are all asking, is this budget making life more affordable for Nova Scotians? I want to start out on a positive note. (Interruption) I do. I was looking at a press release, Madam Speaker, and I noticed that Heritage Gas is investing over \$50 million to expand its pipeline into Pictou County and, of course, they're going to be delivering natural gas. I know, actually I think this sums it up and I will table this, this is a quote from Pat Lee, the CEO of the Pictou County Health Authority, "The delivery of natural gas to Pictou County is good for business . . . Our business is health care and we are continually seeking efficiencies and ways to save money. Natural gas will give us substantial annual savings, money that can be redirected to patient care."

I think all members in the Legislature would agree with the CEO of the Pictou County Health Authority on that point. We all know, and I know the Minister of Energy knows, that natural gas is affordable and it does reduce emissions. I'm not having anybody on the other side arguing with me, Madam Speaker, so obviously there's full agreement here. I know that the minister himself said that it will save millions of dollars in energy costs for large industrial employers with savings around the corner for small business, hospitals, schools and family homes.

We are in agreement. The member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville talks about emissions. Natural gas emissions are 50 per cent less than coal. He's asking about federal regulations, but this province will have no problem doing that. In fact, the federal

government has relaxed those regulations recognizing that we also have to take into account the economy and we look at businesses - I think about Michelin, they have natural gas now, and why do they want natural gas? Because it's cheaper.

I can think of another company in the province, I won't mention their name, but they actually produce renewable energy. Do they use it for their business? No, they don't, but they sell it to the grid so that we can all purchase it through Nova Scotia Power, but what do they use? They use natural gas. That's about as much proof as you will ever need.

The reason I'm beginning my discussion, I think we have agreement here, that natural gas is a good thing. I should table that release because it is right from the government, we are in agreement. It's time that we have more agreement in this Legislature. I encourage them to continue using more natural gas because it does pollute less and it's affordable, which is a lot more than we can say for some of the other options they've been choosing.

I want to tell you about somebody I spoke with yesterday evening in my constituency and she was asking me about her power bill. The first thing I said to her, why don't we check with Nova Scotia Power and see if maybe there was an error made in reading your meter. I know myself, one time they made an error reading the meter by 1,000 kilowatt hours and I got a surprise when I saw my bill. She got a surprise too, so we were able to get it corrected in my case, we're investigating it for her.

I also told her that the reason the power rates are going up is because this government, instead of choosing more natural gas, which I've just given them credit for in the release, which they are doing to some degree, instead of choosing to go more in that direction, they're choosing all these other expensive forms of energy and putting them into the mix. They always talk about it being stable, but the reason they say stable is because they know they can't say that it's cheaper.

I just want to tell the members opposite what the woman said to me, she left me with kind of a funny quote, she was certainly concerned about having to pay her power bill but throwing her hands up in the air, much as we do on this side of the House, all we can do is bring these points to the Legislature. She said, you can hit your head on the rock or you can hit the rock to your head. I kind of got a kick out of that saying - more or less to say that there's really not much she can do about it; and, there's not, unless the government decides to choose to require Nova Scotia Power to use energy inputs that are cheaper per kilowatt hour.

I remember back in April 2010 - I will table this as well as I move into the budget. The reason I wanted to talk about power costs is because that's one of the big costs for all Nova Scotians. We need to make power more affordable for people and I also want to tie that in with the fact that we need a budget delivered from government that's more affordable.

Madam Speaker, I was thinking about this on Budget Day because in April 2010 - and I'm going to table this and I'll just quote a little bit from it. These are words that I used myself here in the Legislature and I've talked here about Nova Scotians having heard a lot, at that time, about how bad things were. In November 2009 we had the economic review panel tell Nova Scotia that the province was on the road to financial ruin and to reinforce this notion Mr. Steele travelled the province to proclaim the same in his Back to Balance tour.

Now at that time in 2010 we had the NDP proposing a four-year budget plan to save Nova Scotia. I guess what amuses me is I also say here that people have seen this approach before. We can look back to the Romanow Government in Saskatchewan in the early 1990s where they were doing the same thing and making things look bad. We heard so much about a structural deficit and poof it's gone, in just three years. It just amuses that what I said would happen has happened, so I'm going to table that.

Madam Speaker, I think about when I was looking at the budget, when it was tabled last week, as a former Finance Critic over here I took a quick perusal of the budget and I counted 10 items totalling about \$125 million that were either past over-budgeted expenses, to make past budgets look bad and to also to provide an ability for this government to rein in those really false expenses, because they were never made. The other component of that \$125 million was actually some tax increases. That's a significant amount of money and I want to point some of them out because I love presenting facts in the Legislature and attaching numbers to it because the numbers don't lie, especially when they are the government's own numbers.

The first one is the FTE account, the number of people working in the civil service. In each of the past three years we've seen roughly an expected requirement of needing 10,700 people working in the civil service and then at the end of the year, oops, we only needed about 10,000. So every year they did that - and that gave them an extra 700 FTEs, which if you look at salary, benefits and office space, equates to about \$100,000 apiece. That's \$70 million each year that this government had, an extra expenditure that they knew they weren't going to spend anyway.

That did two things. One, it helped them to justify a tax increase because it was making things look worse than it was, by \$70 million, and two, it gave them a number at a future point in time, which happens to be this year, where they could rein in that so-called expense, which didn't really exist to begin with because if you can get by running government with 10,000 people last year, I'm sure you can get by with running it with 10,000 this year.

So the government this year - and if you look on Page 1.14 in the Supplementary Detail, on that page you will see that they made a change this year, Madam Speaker - they addressed about half of that 700 number. Of course, if you look at half of \$70 million, there

are about \$35 million in supposed savings. The truth of the matter is it was never an expense to begin with.

Another item here that I saw was Nova Scotia Business Inc. They were budgeted an extra \$5 million last year that they never spent anyway, so this year they didn't budget it. Well, if they didn't need it last year, why would they need it this year? It's not really a budget saving but it was, once again, another example of the government over-budgeting expenses in the past, which they knew they weren't going to spend, to make the budget look worse. That can be found on Page 18.2 in the Supplementary Detail, and I encourage the members to write those page numbers down so they can have a look at these items and not just take the word of their Minister of Finance.

So Madam Speaker, there are two examples and I know I don't have a lot of time today so I think I'll save some of the other examples for another point in time, but suffice it to say 10 items totalling \$125 million.

Madam Speaker, I just mentioned the Minister of Finance; I heard her in Port Hawkesbury not so long ago, in a pre-budget consultation, talking about how their government had a revenue problem, this despite taking an extra \$1,000 out of the pockets of every Nova Scotian since they've increased the HST over the past three years, so it's an extra \$300 million to \$400 million a year in the coffers of government, but the minister still feels that she has a revenue problem.

One of the points brought up was that the government no longer has the offshore royalties that Premier Hamm had when he balanced the budget. I have to make this correction - in 2002-03 when Premier Hamm delivered the first balanced budget in four years, what were the offshore royalties, Madam Speaker? Half of what they're projected to be this year. So he had half as many royalties to work with in royalty revenue, and that government still managed to balance the budget - and they also did it without that additional HST tax increase.

Madam Speaker, we need not be surprised because there are members on the government side of this Legislature right now who voted against that budget, so we need not be surprised that they voted against a budget that strove to balance - sorry, to vote against a budget delivered by a government that strove to balance the budget and not put pressure on Nova Scotians and their disposable income. I'm happy to make that point today.

I think that we did see a couple of things that I think are positive as far as the transportation budget being maintained. It's nice to see them continuing that tradition. They never talk about the good things of governments past, but I think that's one that both the Progressive Conservatives and the NDP share in that I know during the MacDonald time, when he was Premier, had a real focus on the transportation budget and being from an area, an area that I actually now represent, where we have 2,300 kilometres of roads in Inverness County alone and knowing how important roads are to people in our area, I think

that's a good thing. It's an important service that Nova Scotians expect for their tax dollar and I'm happy to see that that budget is maintained for transportation.

Madam Speaker, I noticed that the government is also spending a bit more this year on taxation and fiscal policy. I'm hoping that might yield some wisdom in terms of perhaps reducing the amount of debt that they have been adding to the provincial debt in the form of deficits each year. We've seen the government add over \$1.67 billion in debt by the end of this budget year as they proposed with this budget. (Interruption)

AN HON. MEMBER: How much did John Buchanan add?

MR. MACMASTER: The member across asks how much did John Buchanan add. I know a significant, in fact one-quarter of the provincial debt is due to the operation of Sydney Steel. Thank God, Madam Speaker, that that ended because if that operation continued, at least being run the way that it was, it might be responsible for a lot more than one-quarter of our provincial debt. Thank you.

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

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm glad to rise and talk for a few minutes in regard to some issues that are important to our Party and our government, as well as many Nova Scotians and particularly the constituents that I have the pleasure of representing and have represented over the last almost four years now.

I think it's important that part of a debate is always the other side of the story, Madam Speaker, taking the opportunity to go back in time to talk about some of the decisions that were made in the past. One of the things - I've a few topics that I think, I know I would love to speak for more than 15 minutes, but I have only about 15 minutes, but I want to discuss some issues that are important to Nova Scotians and moving Nova Scotia forward, but let's talk about some of the past.

One of the things that we know is that health care has always been a very important issue to Nova Scotians: health care, having access to medical professionals; access meaning not waiting a long period of time to see a health care professional. One of the things that other governments, the Parties opposite have always said - what they would do is they would just kind of throw money at an issue and hopefully it would go away. With regard to emergency room closures, this is an issue that we heard several times and our Party has been the lead on health care initiatives in this province and in this country, quite frankly.

Health care is an important issue to Nova Scotians and one of the things we've been trying to do over the past number of years is ensuring that we use the money that we have, the resources that we have, in an innovative way. In particular, around using Collaborative

Emergency Centres that give people same-day or next-day appointments to medical professionals. In fact, what we're seeing is that Nova Scotians are finally seeing open emergency care in their community when and where they need it.

When you look at some of the facilities that have switched over to the CEC model, they have virtually seen no closures in their emergency rooms because they are able to see the health care professionals in their own communities. It took 20 years - 20 years we had ER closures under the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives, they just let it continue. In fact, the Liberal Party closed 1,500 hospital beds and said, that will fix the issue. Well, I don't think so.

The other thing they did was they paid nurses to leave the province, over 1,000 nurses. They paid them to leave our province. I would be remiss if I didn't point out that the Liberal Party built a hospital right here in downtown Halifax, closing one full hospital, merging two hospitals into one and not making it large enough - an ER that was broken, and I will give kudos to the former Progressive Conservative Government who did see the foresight in expanding that ER because it was underbuilt. It wasn't built for the capacity in which we knew it was needed.

The Liberals are stuck in the past. The Liberals want to go back to the way it used to be. Let's just throw money at things, let's just throw money at problems, let's throw money at health care initiatives, let's just throw money at it. We can't do it, that's just not the way to do it, that's not the way to move Nova Scotia forward. In health care, what the Liberals want to do is create one super board so that decisions in health care are made out of Halifax and not made out of Liverpool, not made out of Kentville, not made out of Yarmouth, not made out of Amherst, not made out of Truro, not made out of New Glasgow, not made out of Port Hawkesbury, not made out of Sydney. They want the decisions of the Liberal Party, they want to have a super board.

We know for a fact that when they create super boards like they did in Alberta (Interruptions) like they have in New Brunswick, it doesn't work. This government has moved administrative costs away from the boardroom and at front-line care. That's what Nova Scotians want. They don't want rollbacks of collective agreements. They don't want that. That's what the Liberal Party would do and I would be remiss to suggest - would the Liberal Party bring forward P3 hospitals like they did with the schools? I bet they would. I don't hear them chirping on over there that they wouldn't, so I guess they would.

The other thing I want to talk about is fiscal responsibility. In the 2009 provincial campaign, we knew as a Party that we can't just promise 34 pages of promises. That is what the Liberal Party did, but we can't do that, because we knew the fiscal restraints that government was under because of the worldwide recession - one of the worst recessions since the Great Depression.

Fiscal responsibility is an important piece of the puzzle here, because this NDP Government is one of only three governments in the country to bring forward a balanced

budget. This is an important thing to point out. Something to point out is the fact that the last time a Liberal Government balanced a budget in this province was 1976. I know that the member for Yarmouth would say, well, that's in the past. Well, you're right, it is in the past. The Liberal Party has a record to stand on, because when they were government there was chaos in our system. There was chaos in our health care system, there was chaos in our education system, and there was chaos in social services. People on income assistance were not getting the help that they needed.

Do you know how much the Liberal Party of Nova Scotia promised in the last election when it came to promises? I have an article from The ChronicleHerald here that I want to table. It was dated May 23, 2009, and the title of the article is "LIBERAL PLATFORM; So, whose dog ate page 34?" One of the things that needs to be pointed out in this whole debate - and I know the Liberal Party says they wouldn't have raised taxes, they wouldn't have been able to bring in - and they said they would so-called "innovate" in how we run our programs.

But one of the things that the Liberal Party never says is how they would have paid for the \$527.75 million worth of promises. That's half a billion dollars that the Liberal Party said that they would do, said that they would bring forward if they had their way. The question is, how would they have paid for it? So either they are going to make promises and not keep them - and then they say they're not going to raise taxes and then probably raise taxes. That's the important piece of this puzzle: over half a billion dollars in promises that the Liberal Party said that they would bring forward in the last election, and how would the Liberal Party have paid for it? I'll table that.

What time do I have until, Madam Speaker?

MADAM SPEAKER: You have 20 minutes.

MR. WHYNOTT: Thank you very much. I have a few other things that I do want to discuss, and one of the things I do want to discuss is a conversation that I had over the weekend around jobs.

One of the things that this government knows we are doing is putting the investments where they need to be - investments in communities right across the province. I know I hear a member from Cape Breton talking about jobs. I think that's an important piece of the puzzle, and one of the things they're saying is that that Party, the PC Party and the Liberal Party, would not have helped Port Hawkesbury Paper succeed.

Are we just going to let the families of Cape Breton continue to leave like they did under those Parties for 20 years? Are they going to do that? Absolutely they would. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. (Interruptions)

When the Speaker says order that means order. It doesn't mean you keep chirping afterward. It means order.

AN HON. MEMBER: On both sides.

MR. SPEAKER: It means order on my side. I'm the authority in this Chamber, and you will adhere to the Rules of this Chamber. When the Speaker says "order", it means order. It doesn't mean continue debate or continue chirping after the Speaker calls order. Are you questioning my authority in the Chair? (Interruption) Well, I'm just giving you the facts of the Rules of the Chamber and I hope that all the members in this Assembly abide by the Rules of this Chamber on all sides of the House.

The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville, to continue.

MR. WHYNOTT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This question about jobs and ensuring that we are able to keep our young families here and, in fact, bring them home. On Sunday I was at church and I was speaking with a young man who is about 22 years old who is an engineer. He just graduated from engineering school in New Brunswick and he had the opportunity to move home. He came up to me and said, "Oh, it's good to see you." and I say, "Oh, well, you too, Brad, it's good to see you move home." And I said, "Well, where are you working?" and he said, "Well, this new company, they just moved to Nova Scotia, PROJEX. Have you heard of them?" I said, "Yes, in fact, I did." and I said, well, in fact, one of the reasons why PROJEX moved to Nova Scotia was because we want to bring Nova Scotians home, we're bringing an Alberta company to Nova Scotia to bring young people home.

One of the things I asked him, I said, "Brad, can you talk a little bit about the workforce at PROJEX?" So I asked the question, I said, "Well, how many people right now are currently working?" He says, "Oh probably 80, 85 right now because they're just continuing to hire." And I said, "So where are those people coming from?" He said about two-thirds of those people currently are expats. Mr. Speaker, they are people who lived in Ontario, they are people who lived in Saskatchewan, they are people who lived in Alberta and now they're able to come home.

So I said, "Who are these people, Brad?" He said, "They're younger people, they are people between the ages of 25 and 40, bringing their families home." Mr. Speaker, that is exactly why this government invested to help bring companies to Nova Scotia. That is exactly the type of story that this government has done to bring people home.

You know, Mr. Speaker, that's the type of inexperience that the Liberal Party has when it talks about jobs. I'll leave on this note, I had the opportunity of talking about the unemployment rate in the area of, I think it's Cape Breton-Canso, so in 2005 the unemployment rate for the federal constituency of Cape Breton-Canso - and I don't know quite, I believe it was Rodger Cuzner, the Liberal MP there - was 21.4 per cent and that was a Liberal Government of the day that forced jobs out of Cape Breton, I believe. They shut

down some key industries in Cape Breton. Anyway, I just wanted to point that out about the Liberal Party here in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about jobs, we are talking about bringing people home. The Liberal Party is stuck in the past about decisions. They just think that the old way is the good way. Nova Scotians in this Party know that's different.

SPEAKER'S RULING: EECD Minister's refusal to answer certain questions during Question Period and CWH on Supply (Pt. of privilege by Hon. K. Casey [Hansard p. 529, 04/09/13]) No prima facie breach on privilege.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Earlier today the honourable member for Colchester North rose on a point of privilege based on what she said was the refusal by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to answer certain questions during Question Period and the refusal by that minister to provide information to the Committee of the Whole House on Supply. The answers to both these points are simple but as one of them may affect proceedings later today and affect the member's ability to pursue the alleged breach of privilege, I want to deal with the matter now.

First, the refusal by a minister to answer a question during Question Period is not a breach of privilege. Second, without ruling on the merits of the member's claim of a breach of privilege in the Committee of the Whole House on Supply, the correct procedure is for her to raise it in the committee so that the committee can report it to the House for me to deal with. If the committee decides to issue such a report, there have been a number of rulings in recent years by the Chair that only in the rare cases of extreme and exceptional circumstances can the Speaker hear a point of privilege on a matter in a committee.

This is not such a case. It is entirely open to the member to raise her complaint in the Committee of the Whole for a decision on whether it wishes to report the matter to the House. I find there is no prima facie case of a breach of privilege.

The motion is carried.

[2:30 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CWH on Supply with Deputy Speaker Mr. Alfie MacLeod in the Chair.]

[6:00 p.m. CWH on Supply rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Gordie Gosse, resumed the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER: The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Supply reports:

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole House on Supply has met, has made progress, and begs leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

The Adjournment motion was chosen earlier and submitted by the honourable member for Richmond.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

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

PREM.: USER FEES - INCREASES

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I was actually expecting that you were going to read that for some reason, there was a pause, on what the subject was tonight for late debate, but the subject is user fees. It's my pleasure to rise tonight, I have just 10 minutes and that can barely scratch the surface of an issue as big as an increase in 1,400 user fees to Nova Scotians.

When you look at that basket of fees, 1,400 covers so many different government services that it will touch every Nova Scotian to one degree or another. The last time the government did this was in 2011. The 1,400 fees went up 2 per cent each and that amounted to over \$3 million that year, but that pales next to the increase that has been put in place this year, which is amounting to \$11 million more in revenue. It is an increase of 5.8 per cent, almost 6 per cent, and that means a cumulative increase in the four years that the NDP have been in power, a cumulative increase of 8 per cent on the fees for every service that Nova Scotians rely on.

When I looked at the list and saw the large document that the Minister of Finance tabled here just before the long weekend, on the last business day of March, it was amazing to see how this is going to impact, in a negative way, business, individuals and the economy. Everything from food handling courses, which are what our waiting and food service people in restaurants have to take, to the fees we have to license an establishment; fees for recreation; things like culture and heritage, museums and historical sites, museum admission fees - all these things are going up. For business, salvage yard licences going up, environmental assessment fees rising, well-digging licences going higher; it just goes on and on. Some of them are really astounding, to see that we would touch those fees at all.

I know the government suggested there were a few fees they thought were sacred and they didn't go to, but 1,400 fees have gone up. In both instances, 2011 and this year, the fees were raised on the eve of a long weekend, both times, slipping it through as if to cause no - maybe to get as little attention as possible. I will say, this year, after the great debate last time in 2011 about how this was done in a stealth-like manner, in a manner that

wasn't transparent and open, the government did table the increases here in the session of the Legislature. We do think that is certainly an improvement, at least it was above-board; at least it told us and the public exactly what was going up and the individual fee increases were included in that.

Mr. Speaker, our main concern here is that the government, when they were in Opposition, the NDP as Opposition members raised Cain about government increasing fees without justifying the fact that they were really cost recovery. The whole difference between a fee and a tax increase is that a fee is supposed to cover the cost of providing the service. A tax increase is clearly revenue generating. It's a way to put more money in the coffers of government to provide other services.

The NDP, when they were in Opposition, insisted that the government must justify these fee increases, but since taking office and becoming the Government of Nova Scotia, the NDP have not given us one shred of evidence that the increases that have come forward are actually doing what they previously wanted, and that is to show us that it really isn't a tax grab, that it is actually covering the cost of delivering the service.

It's very hard to imagine that it would cost 6 per cent more for somebody to issue a licence if you come in person to the Motor Vehicles office, or to get a marriage licence, a death certificate, a birth certificate. All of these costs have gone up 5.8 per cent in the latest round of fee increases.

What we're asking in Opposition is, where is the evidence that the government previously called for and demanded? Where is that evidence that this is not just an across-the-board tax increase? That's what we would say today: it is an across-the-board tax increase. This \$11.8 million, I believe it is, is really a way for the government to add to their coffers by going after every fee and spreading it over every single service that we charge for. The government has found a way to add \$11 million - it's \$11.6 million, I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker - \$11.6 million to the bottom line.

That is not an amount of money that comes to us because of cost recovery. That's an amount of money that was put into that fee increase on the eve of the new fiscal year to help bolster the revenue for this coming year and for the budget that we are here today debating in the House.

Mr. Speaker, you will know that in my reply to the Budget Address I made it very clear that here in the Liberal caucus we do not believe that the revenue estimates that were included for personal income tax, corporate income tax, and HST revenue that we should be receiving - we don't believe that those are reasonable estimates in the budget. We believe they are inflated, and we believe they are not going to be attained this year.

On the other hand, when you raise fees there is every chance that the government can control that, because these are services that people need. If you are in business and you

are running an eating establishment, you need a licence. If you are a food handler, you need to take the course. All of these costs are rising.

Again, I mentioned that this is going to harm people who can least afford it. If you want to get information on maintenance enforcement, you'll have to pay more to get information on your maintenance enforcement. There's definitely a fee issued with any garnishment that's going to be done. If you wanted to ask that maybe the errant spouse or parent is not paying the maintenance enforcement, you'll have to pay a larger fee to get that action started.

Additional fees are in place here for apprenticeship training, for example. Here in the House we speak a lot about the need to improve skills training. We just heard the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development talking about how proud she is that we have a program which introduces high school students to trades and skills, and yet we're going to increase the cost here for certificates to do with apprenticeship training. It seems very contradictory. It seems like we're doing something positive with one hand and then slapping people down with the other, making it more difficult for them to attain the skills and the education that they need.

These 1,400 fees will dig a hand into the wallet and into the pocket of every Nova Scotian in the province. This is something that we think is not justifiable. The only way an increase in fees is justified is when the individual departments can come back with a calculation that shows that their fees have risen, their cost of delivering that service has risen by that percentage. If they can show that it's that much more expensive to staff their offices or provide the service that's required, then that's justifiable.

How many fees these days are delivered on-line? The cost there is a lot less, and we're directing more and more of the public to on-line means of getting their licences and renewing permits, and yet at the same time, the government has had the nerve to increase fees by 6 per cent this year alone, and 2 per cent two years earlier.

To add insult to injury, the NSLC, our Liquor Corporation in the province, jumped the gun and increased their fees on liquor even earlier. Their increases were passed on to the public a day or two earlier than they should have been. There might be a good part to this story, because I understand they're going to give the additional money that they collected back to charity as a result. They're showing the way a lot better - they are at least being accountable for the mistake they made in jumping the gun and putting higher taxes on their product before it was justified on April 1st.

The big point here is that the NDP have done a complete about-face in the position that they held before the last election, which was that fees should be justified and that evidence should be provided as to what justifies the increase, and if you can't provide that, don't raise those fees. That's the bottom line. Here we are today, four years after an NDP Government got elected with not a shred of evidence that these fees are justified and that we should be actually paying more because it cost more to deliver the service.

The NDP, Mr. Speaker, had one story in Opposition and had done a complete about-face and really disappointed the people of Nova Scotia by raising fees for the second time with no evidence to justify them. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

MR. BRIAN SKABAR: Nova Scotia is back to balance. Nova Scotia is now a pay-as-you-go province. We are a pay-as-you-go province, and there are very few of us. There are four pay-as-you-go provinces - four provinces back to balance, and we're the only one in the Atlantic Region that is there. Now it did occur to me, it did occur to many of us, that not everyone is particularly anxious or pleased at an increase in user fees. Most of us don't really much care to pay more for what we're getting. There is an exception however. Of these last batches of user fees there was actually a request from the Nova Scotia Wildlife Habitat group; they asked for an increase in user fees so that the Federation of Anglers and Hunters would be in line to support the Sport Fish Habitat Fund. So there is that.

AN HON. MEMBER: Okay, what about the 1,399 to go?

MR. SKABAR: Now, getting back to the other 1,399. I get it, and when I speak to constituents they get it as well - delivery of services costs money and if you're going to be a pay-as-you-go province, when the costs increase you pay as you go and you increase the cost to those who are receiving the service.

The benefits from government services for which user fees are charged are charged to those who actually use the service. Those people who don't drive a car, of course, should not be charged for the registration thereof. Those persons who have three cars, or four vehicles in a family, they should be charged the registration of each of those vehicles - they are the ones who are using the service and they are the ones who are charged for it. User fees pay for the services that the people are getting as opposed to general revenue, or as opposed to other sources of tax that are charged for that purpose.

The Opposition asked, in a recent Question Period, how much the cost of a stamp for renewable auto registration was. Well, I don't know what a stamp or a new sticker for a car actually costs, probably less than 5.8 per cent, but the thing is it's not that difficult to figure out the cost of running the Department of Motor Vehicles, divide that by the number of vehicles that are registered, do some simple math, some division, and that's how much it costs.

AN HON. MEMBER: There's the problem - they can't do simple math over there.

MR. SKABAR: Simple math. The cost, of course, of delivering these services isn't the stamp itself, it's the highly professional staff that we have to deliver those services. Efficient, yes. Back in terms of any user fees, the motive fuel tax of course would go to provide for transportation infrastructure. That's what will pay for - a good part, that's what

pays for the roads that we drive on. Again, that should not come out of general revenue - but by all means it's the people who are driving on the roads, paying the motive fuel tax, those are the ones who are paying for the roads.

This government did not have the advantage of \$450 million a year - I think it's \$457 million a year - in revenues from offshore sources. As a matter of fact, we're down to \$27 million. Now again, we are a pay-as-you-go province. There have been measures taken by this government to balance the budget and for that, by the way, you are welcome.

Mr. Speaker, the whole balanced budget has definitely changed the water on the beans. It's a fair way to pay as you go. User fees are the ones that pay for the services we need, and that is the action that has taken place. Those who use the services pay the costs, and if you don't own a car, okay, but after that - the fee increases, however, are gradual. There was no increase in user fees last year. This year they went up by 5.8 per cent, that's a combination of two years of user fees in there.

Now, again, the gradual increase of user fees is one thing. An ambulance fee, for example, went up by \$2.90 for long-term care residents, and for regular users of the ambulance fee, it went up by \$7.79. Now this is really quite different, very, very different than the Hamm Government of 2002, which increased the ambulance fees from \$100 to \$600 per trip - \$600. That is a 600 per cent increase for those who need that service most.

And Liberals, let's talk about the Liberals. Yes, let's do that. In the 1990s, the Liberals decided to put user fees on Pap tests and prostate exams. My goodness gracious, if there is anything that we don't do, it is tax for health services. And of course, my favourite, to this day, I still resent paying \$4 every time we have to come to Truro or go to Halifax from Cumberland County, from Amherst. And to my Liberal friends and colleagues across the hall I say, why don't you like us? Why did you do that to us? Highway robbery, that's what that is - the only ones with a toll highway.

Yes, costs are going up. But we're doing this in a humane and civilized way. We are a pay-as-you-go province. We do have a balanced budget, but we also have taken measures to protect our most vulnerable citizens, those most in need. We have programs that waive ambulance costs for low-income families and for seniors. Our government is mindful that Nova Scotians do struggle to make ends meet, many of them do, but we have introduced measures to help those who need the help most. Poverty reduction and affordable living tax credits are putting money in the hands of the people who need it most. Money in the hands that helps them pay - and a good deal more, rather, than they pay in increased HST, for example, or any moderate increase in user fees, the 5.8 per cent of services that they need.

Again, seniors eligible for the Guaranteed Income Supplement pay no provincial income tax at all - none. All that, and still, the budget is balanced. My colleague across the way took exception, by the sound of it, that the Auditor General, in fact, agreed and endorsed the calculations of our projected revenue for this year. Now, I'm sure we all

appreciate the efforts and the opinions of our Auditor General on that, however, we did receive an unqualified opinion as to the projections of revenue to that end.

Some of the 1,400 user fees went up by 3 per cent, some went up by 6 per cent; the average was 5.8 per cent. These are associated with the cost-of-living price index, created by - who creates that, Gary? - the cost-of-living price index, anyway. (Interruption) CPI, that's it.

I might be a little short, I thought I had 10 minutes' worth, but I've got about eight. Another minute? Okay. As far as the user fees go, in our particular (Interruptions) The motive fuel tax is one of the ones that we did make, did have some exceptions to it in Cumberland County. One of the issues that came up during the 2009 campaign was the difference in price of the motive fuel tax in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, which did amount to about four to six cents a litre, depending on the Thursday or the Friday that the tax went up.

One of the things that I was hoping to be able to do - and we brought this to the Utility and Review Board - is to create a zone whereby the tax was modified on border areas and increased incrementally by one cent for every 10 kilometres away from the border. This, of course, was reviewed by the Utility and Review Board and rejected.

Again, my colleague, the member for Cumberland South at the time spoke against such a measure to reduce the motive fuel tax in Cumberland County, and as a consequence, the motive fuel board didn't agree with that.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I thank you and take my place.

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

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise this evening to speak to this resolution for late debate. The bullpen part didn't work. The cleanup hitter was the better one.

We just heard from the member opposite that we're now a pay-as-you-go province. I hope that's like pay-per-view television, so we can pick and choose what fees we want to pay, because we don't have that option - 2 per cent on everything in the province's HST four years ago was taking money out of our pockets left and right.

If we are a pay-as-you-go province, how far are we going to go? We've seen it already. We're going to go and turn that corner. I don't know about that corner, but that corner that I've been around here sees a lot more money coming out of people's pockets.

We also had a little lesson on the budget about the Auditor General, what the Auditor General says about that balanced budget. According to what the Auditor General

says, and I'll take this right from the letter from the Office of the Auditor General, "Accordingly I express no opinion as to whether the revenue estimates will be achieved." I don't think that's unqualified.

We've had a raised HST, and I think the money that has been taken from each and every Nova Scotian because of that is \$1,000 out of each and every Nova Scotian's pocket. I'm glad to see that the NDP are pleased with this, because do you know what? Taking money out of our pockets, when we go to the polls we'll see how pleased the people are about this. They'll pass the judgment if they're happy with this balanced budget or not. We'll see in September when the first forecast is up if they think they've got a truly balanced budget - we'll still be here, and we'll be hearing that budget. If we go before that, we'll assume that budget wasn't going to be balanced.

Now, it's well known that life under this NDP Government is getting harder. Nova Scotia families are struggling. We heard earlier today from the member for Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville about all the jobs that are created here in Halifax. I'm from an area of Cape Breton where there's 30-plus per cent unemployment in my small town - 18.6 per cent unemployment in Cape Breton - and he stood over there and told us that we didn't know what we were talking about, that life in this province is rosy.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have the highest taxes in Canada. We have the highest power rates and the fastest-rising prices. Stagnant wages are taking their toll on our families. Our energy rates have gone up 44.5 per cent. In the four years before this government took place, those energy rates went up 6.5 per cent. That's a whopping 37.9 per cent difference, and they are saying life is easier and better for the Province of Nova Scotia.

All the province suffers. Even the small- and medium-sized businesses are struggling and having a hard time keeping jobs, let alone creating them. We see that in Cape Breton.

Shelter has gone up over 1 per cent in the four years. Clothing has gone up 7.7 per cent. Goods have gone up 9.5 per cent. Transportation has gone up over 20 per cent. Hard-working people are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet. People have to make a decision on power or groceries, prescriptions or power, medication or heat to heat their homes. With higher costs and no extra income, many people are forced to make those difficult decisions.

What happens if we have to fix our roof or get braces for our children? We have to make a decision then: do we fix it or pay the rent? Do we get groceries or fix the roof? Do we get a prescription or fix our car so we can get to our jobs? For far too many Nova Scotians, it's simply not realistic to put a little away for retirement because they're having a tough time making ends meet.

Just when people thought they couldn't take any more from this government, they put the user fees up on over 1,400 government services, over 6 per cent, and that's after 2 per cent two years ago. I recall, once upon a time, the Premier called the increase in user fees across-the-board tax increases, but it doesn't really matter what we call it. Again, it's something that was said in Opposition; it's completely opposite when they are in power. Whether it's called a tax or a fee, for many Nova Scotians it may be more than their family can bear.

On March 28th of this year, just before the long Easter weekend, the government announced they were about to reach in the pockets and purses of Nova Scotians again and take an additional \$11.6 million in increased user fees. Many of these services are things Nova Scotians can simply not do without. There are 121 pages of new fee increases, 121 pages. Among those increases are fees for home support user fees, which are going up to \$12.10 an hour, while the charge for cancelling a home support visit goes up to \$59.30 per occurrence. That is not just the elderly who are getting hit by this.

Just as we have this great opportunity with the shipyard contract when thousands of Nova Scotians are going to need training and apprenticeship opportunities, the NDP made that process a little bit harder too; 18 of those 1,400 user fees relate to apprenticeship training. The very thing that we say is necessary for our future, they're now going to tax us on and take more money out of our pockets to do it.

On Page 27 of the 121-page fee increases for ambulances, fees are going up for a normal call. They are going up for residents of long-term care facilities and they are going up for Nova Scotians with mobility problems. Last week the government introduced a bill that would make it easier to get a marriage licence, the "get me to the chapel on time" bill, so on one hand they are making a marriage licence easier to get, but on the other hand they are making it more expensive. That's quite a trade-off.

If they go to the liquor store after that and get booze for their reception, that's going to cost them more money again and if they had it on Easter Saturday, it would be even more again. People of Nova Scotia are probably happy that they are going to make a donation to charity, but probably not happy about the way they did it. If you asked them out front of the liquor store, they probably would have given it before they took it from them.

None of the fee increases is related in any way to the ability of Nova Scotians to pay. It's another tax grab and another way to increase revenue for this government. The burden placed on everyday hard-working people doesn't seem to enter into the equation to this government. They decided they need \$11.6 million more and they reached into your pocket and took it. They reached into your purse, your wallet; they are probably reaching into every little child's piggy bank as well. In fact, when asked last week about the user fees, the Minister of Finance said, this is the year the province will move back to a balanced budget.

I have that article here and I'll table that. Balanced on the backs of Nova Scotians who may not be able to afford to pay it; achieving economic goals on the backs of our seniors; people who need ambulances and people attempting to better themselves through apprenticeship training; hard-working Nova Scotians who are already stretched to the limit; it's not what Nova Scotians signed up for. We've heard that it is not my NDP, on more than one occasion from people in this province.

But the lure of easy money was too much for the government. It was powerful enough to cause the Premier to turn his back on what he said in Opposition. It's another case of saying one thing while in Opposition and another thing while in government - it's kind of like his promise to make life easier. We now have 1,400 additional reasons that that claim is simply not true. What the Premier once called across-the-board tax increases, he now calls business as usual. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, I'd like to thank all the honourable members for an excellent debate this evening, with decorum and respect.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Supply unto Her Majesty.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

[6:31p.m. The House resolved itself into a CWH on Supply with Deputy Speaker Becky Kent in the Chair.]

[7:12 p.m. CWH on Supply rose and the House reconvened with Deputy Speaker Ms. Becky Kent in the Chair.]

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

THE CLERK: That the committee has met and made some progress and begs leave to sit again.

MADAM SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: That concludes, Madam Speaker, the government's business for tonight. I think our friends on the bench can wait another day - as they say, the law is the only place where the best players sit on the bench.

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

With that said, I will now turn it over to the Progressive Conservative House Leader to give us the business for tomorrow.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Progressive Conservative House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Tomorrow, Opposition Day, after the daily routine, we will call Bill Nos. 6 and 35.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now rise to meet tomorrow at 2:00 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.

[The House rose at 7:15 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 190**

By: Mr. Zach Churchill (Yarmouth)

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

Whereas the Bantam Boys Division 4 Provincial Basketball Championship Tournament was held over the weekend of April 5th to April 7th; and

Whereas the Yarmouth Thunder bantam boys basketball team consisting of Dylan Smith, Brayden Moses, John Atwood, Skyler Baxter, Riley Challoner, Brad Jones, Walter Vanbuskirk, Lucas MacIsaac, Mitchel Wilcox, Brogan O'Brien, Ben Wyman, Ryan LeBlanc and Dwayne Crowell, under the guidance of coaches Murray Judge and Gary Baxter, competed in this tournament; and

Whereas the Yarmouth Thunder went undefeated throughout the tournament and won the championship game, defeating the Sackville Storm by a score of 60-41;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Yarmouth Thunder bantam boys basketball team on their championship win and impressive performance throughout the provincial tournament, and wish the team every future success.

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 219**

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

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 220

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

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 221

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

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 222

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

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 223

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas the Hants Journal is a thorough, well-read newspaper with a circulation of approximately 3,000 in Windsor-West Hants, Hantsport, and a part of East Hants, and has been serving the local area for more than a century; and

Whereas the Hants Journal was recently nominated for a total of seven journalism awards at the upcoming 2013 Newspapers Atlantic Better Newspapers Competition, scheduled for the middle of May in Halifax; and

Whereas the Journal has been nominated as a standing finalist in the General Excellence Category for its circulation class, and editor Carole Morris-Underhill is a finalist in the categories of Outstanding Photographer and for Best News Story of the Year for her in-depth coverage of the battle to keep Junior B Hockey alive in Windsor;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the exceptional work of Carole Morris-Underhill, Editor of the Hants Journal, and wish her the very best at the upcoming awards dinner in Halifax.

RESOLUTION NO. 224

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas no publication could survive by content alone and must have talented sales personnel; and

Whereas the Hants Journal weekly newspaper is lucky to have Michele White as their sales representative, with her innovative thinking and catchy sales ideas; and

Whereas Michele has been working at the Hants Journal for only a year but has been nominated for an Atlantic Newspaper Award in The Best Original Advertising Idea category;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud the creative advertising talent of Michele White of the Hants Journal and wish her success at the Atlantic Newspaper Awards.

RESOLUTION NO. 225

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas RRFB and Valley Waste Resource hold an annual Nova Scotia Recycles Contest to raise awareness about waste reduction and recycling in our province; and

Whereas this contest is a valuable hands-on project to learn about the fragile nature of our environment and the importance of having the best quality of air, water, and soil as we reuse, recycle, and reduce for the benefit of future generations; and

Whereas Cohen Sawler of Port Williams Elementary is a winner in the Valley Region;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Cohen Sawler on his achievement and wish him every success in his future commitment to a healthy environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 226

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas RRFB and Valley Waste Resource hold an annual Nova Scotia Recycles Contest to raise awareness about waste reduction and recycling in our province; and

Whereas this contest is a valuable hands-on project to learn about the fragile nature of our environment and the importance of having the best quality of air, water, and soil as we reuse, recycle, and reduce for the benefit of future generations; and

Whereas Colin Muise of Annapolis West Education Centre in Annapolis Royal is a winner in the 2013 Nova Scotia Recycles Contest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Colin Muise on his achievement and wish him every success in his future commitment to a healthy environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 227

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas RRFB and Valley Waste Resource hold an annual Nova Scotia Recycles Contest to raise awareness about waste reduction and recycling in our province; and

Whereas this contest is a valuable hands-on project to learn about the fragile nature of our environment and the importance of having the best quality of air, water, and soil as we reuse, recycle, and reduce for the benefit of future generations; and

Whereas Emma Johnson of Northeast Kings Education Centre in Canning is a winner in the 2013 Nova Scotia Recycles Contest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Emma Johnson on her achievement and wish her every success in her future commitment to a healthy environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 228

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas RRFB and Valley Waste Resource hold an annual Nova Scotia Recycles Contest to raise awareness about waste reduction and recycling in our province; and

Whereas this contest is a valuable hands-on project to learn about the fragile nature of our environment and the importance of having the best quality of air, water, and soil as we reuse, recycle, and reduce for the benefit of future generations; and

Whereas Ms. Rafuse/Ms. Webber's class at Kings County Academy is a winner in the 2013 Nova Scotia Recycles Contest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ms. Rafuse/Ms. Webber on this achievement and wish them every success in their future commitment to a healthy environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 229

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas RRFB and Valley Waste Resource hold an annual Nova Scotia Recycles Contest to raise awareness about waste reduction and recycling in our province; and

Whereas this contest is a valuable hands-on project to learn about the fragile nature of our environment and the importance of having the best quality of air, water, and soil as we reuse, recycle, and reduce for the benefit of future generations; and

Whereas Rebecca Schoonhoven of Central Kings Rural High School in Cambridge is a winner in the 2013 Nova Scotia Recycles Contest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Rebecca Schoonhoven on her achievement and wish her every success in her future commitment to a healthy environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 230

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas RRFB and Valley Waste Resource hold an annual Nova Scotia Recycles Contest to raise awareness about waste reduction and recycling in our province; and

Whereas this contest is a valuable hands-on project to learn about the fragile nature of our environment and the importance of having the best quality of air, water, and soil as we reuse, recycle, and reduce for the benefit of future generations; and

Whereas Shannon Ubels of Middleton Regional High School is a runner-up in the 2013 Nova Scotia Recycles Contest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Shannon Ubels on this achievement and wish her every success in her future commitment to a healthy environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 231

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas RRFB and Valley Waste Resource hold an annual Nova Scotia Recycles Contest to raise awareness about waste reduction and recycling in our province; and

Whereas this contest is a valuable hands-on project to learn about the fragile nature of our environment and the importance of having the best quality of air, water, and soil as we reuse, recycle, and reduce for the benefit of future generations; and

Whereas Felicia Boyd of Annapolis East Elementary School in Middleton, Nova Scotia, is a runner-up in the 2013 Nova Scotia Recycles Contest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Felicia Boyd on this achievement and wish her every success in her future commitment to a healthy environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 232

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas RRFB and Valley Waste Resource hold an annual Nova Scotia Recycles Contest to raise awareness about waste reduction and recycling in our province; and

Whereas this contest is a valuable hands-on project to learn about the fragile nature of our environment and the importance of having the best quality of air, water, and soil as we reuse, recycle, and reduce for the benefit of future generations; and

Whereas Hailey MacLeod of Champlain Elementary in Granville Ferry is a runner-up in the 2013 Nova Scotia Recycles Contest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Hailey MacLeod of Champlain Elementary, in Granville Ferry, on this achievement and wish her every success in her future commitment to a healthy environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 233

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas RRFB and Valley Waste Resource hold an annual Nova Scotia Recycles Contest to raise awareness about waste reduction and recycling in our province; and

Whereas this contest is a valuable hands-on project to learn about the fragile nature of our environment and the importance of having the best quality of air, water, and soil as we reuse, recycle, and reduce for the benefit of future generations; and

Whereas Mrs. Heather Ross's class at Glooscap Elementary in Canning is a runner-up;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mrs. Heather Ross's class on this achievement and wish them every success in their future commitment to a healthy environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 234

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas RRFB and Valley Waste Resource hold an annual Nova Scotia Recycles Contest to raise awareness about waste reduction and recycling in our province; and

Whereas this contest is a valuable hands-on project to learn about the fragile nature of our environment and the importance of having the best quality of air, water, and soil as we reuse, recycle, and reduce for the benefit of future generations; and

Whereas Jesse Hammond of Charity Baptist School in Torbrook Mines is a runner-up in the 2013 Nova Scotia Recycles Contest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jesse Hammond on this achievement and wish him every success in his future commitment to a healthy environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 235

By: Mr. Leo Glavine (Kings West)

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

Whereas RRFB and Valley Waste Resource hold an annual Nova Scotia Recycles Contest to raise awareness about waste reduction and recycling in our province; and

Whereas this contest is a valuable hands-on project to learn about the fragile nature of our environment and the importance of having the best quality of air, water, and soil as we reuse, recycle, and reduce for the benefit of future generations; and

Whereas Ms. Julia Schofield's class of Gaspereau Elementary are runners-up in the 2013 Nova Scotia Recycles Contest;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ms. Julia Schofield's class on this achievement and wish them every success in their future commitment to a healthy environment.