



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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First Session

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2013

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2013

Sixty-second General Assembly

First Session

11:00 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we get into the daily routine, just a notice that the subject for late debate has been established, submitted by the honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid:

Therefore be it resolved that the Premier assure Nova Scotians tonight that he will honour the previous government's important commitment to long-term care, including 350 new long-term care beds, 750 replacement beds, and plans to allow 3,000 more people to access home care.

We will now proceed with the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg.

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition. The operative clause in this petition reads as follows:

“Residents of New Boston Road hereby call upon Provincial Government Officials to have the New Boston Road paved at the earliest, possible date. This road is in such a deplorable condition that it poses a great danger to the motoring public and pedestrians.”

Mr. Speaker, it’s signed by 450-plus people, and I have attached my name in agreement.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Energy.

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak about an important agreement that impacts all Nova Scotians. My colleagues in the Legislature, the public, and the partners in the energy industry are all very interested in the government’s position on the Maritime Link project. Last Friday the Utility and Review Board ruled that the project agreement will proceed and made it clear that Emera and Nalcor shareholders take on project risks, not ratepayers. This is a significant milestone and one our government helped shape by intervening at the recent hearings to ensure Nova Scotia ratepayers’ interests are protected.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind Nova Scotians that our Party is on record as stating the Maritime Link was a project with potential, but our issue is with the structure of the deal and risk for ratepayers; in fact, while appearing at the Resources Committee meeting of October 2011, I said that the thing that frustrates me sometimes is every time you ask a question about Churchill Falls, there are a lot of people who say you’re against the project.

I just want to be clear that I’m not against the project, although I have questions about some information that has been put out about it and also in terms of where this fits in the overall scheme. I think there are important questions that we need answers to. I do think

the Muskrat Falls project is an important component of our entire energy mix. And that is on the record in Hansard from October 2011.

In Opposition I raised risks to the project like water management, non-delivery, and availability of surplus energy. The previous government said don't worry, despite it not being enshrined in the agreement. Through the actions of the Utility and Review Board and our government, these issues are now addressed so the risks of these issues are no longer on ratepayers. Even in its first ruling on the project, the Utility and Review Board clearly agreed with our position at the board and that of other interveners. On July 22nd the Utility and Review Board approved the project with conditions that Emera must obtain a guarantee of access to market price electricity from Nalcor or an alternative source. These are issues I had raised in my arguments before the board and ones they largely agreed with. My position in support of the board's decision, as well as the Premier's in support of the board's decision in July was widely reported.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the recent compliance hearing was about whether or not the Energy Access Agreement met the condition for access to market energy, as required as part of the board's conditional approval in July. The board clearly stated they were not revisiting the link as a project during the recent hearing and it wasn't about whether the board was approving the Maritime Link deal and charging it back to customers - this approval had already been granted conditional on the compliance filing. This was about the structure of the agreement, and this government was not satisfied with the agreement as presented.

We reviewed the evidence from all sides; we had the government lawyer ask tough questions in the hearing - something which was noted as rarely, if ever, having been seen before. We spent a considerable amount of time before closing arguments reviewing whether or not we were satisfied. We determined that the details of the agreement could address our concerns, but we were troubled because we didn't think the agreement itself was clear enough as presented.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Nova Scotia ratepayers we proposed eight conditions to improve the agreement and ensure ratepayers were protected. That's why we pushed to make sure that the project risks were with Emera and Nalcor, not ratepayers.

On November 29th the Utility and Review Board ruled that the revised agreement - combined with the explanations and commitments made by Emera during the hearing - finally met its condition on access to market energy. The board's decision also fully met, and in some cases exceeded, the conditions put forward by the province. I quote from the board's decision:

“The Province, and other Intervenors, had recommended that the Board impose a number of conditions. The Board considers that interpreting the [Energy Access Agreement] in accordance with the above representations

and clarifications is a more appropriate manner of dealing with the concerns raised by the Province and other Intervenors. However, the Board observes that, as a practical matter, the end result, on a number of issues, is very similar to the conditions proposed by the Province.”

On the day the conditions were announced, I said that we would accept the exact wording or a ruling that achieves the same effect as our conditions. From the second we received the document, I, along with our legal advisors and staff, reviewed the decision. Everyone came to the same conclusion. Our lawyers reviewed the decision, and while lawyers rarely agree, they did in this case. The conditions were met in full.

The concerns behind all of our conditions are now part of the decision. This revised Energy Access Agreement we have today is significantly better for Nova Scotian ratepayers than the previous agreement from six months ago, the one the former government recommended the board approve without condition. Why?

I want to clearly point out the benefits to Nova Scotians. We now have a guarantee of access to market energy, and the result will be a competitive market. In addition to Nalcor energy, we will be able to access competitive power from other sources. We now have guarantees of access to surplus energy. We did not have this before. We now have a guarantee that risk is shifted away from ratepayers to Emera and Nalcor. We did not have this before.

The revised agreement goes even further to outline exactly what the mechanics of sales and benefits to ratepayers will be. So overall, this is a different and much-improved deal for the Link project. Every single issue we expressed concern about with the Link deal is now fully addressed in the new arrangement.

We also need to consider the decisions of the previous government, and what will be new to Nova Scotians is a better understanding of where the previous administration made commitments which must now be weighed by this government, identifying legal and binding arrangements the previous administration made - commitments that we will and must uphold in good faith. For example, on November 30, 2012, there was a commitment made by Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Emera, and Nalcor to meet terms and conditions required to satisfy the federal loan guarantee. URB approval was a key condition that had to be met for other terms to be dealt with. Now, if we were not satisfied that our concerns were met, we would have walked away, but given that our conditions have been met, when you consider the potential risks that the previous government placed on us and taxpayers as a result of their legal agreements, it would not make sense to put taxpayers at risk at this point.

With the changes we have managed to achieve we have shifted the risk away from ratepayers and from taxpayers, so it makes sense to continue with arrangements that were signed in good faith. Now that the Utility and Review Board has given the Maritime Link

Project a green light, and with the final actions by our government, the remaining conditions required by the Province of Nova Scotia for the federal loan guarantee will be met through legislation which this House will debate in the coming days.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to say that we appreciate the efforts of our federal colleagues who worked diligently with us and the project proponents to finalize the necessary agreements, and in particular, responded to our concerns in the past few weeks. With the federal loan guarantee, Nova Scotians will benefit from significant cost savings. As we said last year, if the project were to proceed, it must have the loan guarantee.

Today I also launched a micro Web site on the Department of Energy portal to answer questions of the public on what is different about this deal and to provide them information about the board's decision and how the conditions were met. I know the public has questions about cost, risk, mechanics, and opportunities, and many of these questions will be answered on this Web site.

It is important to me that Nova Scotians are given answers to their questions. Nova Scotians deserve answers, the most complete answers we can give. As questions come in we will answer them in as timely a fashion as we can and I want to say we've already received some today and we hope to get answers up very quickly.

This project is just about one aspect of our energy future, and the work does not stop here. I will be discussing the possible advantages of regional co-operation on grid and other energy issues at the upcoming meeting of the Atlantic Energy Ministers. It is important to note that the benefits of this to ratepayers, the regional co-operation, are actually predicated on the link and the competitive environment being in existence.

We will also soon begin a very significant consultation and review process - the first in 13 years - on what Nova Scotians expect and need from their electricity system. The bill I introduced last week is only an early part of that electricity future. My vision, our vision as government, is an energy future where Nova Scotians have greater choice, where ratepayers come first and have a direct role in determining our energy future. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to thank the minister for giving us a copy of his statement today. The Maritime Link is one in which the whole deal has been shrouded in secrecy with so many unanswered questions for so long that it is interesting to hear someone actually stand up and explain some of it. I commend the minister for that because we didn't necessarily get it from our friends who are sitting way off to our left here now.

This caucus has never doubted the value of the Muskrat Falls project itself; we simply stand up for ratepayers to make sure they are getting the best deal possible. This multi-billion dollar project will lock people of Nova Scotia in for decades to come. That's a commitment that we are not prepared to make without very careful consideration. The minister did not provide the answer to the question he most frequently asked the former government, and I hope it might end up in his micro-site when that time comes: What can Nova Scotians expect to pay for the power we are going to get from Muskrat Falls?

These questions are too important not to have answers to. How can Nova Scotians celebrate the deal without knowing what they'll see when they open their power bills? Skyrocketing power rates have plagued family budgets for far too long and Nova Scotians need a break. The Utility and Review Board hearing on the compliance filing was very telling. There were a number of interveners, including the PC Caucus, who were there to represent the interests of ratepayers.

In Opposition, now the Minister of Energy, criticized the former government for sending department staff to the URB hearings; he said: The fact is there is a difference between being represented and actually participating to defend Nova Scotians. The minister himself was not an intervener, which I found interesting. I thought he would be there on those days that we were there, especially on the last go round for the changes. I guess he decided he had better things to do at the time; maybe he was reading the portfolio and getting ready for the House sitting.

The government needs to prove to Nova Scotians that their power bills will not continue to climb. The Liberals made a number of contradictory statements about what the Maritime Link will do to power bills. It's time they answered what should have been their first answer all along - what will power rates be? Thank you.

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

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for giving us this statement in advance. The minister likes to heap much praise about the deal, particularly on himself. He likes to go on and talk about the eight positions they put forward and they were all accepted. But they were soundly rejected and even in a ChronicleHerald column on Emera by Ms. Stephenson, *Emera gets early Christmas gift on Maritime Link approval*, the provincial regulator rejected eight conditions requested by the Nova Scotia Liberal Government. I'll table that. (Interruption)

Okay, I'm getting encouragement from the minister, but he likes to say, well, I've always been a proponent of the Maritime Link, but in Opposition he and the now-Premier were saying, let's look at Hydro-Québec, this is who we want. They were picking then, Mr. Speaker. They wanted Hydro-Québec - that was their friend, Hydro-Québec. These are issues that, for clarity's sake, have to be put out there. Ministerial statements should be

about the position of the ministry, not about the minister trumpeting or trying to rewrite history.

In May 2012, the former Energy Minister introduced legislation entitled an Act to Ensure Regulatory Review of the Maritime Link. That legislation subjected an open and transparent review at the URB. That was done. The regulator was tasked with determining whether or not the Maritime Link would be the lowest-cost option for Nova Scotians. The current Premier and the now-Minister of Energy continued to flip-flop on this issue, expressing their doubts in the project in one breath, while supporting it - as he just did - in the next. If Nova Scotians are confused, I would certainly understand that.

But it was really their support of Hydro-Québec that makes their whole stance today so amazing when it comes to this government and their many flip-flops. Whether it's around Efficiency Nova Scotia or whatever, it's like it's one thing in Opposition, another thing in government.

I think in this whole process what we have to realize is that the independence of the URB has worked. We put it there, we said it would be up to them to do this. It's an independent body. Things like this should not be decided solely by politicians, so we were more than happy to put it there, although my friend in the Progressive Conservative Party said it wasn't transparent. I suppose he looked at it with a more myopic view than he should have, but I forgive him for that, Mr. Speaker. Well, it is getting close to that season, and I often tell people I come from a religion of atonement.

This is going to make up about 30 per cent of our energy needs, and this is an historic perspective in this province when it comes here. Last night in debate on another energy bill - we've had many issues about securing access to energy for this province and what it means to Nova Scotians. We relied for a long time on fossil fuels. Fossil fuels really aren't a proper mix for today's environment, so we have to look at that and be forward thinkers when it comes to our energy needs. Part of that energy mix will be in Lower Churchill, and it will provide stable costs for all ratepayers for many years to come.

I for one, and on behalf of the Party . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: You know what the costs are now, but you didn't before.

MR. CORBETT: The member is saying, you know the costs now, but you didn't before. Well, Mr. Speaker, as we know, from time to time people will go back to the board and there will be rate applications made. That's just the reality, but they'll be stable. That's what we understand, and that's what businesses and ratepayers have been after, so we're satisfied with that.

Mr. Speaker, what I wanted to do today is thank the people at the URB for their hard work on this file. It has not been easy for them to take all the information that has been

given to them, to synthesize it, and make sure that Nova Scotians were looked after. I think the URB has made the right decision. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, on an introduction.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Joining us in the east gallery today are constituents of mine, Jim and Brenda Marchand, who are up here in the city. I believe Jim said he's been here before, but this is Brenda's first visit to our Chamber. They are tremendous volunteers back home from the community of Louisdale and we're certainly pleased to see them joining us for today's proceedings. I'd ask my colleagues to give them a warm welcome to the Legislature. (Applause)

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

RESOLUTION NO. 92

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

Whereas Nova Scotia sends a large Christmas tree to Boston each year as a gift in appreciation for help given after the Halifax Explosion of 1917; and

Whereas Mary Lou Milligan of Mill Cove, Lunenburg County, donated a lovely, 15-metre-tall white spruce to be this year's gift from our province to Boston; and

Whereas this year the Boston tree gift also included a special acknowledgement by the province of the Boston Marathon bombing tragedy and was sent in part to honour the memory of the victims and the suffering of their families;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Mary Lou Milligan for her gift and express gratitude to the people of Boston for their help in the past, and our heartfelt condolences to Bostonians, as well, as they prepare to celebrate their first holiday season since the losses they suffered at the marathon in April.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 93

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

Whereas December 3, 2013, has been declared by the United Nations to be the International Day of Persons with Disabilities; and

Whereas the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognizes that living independently and being included in the community is a basic right; and

Whereas Nova Scotia is committed to a plan to transform services for persons with disabilities based on this UN Convention;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the contributions of persons with disabilities as agents of change and as contributors to the communities in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 9 - Entitled an Act to Ensure Accountability in Providing Economic Development Assistance in Nova Scotia. (Hon. Michel Samson)

Bill No. 10 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 9 of the Acts of 2012. The Maritime Link Act. (Hon. Andrew Younger)

Bill No. 11 - Entitled an Act Respecting the Sir William Young's Benevolent and Charitable Fund. (Mr. Joachim Stroink)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

RESOLUTION NO. 94

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

Whereas the Petite Rivière Volunteer Fire Department has celebrated 56 years of serving its community as an active fire department; and

Whereas the Petite Rivière Volunteer Fire Department celebrated this milestone with an annual banquet held on November 30, 2013; and

Whereas members were recognized for their efforts and their years of service to the department and the community;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize and congratulate the Petite Rivière Volunteer Fire Department for their continued efforts in serving their community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

RESOLUTION NO. 95

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

Whereas the Duke of Edinburgh's Award was founded by His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, in 1956 to encourage personal development and community involvement in youth between the ages of 14 and 24; and

Whereas the award program consists of four mandatory sections: Community Service, Adventurous Journey, Skills Development, and Physical Recreation, and in pursuing these activities at the Bronze, Silver and Gold levels participants demonstrate their commitment, motivation, and personal development; and

Whereas Brett Erskine of Carrols Corner has worked independently since February 2013 to achieve the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award by volunteering in his school and community, bicycling for 85 kilometres in Lunenburg County, taking bass guitar lessons, and participating in numerous sporting activities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Brett Erskine for his outstanding achievement in being awarded the Bronze level of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and wish him the best of luck as he continues his journey towards the Silver level award.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Acting Leader of the New Democratic Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 96

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

Whereas The Coast weekly newspaper holds an annual Best of Food competition, with awards in a wide variety of categories and with the winners voted on by readers of The Coast; and

Whereas for the past 20 years Julien's Patisserie, Bakery and Café, located on Young Street in Halifax's historic Hydrostone District, has been providing delicious pastries, croissants, and other treats to be enjoyed with freshly brewed coffee, as well as a wide selection of wholesome breads to be enjoyed at home; and

Whereas Julien's is the Gold Winner in the Best Bakery category in The Coast's 2013 Best of Food awards;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Julien's Patisserie, Bakery and Café on receiving the Best Bakery award which it has previously received in 1999, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011.

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 Environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 97

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

Whereas today is the Feast of St. Francis Xavier and the annual X-Ring Ceremony being held at Charles V. Keating Millennium Centre on the campus of St. Francis Xavier University; and

Whereas nearly 1,000 senior students will be receiving their coveted X-ring; and

Whereas although it is one of the most recognizable rings in the world, to St. F.X. graduates and alumni it symbolizes academic achievement, the strong bonds and

experiential learning, lifelong friendships created at this residential campus where people from across Canada and the world live side by side for four years;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate those students who are receiving their X-ring as it is a day they've been counting down to since they received their acceptance letter to this university.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

RESOLUTION NO. 98

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

Whereas Lane Cormier from Hopewell, Pictou County has been chosen to play at the World U17 Hockey Challenge in Cape Breton in December for the Atlantic U17 team; and

Whereas despite knee surgery and playing only a few games so far this season he made enough of an impression to make the cut and earned a spot on the roster thanks to his hard work and natural edge, things that cannot be taught; and

Whereas this will be the last year there will be a Team Atlantic program;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Lane Cormier on making the team and wish him the best of luck in the tournament.

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 Sydney-Whitney Pier.

RESOLUTION NO. 99

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

Whereas the Maritime Barrel Racing Association was formed to promote the western speed events, particularly barrel racing, throughout the Maritimes; and

Whereas in November 2013 the Maritime Barrel Racing Association held its annual awards banquet; and

Whereas barrel racer extraordinaire Alka Virick was named the 2013 Youth Champion;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Alka Virick on her outstanding achievement and wish her continued success in her future barrel racing 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 Kings South.

RESOLUTION NO. 100

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

Whereas the Acadia Centre for Social and Business Entrepreneurship is celebrating 25 years of helping entrepreneurs succeed in Nova Scotia and will now be known as the Acadia Entrepreneurship Centre; and

Whereas the Centre for Innovation and Incubation Services has celebrated its grand opening at Acadia University; and

Whereas both these initiatives are focused on investing in entrepreneurship and innovation;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Findlay MacRae, executive director, and all of the staff of the Acadia Centre for Social and Business Entrepreneurship for these important milestones in supporting entrepreneurs and innovation in the Nova Scotia economy.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 101

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

Whereas 10 Nova Scotia employers were recognized for championing persons with disabilities by being presented with the Lieutenant Governor's Persons with Disabilities Employer Partnership Awards; and

Whereas the award acknowledges and honours employers who best promote practices towards employment, independence and service to persons with disabilities; and

Whereas Eric Turner of Turner's Handyman and Snow Removal of Kentville was the deserving recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Persons with Disabilities Employer Partnership Award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Eric Turner on receiving a Lieutenant Governor's Persons with Disabilities Employer Partnership Award and commend him on his efforts to make Nova Scotia a more accepting and inclusive place.

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 Sackville-Cobequid.

RESOLUTION NO. 102

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

Whereas Ben Duffy is a 21-year-old resident of Lower Sackville who began playing hockey at the Sackville Sports Stadium at the age of five; and

Whereas Ben has played on AAA teams throughout his development and at age 16 joined the P.E.I. Rockets in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League where he was awarded the Jean Beliveau trophy for leading the league in scoring with 110 points; and

Whereas Ben accepted a one-year contract with the Hamilton Bulldogs, a farm team of the Montreal Canadiens, in the American Hockey League;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Lower Sackville's Ben Duffy for his accomplishments in hockey and extend wishes for continued success as he furthers his career with the Hamilton Bulldogs.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou West.

RESOLUTION NO. 103

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

Whereas Karl and Rebecca Whiffen of Lyons Brook opened Uncle Leo's Brewery in Lyons Brook, in June of 2013; and

Whereas the fine ale is brewed in the traditional style of craft breweries by brewer Karl himself; and

Whereas the business opened to large crowds of people and rave reviews;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Karl and Rebecca Whiffen on the grand opening of Uncle Leo's Brewery 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 Queens-Shelburne.

RESOLUTION NO. 104

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

Whereas the Lockeport Greenwave captured the 2012-13 Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation Western Region Junior Boys basketball championship on March 6th, in New Minas, defeating Evangeline Middle School 58-51 for the banner; and

Whereas the Lockeport Greenwave also captured the NSSAF Shelburne Yarmouth Junior Boys District basketball championship on February 20th, defeating Maple Grove for the title; and

Whereas the Lockeport Greenwave Junior Boys basketball team posted a 28-10 record for the 2012-13 season;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate the Lockeport Greenwave for winning both the District and Western Region Junior Boys basketball championship for the 2012-13 season.

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 Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg.

RESOLUTION NO. 105

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

Whereas 10 Nova Scotia employers were recognized for championing persons with disabilities by being presented with the Lieutenant Governor's Persons with Disabilities Employer Partnership Awards; and

Whereas the award acknowledges and honours employers who promote best practices towards the employment, independence, and service to persons with disabilities; and

Whereas Carol Church, of Church's Valufoods in Marion Bridge, was the deserving recipient of a Lieutenant Governor's Persons with Disabilities Employer Partnership Award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Carol Church on receiving a Lieutenant Governor's Persons with Disabilities Employer Partnership Award and commend her on her effort to make Nova Scotia a more accepting and inclusive place.

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 Chester-St. Margaret's.

RESOLUTION NO. 106

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

Whereas the Farmers Market in Hubbards, Nova Scotia was established in 1996 and provides a venue for local producers and entrepreneurs; and

Whereas this market also showcases local musicians and offers free space to groups throughout the community; and

Whereas thanks to its employees this year, the Farmers Market will be in its 18th year of providing a strong and vibrant venue for the community of Hubbards to showcase their products and talents;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate the Hubbards Farmers Market on continued success and for its strong and meaningful place in our community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 107

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

Whereas the Order of Nova Scotia is the highest honour of the Province of Nova Scotia that recognizes outstanding contributions or achievements by members of our community; and

Whereas Raylene Rankin was an acclaimed and award-winning singer and song writer, and one of our province's favourite daughters, who had a unique gift for telling her stories through song; and

Whereas Raylene was a true ambassador for Nova Scotia and for Gaelic language and culture, who will be lovingly remembered by her family, friends, her hometown community of Mabou, and her province;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Raylene's accomplishment on receiving the Order of Nova Scotia and share a hope that her family will find comfort in knowing that Raylene's story will be remembered and honoured for generations 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 Sydney-Whitney Pier.

RESOLUTION NO. 108

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

Whereas the Emile Theriault Library and Information Technology Award recognizes the efforts of a library support staff member who has made a major contribution to their library community; and

Whereas Bev McGee's commitment and dedication to her work is a testament to the role she plays at the McConnell Library in Sydney; and

Whereas Bev McGee was awarded the prestigious Emile Theriault Library and Information Technology Award;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Bev McGee on receiving the Emile Theriault Library and Information Technology Award, and wish her continued success in her 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 Northside-Westmount.

RESOLUTION NO. 109

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

Whereas Clyde MacLellan, Assistant Auditor General of Canada, has been named a 2013 Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario; and

Whereas this is the highest designation that the institute confers in recognition of outstanding career achievement and leadership contribution to the community and the profession, with less than 2.8 per cent of Ontario's 36,000 CPAs ever receiving this award; and

Whereas Clyde grew up and received his early education in Sydney Mines and now lives with his wife Marian in Ottawa;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Clyde on this exceptional award and an exemplary career.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

RESOLUTION NO. 110

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

Whereas Adam Langille graduated from Sackville High School in June 2013 and currently attends Acadia University; and

Whereas Adam created a composition titled *Part 1: Indecision* as part of his Grade 12 music class requirement; and

Whereas a group of approximately 50 musicians, including professional wind quintet Fifth Wind Ensemble, performed Adam's composition at a free concert held at the Knox United Church on June 5, 2013;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Adam Langille of Lower Sackville on his accomplishment in the musical composition of *Part 1: Indecision* and on its performance by 50 musicians and offer best wishes for future success in his studies and musical career.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 111

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

Whereas the Summerville and District Volunteer Fire Department was established in 1963, following a structure fire in the village; and

Whereas from fighting fires with only a portable pump and a few lengths of hose 50 years ago, the department is now a fully functioning department with approximately 30 volunteers who respond to nearly 100 calls per year; and

Whereas Fire Chief Chris Spencer and many other long-time members celebrated the Summerville and District Volunteer Fire Department's 50 Year Anniversary on June 8, 2013;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate all the members of the Summerville and District Fire Department and thank them for their commitment and dedication to fighting fires in Summerville and surrounding areas.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River.

RESOLUTION NO. 112

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

Whereas Boxing Nova Scotia is legalized and controlled by the Boxing Authority Act which controls the various amateur boxing clubs around the province; and

Whereas the Truro Amateur Boxing Club flourished for a number of years before closing in 2012; and

Whereas Anthony Lynds with fellow coaches Wyman Mingo and Peter Allen, heading a five-person board, established the Hubtown Amateur Boxing Club which opened in September 2013;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulates Anthony Lynds, Wyman Mingo and Peter Allen on the founding of the Hubtown Amateur Boxing Club and wishes them many years of success as they offer a safe and healthy outlet for physical and mental exercise through the sport of boxing.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

RESOLUTION NO. 113

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

Whereas local Pictou County historians Clyde MacDonald and Philip MacKenzie have created a new project to help preserve the history of the Town of New Glasgow; and

Whereas they have accumulated numerous photos of buildings, businesses, and other locations in New Glasgow from the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s which are still relevant to present locations within the town; and

Whereas Clyde MacDonald and Philip MacKenzie began their project by presenting a picture of the first federal post office built in Nova Scotia, a building that continues to exist today - it is the Town of New Glasgow's administrative office;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Clyde MacDonald and Philip MacKenzie for taking such a great interest in locating and preparing these photos and offering them free of charge as part of their effort to preserve the history of the Town of New Glasgow.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

RESOLUTION NO. 114

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

Whereas Valerie Jollimore of VJ's Vegetable Stand at the Liverpool Farmers' Market has been selling vegetables in Queens County for over 30 years; and

Whereas Valerie Jollimore has been instrumental in making the Liverpool Farmers' Market a success by being a dedicated vendor and a mainstay at the market; and

Whereas in October 2013, Valerie Jollimore of VJ's Vegetable Stand was awarded the Business Achievement Certificate by the Region of Queens;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize Valerie Jollimore of VJ's Vegetable Stand for her contribution to the success of the Liverpool Farmers' Market and for her dedication to providing this valuable service to the residents of her community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's.

RESOLUTION NO. 115

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

Whereas the Chester Garden Club is a not-for-profit organization whose goal is to not only stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening, but to aid in the beautification of Chester through horticulture; and

Whereas the Chester Garden Club was founded in 1939 by a small group of women who wanted to make Chester a more beautiful area, with their first project being a garden on the parade grounds around the Chester War Memorial, which was erected in 1922; and

Whereas the Chester Garden Club is responsible for maintaining two public green spaces in the Village of Chester, the original garden at the parade square, and also the Cove Garden which was formerly the village dump;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate the Chester Garden Club on their upcoming 75th Anniversary and their hard work in making Chester a more beautiful village.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River.

RESOLUTION NO. 116

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

Whereas Truro resident Brian Ross, age 75, played varsity basketball for Saint Mary's University beginning in 1955 for four years, during which he was the team's leading scorer; and

Whereas Brian was also a top defender for the Saint Mary's team and a catalyst for motivating his teammates; and

Whereas on October 5, 2013, Brian Ross was inducted into the Saint Mary's University Sports Hall of Fame;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Brian Ross for his induction into the Saint Mary's University Sports Hall of Fame and for his outstanding basketball career.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Question Period will begin at 12:01 p.m. and end at 1:01 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: NSP - GOV'T. ACTION

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. While in Opposition, the Liberals said they were vehemently opposed to power rate increases. In fact, last May the Liberal member for Richmond, now the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, criticized the NDP Government and said that this government is the only entity that has the power to take action and stand up to Nova Scotia Power. My question to the Premier is, does he still agree that the government has the ultimate power to take action and stand up to Nova Scotia Power when it comes to rate increases?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is yes. It's why the Minister of Energy and the Department of Energy were at the rate hearing defending ratepayers; it's why Nova Scotians can now say they have a better deal under the Maritime Link Act; and it's why Nova Scotia ratepayers are being protected by this government.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I don't know how the Premier can say they have a better deal on the Maritime Link when they still don't know the price that that electricity will attract when it gets to our homes, any more than the NDP did when they supported it. What we do know is that Nova Scotians face a 3 per cent increase in their power bills starting this January.

While he was in Opposition, before the election, the Premier said it's a sad day in our province when our Premier won't stand up for Nova Scotians. He went on to ask the Premier of that time: Will you stand up for Nova Scotians and say no to another power rate increase? My question is the same question for the new Premier, will he stand up for Nova Scotians and say no to the 3 per cent increase scheduled for January?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, that's why the Minister of Energy was at the rate hearing, to stand up for Nova Scotia ratepayers to ensure there would not be further rate increases. Part of the question was asked today how much the energy would be. Yesterday imported energy was \$53 a megawatt; energy that was produced in this province was \$49 a megawatt. If the Maritime Link had been in production yesterday, under the new deal negotiated by the Minister of Energy, we would have had energy costs at \$42 - that's \$7 cheaper than energy produced in this province and \$11 cheaper than those being imported. That's a good deal for Nova Scotia ratepayers.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, having lesser cost than the bad deal the NDP signed but still more than we paid today is not a good deal for Nova Scotians. That's what the Premier is missing in his previous answer. When he was in Opposition, the Premier said to do something that will mean something to Nova Scotians today, not two years from now. The reality is that Nova Scotians can't pay their power bills today; they're going to food banks today.

Those were the words of the Premier when he was in Opposition. Now that he's in government and agrees that the government has the ultimate power to save Nova Scotians from the upcoming 3 per cent increase, which is real and before them in a month and a half time, my question to the Premier is, will he honour his own words from just a few short months ago and say no to the 3 per cent power increase coming up this January?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, that's why we were down at the URB protecting Nova Scotia ratepayers. I want to again remind the Leader of the Official Opposition that if the Maritime Link was in production today under the deal negotiated by the Minister of Energy, it would be \$42 per megawatt energy. That is cheaper, and in anyone's mind, in any world, that means Nova Scotians would be paying less for their energy today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Acting Leader of the New Democratic Party.

PREM.: EFFICIENCY N.S. - GOV'T. STANCE

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Premier. Repeatedly in Opposition and throughout the election, the Premier and the Energy Minister railed against funding for Efficiency Nova Scotia. They told Nova Scotians that the simple answer was to make Nova Scotia Power pay for Efficiency Nova Scotia through their profits.

But now that they are actually in a position to act, the new minister is changing his tune: it isn't as easy as just shifting the fee, and to act on this commitment apparently would "create all kinds of chaos." Can the Premier please explain the reason for the flip-flop?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear to the Acting Leader of the New Democratic Party and all Nova Scotians: the efficiency tax will be removed from power bills in the Province of Nova Scotia.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the minister and the Premier have had ample opportunity during their time in Opposition to think through their efficiency scheme, to consult, and to bring forward their plan, but apparently they didn't use their time to do that. The minister now says there would be "unintended consequence" if they were to act on a commitment that they made throughout the election, and prior to that.

I want to ask the Premier if he could explain what these unintended consequences are, and why he didn't foresee them earlier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear to the Acting Leader of the New Democratic Party, and indeed, to every member of this House and all Nova Scotians: the efficiency tax that was put on by the NDP in Nova Scotia will be removed from power bills in Nova Scotia.

MS. MACDONALD: Well, Mr. Speaker, as you well know, Efficiency Nova Scotia has saved Nova Scotian families and businesses millions of dollars in energy costs. It's a national leader in energy conservation because of its independent structure, which allows it to operate beyond the reach of Nova Scotia Power.

I want to ask the Premier if he will assure Nova Scotians that their ability to save money through Efficiency Nova Scotia programs will not be harmed by whatever scheme the government and the minister dream up this time.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the difference between this government and the previous government wasn't about whether or not the efficiency programs worked - it was about who paid. The NDP Government believed that low-income Nova Scotians should pay that tax. This government believes that the utility should be paying that bill.

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

PREM. - NSP: GUARANTEED RATE - PROMISE HONOUR

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, the Liberals promised that they would be the ones to stand up to Nova Scotia Power, including their guaranteed rate of return, but that was before the election. On October 31st, just 23 days after taking office, both the Premier and his Minister of Energy said, oh, no, that's not our plan. They flip-flopped. Now they say they only intend to review the rate of return and we all know how that will end. My question to the Premier is, does he plan to honour his own promise to reduce the guaranteed rate of return or not?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate again the Minister of Energy for the tremendous work he did by saving Nova Scotia ratepayers more money. I can't, for the life of me, understand why the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party is opposed to Nova Scotians paying less for power in this province.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, what I am opposed to is a Party that says one thing before the election and the opposite after the election. We already had a bad experience on that once and Nova Scotians don't want to have it happen to them again.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier in his scrum with reporters - and I have the transcript and I'll table it - said that if you actually read the platform it says we're going to review the rate of return for Nova Scotia Power, and I'll table that for the benefit of the House. But that's not what the platform actually says. The Liberal Party platform says, and I quote directly, "We have urged the Utility and Review Board to refuse Nova Scotia Power's return on investment of more than 9% annually and reduce the rate of return."

Mr. Speaker, it's time to tell Nova Scotia Power to look inward for their own savings, and I'll table that as well. The word "review" does not appear in the Liberal promise; the word "reduce" does.

My question for the Premier is, which is it, Premier, reduce or simply review?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate all members of the Liberal caucus who stood up to protect Nova Scotia ratepayers. I want to congratulate the members of the Liberal caucus who stood up to ensure that Nova Scotia ratepayers were being protected against a monopoly and you're right, we believe that utilities should look inward to find savings, instead of going to the Utility and Review Board looking for more rate increases. That's why I'm so proud of the Minister of Energy, sending his department down to ensure that we rework the Maritime Link Act to ensure that we're paying less for energy in this province.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, if they were serious about standing up for Nova Scotia ratepayers, there would not be a further 3 per cent increase coming in January, they would do what they said they would do before the election and deny it.

If they were serious about standing up for Nova Scotia ratepayers, they would do what they said they would do in Opposition, and find out the cost in our homes of the Maritime Link power before they signed on the dotted line like they are doing today, Mr. Speaker. Instead, they flip-flopped on the Maritime Link. Now they're flip-flopping on an energy price increase that we're all about to pay in January.

My question to the Premier is, why flip-flop now, Premier? Is it just because you got elected?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what this government is doing is exactly what it said it would do in Opposition and that is stand up for ratepayers. Under the negotiations led by the Minister of Energy, Nova Scotians have a better deal now when it comes to the Maritime Link, and under the leadership of the Minister of Energy, Nova Scotian ratepayers will be paying less for electricity in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

ENERGY: EFFICIENCY N.S. - FEE REMOVAL

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Energy. The new government has promised to remove the charge for Efficiency Nova Scotia from Nova Scotia Power bills. They promised it in their platform, they continuously called on the former government to enact legislation in removing the charge from the power bills. An article in The ChronicleHerald this morning shows the minister now realizes that it isn't as easy as just shifting the fee. This is just another example of this government making promises on the campaign trail, with no plan for delivery.

My question to the minister is, what is the minister's plan to remove the Efficiency Nova Scotia fee?

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, thanks to the honourable member for the question. Let me be very clear, we committed that we will remove the tax that was conceived by the Tories and added by the NDP. That will reduce power rates in Nova Scotia by taking a tax that these two Parties believe should still be on there, off the bills. That tax will come off and it will come off permanently.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: On May 2, 2012, as Leader of the Official Opposition, he asks the former Premier "... will he at least guarantee Nova Scotians that he will freeze it and it will not continue to rise?" In light of the proposed hike in the Efficiency Nova Scotia charge, one would expect the new government to honour the Premier's words, so my question is, will the minister freeze the Efficiency Nova Scotia charge or will he eliminate it?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member may be aware that the increase that Efficiency Nova Scotia has sought, which we have already come out against and are opposing at the board currently, is the result of the way that the previous Tory Government and the NDP structured the corporation which resulted in a tax liability, that had they actually done their homework and made sure there were no unintended consequences of their decision, ratepayers would now not be forced to swallow.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are at the board at the moment, we are interveners in that hearing to ensure that that charge is not passed on. The member is well aware that I oppose any increase in the efficiency charge being passed on to ratepayers, just as I oppose to it being on the bills. I'm sorry that the Tories and the NDP still feel that Nova Scotians should have a tax on their electricity bills.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that the government has not been upfront with Nova Scotians on how or when they will remove what they refer to as the efficiency tax. The Liberal platform says it will happen in the first year; The ChronicleHerald reports the Minister of Energy indicates it will be in 2015.

In November 2012, the Premier said that if they want to do something for Nova Scotian ratepayers now, remove that efficiency tax and send it to Nova Scotia Power to fill; that would be meaningful. Why, Mr. Speaker, is this Liberal Government no longer in a hurry - where is the plan?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I think the honourable member should talk to the Leader of his Party who has been defending keeping the tax on bills, but nonetheless I have been very, very clear that the legislation would be introduced within the first year of our mandate - it will be - and the tax will come off bills no later than January 1, 2015, which was our platform commitment, which will make sure that Nova Scotians do not pay that tax. That legislation will be here within the first year of our mandate, as the platform stated.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Acting Leader of the New Democratic Party.

PREM.: NDP GOV'T. SPENDING ANNOUNCEMENTS - HONOUR

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier.

On August 28th of this year, while participating in the Halifax Chamber of Commerce Straight Talk Panel discussion, the Premier, then Leader of the Official Opposition, was asked if he would honour the then government's spending announcements if he won the election? The member for Annapolis answered, "Of course we would." But in an interview with 95.7 just days later the Premier said he would only honour capital commitments.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier, which answer should Nova Scotians believe?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question. We have made a commitment that we would honour capital expenditure commitments by the previous government. We've seen, quite frankly, what happens to communities when a government comes in and tears away capital commitments that have been made. When the previous NDP Government closed the jail in Springhill and moved it to Pictou County, we saw the devastation to that community. It's inappropriate for a government to come in and cancel those capital programs, but obviously when any new government comes in they set their own agenda in terms of what's going to be program spending.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, during the chamber panel the Premier also said that commitments made by previous governments have been counted on by communities, businesses and families, so I want to ask the Premier if he would expand a bit on what he believes constitutes a commitment that communities, businesses and families count on.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the question is that the member is looking for. There has obviously been a capital plan put out by the previous government,

there were capital commitments made to communities. I'm not sure what else she's looking for. She should be very intimate with the plan. She was part of the government that actually tabled the capital plan in the Legislature.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, in early September of this year, the NDP Government made a commitment to long-term care in Nova Scotia which included 350 new long-term care beds, 750 replacement beds and plans to allow 3,000 more people to access home care. My question to the Premier is, would he tell us if he plans to honour the commitments to seniors and families and communities for the long-term care, new and replacement beds?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I don't know how much more clear I could be. If a commitment has been made to the community, it has been put before this Legislature, we're prepared to meet that commitment.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

PREM.: MAR. LINK - ENERGY COSTS

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, in Opposition, the now Premier and the Minister of Energy criticized the former government for having too many unanswered questions regarding the Maritime Link and how much it will impact Nova Scotians' power bills. My question is, how much will the energy cost? How much will it impact rates?

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, we are pleased that we are able to actually say what it would cost if this project was in place yesterday, as a perfect example, because, of course, we get the numbers a day after.

Yesterday the average cost of production in Nova Scotia was \$49 per megawatt hour. Imports were \$53 a megawatt hour. If this link had been - and we can only bring in 5 per cent of our energy - if this had been in place yesterday, we would have been able to import the energy at \$42 a megawatt hour. That is a saving for ratepayers and I'm pleased to be able to finally, after years of talking to this project, to be able to answer that question for Nova Scotians.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, as much as it's nice to know what the power would have been today, what is it going to mean when Maritime Link is in place, Muskrat Falls is connected, and what are they going to be paying at that time?

In Opposition the Premier said, "Make no mistake, the Maritime Link will increase rates for Nova Scotians and their families." I will table that. One day after the election the Premier said his Liberal Government will not support the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project in Labrador unless the price of power is cheaper for customers in Nova Scotia and I

will table that one as well. Now the Premier is on the other side. Can he tell us whether the Premier was right? Will the Muskrat Falls project increase power rates when it comes on-line?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what is confusing for the honourable member. We know exactly what the cost would have been had it been in operation yesterday. Let me give you some other examples. The average cost of thermal energy was \$75 a megawatt hour. So if the member has a crystal ball and can tell me what coal prices and natural gas prices will be in 20 years, that's great and we'll get him the comparison.

What we can say with absolute certainty now is it is cheaper than the alternate options. We can say with absolute certainty that it is now, with the current deal we have, cheaper than the alternate options and we can now provide the price comparison that the previous government was unable to provide because their deal didn't allow for it.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the current minister is like the old minister. Can't quite tell us what it is, relies on information of yesterday. In Opposition, the Premier said the former government was blindly championing a multi-billion dollar Maritime Link project when they can't even tell Nova Scotians what it will mean to their power bills. And still, we can't really tell. You are giving me a price of what it's going to be but what does it really mean to Nova Scotians on their power bill? You know, you're really not there.

The Liberal caucus put out a news release in May 2013 and quoted the current Energy Minister in saying that what is becoming increasingly frustrating to Nova Scotians is that neither Emera nor the Premier will tell Nova Scotians what the cost of power will be when it comes on-line. Mr. Speaker, what will the cost be when it comes on-line?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what is complicated for the honourable member. The reality is that in the previous government's deal they had no guarantee to surplus energy and therefore they couldn't tell you the price. We can now tell you what the price would be if the Maritime Link was in operation today. We know that it is less expensive than the coal options; we know it's less expensive than building natural gas plants and we have all of those price comparisons now, which the previous government was unable to provide.

Mr. Speaker, we also know that it is cheaper than the deferred costs that the Tories championed by waiting and charging people after the next election. So we now know the cost, we provided the cost and if this is inconvenient for the honourable member that we are able to actually provide the numbers, I'm sorry to be so inconvenient for him.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: NEW GLASGOW - LONG-TERM CARE BEDS

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. As we heard just a few minutes ago, the Liberal Government has committed to honouring the beds introduced early in September. Long-term care beds were announced in communities located across the province, including Pictou County, Queens County and Lunenburg County; 202 beds were allocated for Glen Haven Manor in New Glasgow, scheduled to begin in 2014.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness, can the minister please provide an update as to when people in New Glasgow can expect their long-term care beds?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for that question. Continuing care is on the minds of more and more Nova Scotians as our population ages. Our government is currently reviewing the long-term strategy that has been in place since 2006. As part of the long-term care strategy we have to look at replacement beds and the possibility of new beds in the future.

What we can tell the good people of New Glasgow is that our plan will have 11 facilities that are currently being looked at and we will have word on those very shortly.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, that is why our Leader asked the Premier about the commitment from the Premier, especially during the election. When you hear of reviews of a strategy or possibilities, then Nova Scotians get concerned. That's why we ask these questions and that's why Nova Scotians want to hear from the new government that the proposals and the plan to introduce new long-term care facilities, which are much-needed, and replacement beds, will continue to happen.

I know that we announced that 29 beds were also allocated for Hillsvie Acres in Queens County and they, too, were also scheduled to begin in 2014. I'm wondering if the minister could reassure those residents of Queens County when they could expect the construction of the long-term care beds committed to that community.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to say that these announcements that were made - and I know made just days, in fact, before the election call - but the department has gone through a very rigorous review of all our nursing homes across the province and they have identified the high needs of many of these homes. In fact, some of them are no longer meeting code in our province and they are on a replacement pattern for the next number of years.

In regard to Hillsvie in Queens County, since becoming the Minister of Health and Wellness, we have had a delegation go from the Department of Health and Wellness to indicate to them to start their planning process and get this particular project underway, since it is long overdue.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer. I'm a little more encouraged but still leery, because I'm aware of the review that the department did. There is a current list of facilities across the province that are aged, that need replacement, and new demands in communities that have a void of new long-term care facilities. So finally, 61 beds were promised to the Mahone Nursing Home in Mahone Bay and scheduled also to begin in 2014.

I would ask the minister if he could provide an update to the people of Lunenburg County on when can they expect their long-term care beds to be prepared and start to see the construction of those facilities.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. As a result of the five-part series that The ChronicleHerald did on long-term care, this has become a topic that's on the minds of many Nova Scotians, and one that will be a pressure on our government. We are taking the top 10 or 11 most-needed facilities in the province and moving as quickly as possible to have them move through land procurement, through planning, and into the first phase of construction as quickly as possible. We're going to move those en bloc.

I also would like to convey to the member opposite that our plan will emphasize an enhanced home care program. We want to be able to support and help as many Nova Scotians stay in their home as long as possible, and to do it safely at a high quality of care.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg.

ERDT: NSP RATE INCREASE - STOP

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. Cape Breton has suffered under the economic hardships imposed by the NDP. Power rates have increased by over 28 per cent since October 2009, and I'll table a document from Statistics Canada. Another 3 per cent increase is to go forward again this January, pushing more and more people out of our communities and our local companies out of business.

My question to the minister is, will the minister give the people of Cape Breton some comfort and commitment to standing up for them against Nova Scotia Power and stop this rate increase?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Obviously, as a member from Cape Breton, I'm very concerned about the unemployment rate which exists and the challenges that are faced not only by individuals but by the business community. I look forward to working with the member and his colleagues from Cape Breton as we identify opportunities both in growing the economy and helping develop our tourism sector.

I'm pleased to report to the honourable member that I've already had the opportunity to meet with the mayor of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, along with several other municipal leaders in Cape Breton. Together, I'm sure that we are going to be able to address many of the challenges facing Cape Breton and facing all of Nova Scotia.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the minister has already identified one issue, and that is the rising cost of power for businesses in our communities. Since October 2009, the population in Cape Breton has decreased by 4,700 people, and I will table that document as well. Full-time employment is stagnant. Nearly 5,000 people are leaving our island for better earning capacity, lower taxes, lower power rates, and I know we are all worried that this cycle may continue.

My question for the minister is what steps has the minister's government taken to ensure that power rates for people and businesses are brought back to affordable rates?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I announced today as part of the legislation that was tabled as well that we will be undertaking a third-party review of looking at the tools that we have at our disposal for economic development both through our department, through Innovacorp, through Nova Scotia Business Incorporated, to be able to identify exactly how it is we can help attract business to Cape Breton and throughout the province; how can we work with our existing entrepreneurs that we have in Cape Breton; how can we continue to build, for example, on the Credit Union Small Business Financing Program, which is at capacity and has been a tremendous success story and for which our government has committed to increasing the guarantee from 75 per cent to 90 per cent. Those are some of the initiatives that we're working on and we're always open to new ideas of how we can grow the economy not only of Cape Breton but all of Nova Scotia.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, Cape Breton has an unemployment rate of 12.5 per cent, and I'll table the document regarding that. That is 2 per cent higher than the North Shore, 3 per cent higher than the South Shore, 4.2 per cent higher than in Annapolis, and 6.1 per cent higher than Halifax. With more people looking for work and businesses pointing to energy as a major cost, this rate increase in January will certainly have a negative impact on business in Cape Breton and across Nova Scotia. Will the minister commit to working for the people of Cape Breton when it comes to stopping this energy increase by Nova Scotia Power?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, obviously we are committed to working with all the residents of Cape Breton and businesses throughout not only Cape Breton Island but throughout Nova Scotia. As I have indicated I have already met with some of our municipal partners and we will certainly be meeting with our federal colleagues as well so that we are able to establish a good working relationship moving forward.

The unemployment rate is way too high but I can tell you as well, there is a sense of optimism around the business community and around Cape Breton. I know that a recent

event that was held in our nation's capital to promote Cape Breton was very well received and hopefully is going to bring tremendous results. What I can say is I can't tell you how proud I am to serve under a Premier who has roots in Cape Breton, understands Cape Breton, is going to ensure that this government is going to do everything possible to move the economy of Cape Breton forward.

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

ENERGY - MAR. LINK: STANCE - CHANGE EXPLAIN

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Minister of Energy. You know many Nova Scotians woke up Saturday morning to a stunning headline that said, "Nova Scotia energy minister welcomes approval of revised Maritime Link deal." How could that be? Isn't this the same fellow who just two weeks before told the Globe and Mail about the Maritime Link agreement, and I will table it when I finish this, "The document as submitted does not go far enough in terms of protecting ratepayers. It's as simple as that." I'll table both the documents.

My question to the minister is, what new information did you receive that made you see the error of your ways?

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: What I learned upon becoming the Minister of Energy is that the previous government had no interest in getting improvements to protect ratepayers in the Maritime Link deal and yet in eight weeks, in appearing at the board, and in discussions with our federal partners, we were able to get changes. Mr. Speaker, what changed is all eight conditions were met, and for the benefit of the House since the member obviously hasn't looked at it, I will table the opinion put together by legal staff and others showing where, in the board's decision, each one of the conditions were actually met in full or exceeded.

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I know the minister would dearly love to rewrite history but the reality is that he has been against the Maritime Link and has been on record. What I want to do is remind him on September he sent out a press release accusing the government of the day of forcing a misguided and expensive deal on the ratepayers in Nova Scotia.

I'll table that original press release, but for some reason we couldn't find it on the Liberal Party's Web site because it had been removed. Fortunately we did a little research and we found the Energy Minister's remarks on a little Web site called www.reelectkeith.ca. I'll table that also.

Mr. Speaker, my question is, did the cost of Maritime Link change since September? If so, by how much?

MR. YOUNGER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, in fact it did change and if he had been listening to the answers to the previous questions, he would actually know that, that we now have the guarantees and can actually say what it costs.

Mr. Speaker, the only person rewriting history is the NDP because they are upset that we were able to actually do the things that we said they should do when they were government. Let me quote from the Canadian Press article on July 24, 2013 - two quotes from that. One: "One thing the Liberals and NDP actually agree on is that the government needs to get electricity from Lower Churchill to meet its energy quota." Then we said, "Both opposition parties . . ." - that's these guys and us - ". . . are careful to state they're not necessarily opposed to the Lower Churchill project, only to the NDP's handling of it." I'll table that.

Mr. Speaker, that was before the election and we can now say what the energy price would have been. We now have the ability to protect ratepayers. The board now has the authority, with the bill we introduced today, to have oversight on it. Every single word of testimony that was before that board hearing now forms part of the Energy Access Agreement and that was not part of the deal championed by the NDP when they were government. (Applause)

MR. CORBETT: You know, Mr. Speaker, this guy lives in the world of, it's true because I said so. He was against it. He knows he was against it. His Leader was trumpeting Hydro-Québec wherever he could. But of course you know the Liberal Government did submit these eight foibles but, to the credit of the URB, they tossed them out the door, so I don't know why this guy keeps going back to say we've got the eight commitments. He sounds like Neville Chamberlain, peace in our time. He's wrong, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to ask, did he actually read the report or has he just taken somebody else's word for it?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, one of the things we learned very quickly upon becoming government was that the people who actually didn't read the reports were the previous ministers; the ones who didn't read the advice were the previous ministers and we're learning that very quickly.

Mr. Speaker, the previous government took a road show around the province, championing the previous deal. They said to the board in July that it should be approved without conditions. Yes, I did read the board's ruling and I have also tabled the analysis by the legal staff that shows that they are all met, so not only do I think that the legal staff have met that and they have made themselves available to any member of the Opposition to also explain it. Unfortunately that member has chosen not to avail himself of that because he doesn't want the truth.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank.

TIR: HWY. NO. 102/HWY. NO. 118 - SAFETY ISSUES

MR. BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for our Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Residents of Fall River, Waverley, Windsor Junction (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank has the floor.

MR. HORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll repeat. The residents of Fall River, Waverley, Windsor Junction, as well as additional traffic from Bedford, Sackville and Beaver Bank, are very concerned about the potential for accidents, accidents that occur on both Highway No. 102 and Highway No. 118 due to safety issues and the high speed. Highway No. 102 at Fall River Exit 5 in the a.m. and Highway No. 118 in the p.m. at Exit 14 to Fall River - both have blocked traffic lining up and stopped on the 100-Series Highway, and thus the potential to result in major accidents.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal what will be done to eliminate these safety issues?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the honourable member for the question. You know, this member has brought this to our attention at TIR several times in the first month and a half of government. It is a very important question. I know that he has heard it many times during the election and since from his constituents and he has worked closely with the councillor for the area to make sure it's addressed.

A couple of things that we did, and it is a safety concern I think that all members, when you come, where Highway No. 118 and Highway No. 102 converge in particular, is a very important area for traffic. I think it's 30,000 vehicles per day which is a large number. We've done a couple of things. First of all, one of the big pressure relievers that we've put into place, which was indicated in our Throne Speech, is Highway No. 107 Burnside connector. That's going to affect traffic all in the metro area, particularly during the drive times. We're also looking at some of the changes and improvements we can make at the Fall River exit. As well, we're looking at another (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable minister has the floor.

MR. MACLELLAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're also looking at a number of areas where we can look at connectors to relieve the traffic. Despite what the Third Party wants to rant and rave about here, this is an important question and I think that the people in the member's area deserve to know.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, it is a very important question. We're going to work with the member and work with the department as best we can to help in that area because it is important and unlike the previous government, we're going to listen to all our caucus members and we're going to get things done for Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

ERDT - NSP: RATE INCREASE - STOP

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. Full-time jobs in Nova Scotia have been disappearing over the last four years in Nova Scotia. We have lost 11,300 full-time jobs. Please allow me to table this document. People who need jobs won't stop needing jobs while the Liberal Government drags its feet. Nova Scotia Power is set to increase power bills by another 3 per cent this January. We have seen power rates impact job creation before and now they're climbing again.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is will the minister stand up for the job creators by saying no to the 3 per cent power rate increase?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, we are certainly cognizant of the challenges that are being faced throughout Nova Scotia which is why today in tabling legislation we did announce there would be a third-party review of the economic development tools that we use here in Nova Scotia to ensure that they are the best tools possible to work with our small business, with our larger enterprises, in order to help foster economic growth in this province.

One of the success stories that we have had, Mr. Speaker, has certainly been through the Credit Union Small Business Loan Program which, as I mentioned, is currently oversubscribed, which is a wonderful thing and as well, which our government through our Premier has committed to extending the guarantee from 75 per cent to 90 per cent which is, once again, hopefully going to help more and more small businesses in Nova Scotia grow.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's response. However, 53 per cent of respondents in the CFIB Business Barometer point to fuel and energy as a major cost constraint. Once again, I'll document and table document number two. These cost constraints are still their major concerns and are not waiting. They need real attention right now. Our small business owners cannot afford to hire more people due to the rising costs of energy.

My question is, when will the minister address the issue of power costs and stand up for small and medium-size businesses here in Nova Scotia?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, our government certainly recognizes some of the challenges that are being faced by the business community which is why we're pleased that our platform did commit to having a review of the tax structure that we have in our province, something which has not been done for many years. As well, we have the Minister of Energy who has already tabled legislation on the issue of power supply and making options available to Nova Scotians and to Nova Scotia businesses to hopefully allow them to get the most competitive rates possible and to make them more competitive.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, our government is prepared to work with the honourable member and all members of this House in identifying economic opportunities because it's in all of our interests in this Legislature to see the economy of our province grow.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, energy prices have increased by 28.5 per cent, from October 2009 to October 2013. May I table this document number three. These energy prices are still 30 per cent higher than four years ago. This problem is not waiting. The upcoming increase in January will add to that even more. Unfortunately, it's something that business owners have come to expect from their government.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, what does the minister have to say to the people who will lose their jobs due to the unaffordable energy prices, come this new year?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, it's in all of our interests to make sure that Nova Scotia has the most competitive environment when it comes to fostering economic growth in this province but when the member asked what are we doing, one of the things I can advise is that we heard loud and clear over the last four years as to the devastation that had taken place in the economy of southwestern Nova Scotia based on the decision made by the previous government.

I'm pleased to say that within mere weeks of being in government that our government was able to sign an agreement which will see the Yarmouth ferry restored for citizens of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

ENERGY: RATE INCREASE PETITION - MIN. SIGNATORY

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, in May 2012 an on-line petition created by Mr. Archie Stewart of Port Hawkesbury called for the House of Assembly to use its power to deny any general rate increase in 2013, 2014 and 2015. While in Opposition the Deputy Premier indicated that every member of the Liberal caucus had affixed their signature to that petition and I'll table that.

My question is for the Minister of Energy. Does the minister recall signing this petition?

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I not only signed it, I went to the board to champion it and I fought against that rate increase down there.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I was assured that the minister would recall signing the petition.

While in Opposition, referring to climbing power rates, the Minister of Energy said, "It is not fair to Nova Scotians for the Premier and other members of his caucus to have stood in Opposition and complained about the exact things that they will now not take action on." I'll table that.

This government has given Nova Scotians no reason to think that they will oppose the upcoming power rate hike. Will the minister honour his words and stand up for Nova Scotians and say "no" to the 3 per cent power rate hike?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, I do understand that the honourable member is new so he may not understand that the decision of the board for 2014 was made some months ago; we challenged that decision. For a government to actually overrule after the fact - which is not what we suggested should be done. We asked the previous government to ensure that it didn't happen before the decision was made by the board.

It is countries like Venezuela and Belize that take independent decisions of boards and then overrule them, which would create significant upheaval in the economy of Nova Scotia. So, Mr. Speaker, if the honourable member would like this government to act like Venezuela or so forth, we know where they want to go. If the member truly wants to see rate relief for the people of Nova Scotia, then maybe he should convince the Leader of his Party that keeping a tax on electricity bills is actually the wrong thing to do.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for acknowledging that I'm new and that there are limitations to things I might understand, but one thing I do understand is when somebody says one thing and does another. The bottom line is that the Liberals promised to stand up for Nova Scotians against the power company, and they've been quiet.

These problems didn't wait when we were out on the election trail. Nova Scotians can't afford another rate increase. Will the minister explain what he plans to do about the upcoming 3 per cent power rate increase in January?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, if the honourable member thinks that we have said nothing to Emera and Nova Scotia Power, whether publicly or otherwise, I'm going to buy him a subscription to the newspaper, The ChronicleHerald. It's almost laughable. The reality is that never once in Opposition did I say that the government should overrule a decision of the board after the decision had been made. I said the previous government should be down there and stop decisions of the board before they were made, absolutely.

This was a decision that was made and if the honourable member - and honestly, the Leader of the Official Opposition should know better, since he champions himself as a chartered accountant, but we go with what we have.

The reality is that he and that member should know that there would be a worse impact to the economy and to the economic markets by retroactively overruling the decision of an independent board at this late date. The member knows that, and to say anything else is not only disingenuous, but he knows that they put at risk all the things they've just asked about earlier about economic development.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's.

COM. SERV.: THRONE SPEECH - PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for the Disabled Persons Commission Act. In late August, as minister, I announced that persons with disabilities, seniors, and people with mental health issues will be able to choose the kinds of services and supports they need to live with greater independence in their communities. I will table that release explaining the three immediate actions that were to be taken this Fall in continuing care and services for persons with disabilities.

In the Throne Speech last week, the government's strategic priorities made very little mention of people with disabilities. Can the minister explain this serious oversight?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, it's kind of hard to explain something that really doesn't exist. I'm very pleased to say that the Department of Community Services and the Disabled Persons Commission are very much going forward with the road-map document that was done over the summer and released in August 2013. I've met with the committee, I've given them my commitment, and I'm very pleased that there will be flexibility and choice for persons with disabilities in where they are housed in the coming years in Nova Scotia.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, how surprising to say that it doesn't exist when community and advocates and persons with disabilities came together over a two-year period with professionals like Michael Bach to develop that strategy. To say it doesn't exist, that's a problem.

During the election campaign this Liberal Government promised to cut 1 per cent from the department budgets. The question is, is my discussion with parents of children living with disabilities, and the disabled community as a whole - how is she explaining increasing services while at the same time making a 1 per cent cut? Just another Liberal flip-flop.

MS. BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct the former Minister of Community Services in saying that the oversight was actually in that it wasn't an oversight, thank you. The second thing is the 1 per cent will be in inefficiencies within the department and absolutely not affect program delivery or front-line services. We are committed to making sure that programs are delivered to the vulnerable Nova Scotians that need them, that are through this department.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us just how committed she is to the road map, and in what direction, and when will we see more information coming forth to people with disabilities?

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

The honourable House Leader for the New Democratic Party.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Today in Question Period we saw something that hasn't been done in this House in my almost 16 years here, and that was a question asked by a government backbencher. It has been the tradition of this House, it's my understanding, that Question Period would be by the Opposition Parties and by independent members. That has been my recollection.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to make a ruling on this. We did have a conversation with the Government House Leader and I voiced my opposition to this. I would appreciate that we would carry on with the usual practice of this House: that questions during Question Period come from members of the Opposition and any independent members there happen to be. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I too want to stand on this point of order. Something that the Premier had said was that we all want to work together in making this House a better place. We had this discussion with the Government House Leader, both of us had said, why don't we let the Committee on Assembly Matters look at this one more specifically and look at it as a whole issue when it comes to all the practices of this House.

When it comes to this question, it has not been the tradition of this House for government members to ask ministers questions - not that there wasn't a good question or a bad question, it was the fact that it's not the tradition of this House. Plus, the issue is as well, I thought there was an air of co-operation, to be able to get along with this. Both of us oppose that and yet it is still here before us, Mr. Speaker, and I do ask that you make a ruling on this one as well.

MR. SPEAKER: I'll take the point of order under advisement.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, on October 8th Nova Scotians sent a clear message that they expected us to do things differently. Here in this House Nova Scotians have clearly said they were upset with the way this House was functioning and were looking upon us to bring about change to the way we do our duties here at the House.

There are going to be further reviews that will take place. Today was an example of starting to implement change. All elected members of this House have a responsibility to their constituents to represent them in the best way possible. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that having a government member ask a question on every 10th question is not unreasonable. Today we made history in this House and I would suggest to you that it was a good thing for democracy in Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: I'll take the point of order under advisement and will come back to you with a decision tomorrow. Order, please.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 7.

Bill No. 7 - Public Service Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Communications Nova Scotia.

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: I'll first move that Bill No. 7, an Act to Amend Chapter 376 of the Revised Statues, 1989, the Public Service Act, Respecting the Office of Communications Nova Scotia now be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased in October to be named the Minister of Communications Nova Scotia. As ministers it is our responsibly to make sure that the resources we have in our departments are used in the most effective way possible, in the best interest of taxpayers. In the case of Communications Nova Scotia I learned a couple of

things right away that needed to change. Communications Nova Scotia had no guiding legislation and it is currently impossible to determine how much the government as a whole spends on advertising. This isn't acceptable. Whether it's a business or a government, we need to be able to tell people how much is being spent and what it's being spent on.

The legislation I'm introducing today, along with the policies and guidelines, will address these issues. I want to be clear that at the same time as bringing forward the bill we have brought forward the draft policy and guidelines so the people can review those, as well, and provide their comment. The legislation compels departments and offices to use Communications Nova Scotia services, ensures that advertising is non-partisan, and holds ministers accountable for communication services procured outside of CNS and outside of proper procurement services. This is the first time this will be done.

Mr. Speaker, amending the Public Service Act will ensure that government communications are relevant to government policies and priorities, that they are factual, respectful, and designed to meet objectives. The legislation clearly lays out a range of services provided by the agency and states clearly that all government departments and offices must use CNS for their communications activities. We will be able to track advertising and ensure that it meets standards, to make sure that it is not partisan, and we will also be able to do things such as prohibiting hyper sexualized images in government advertising.

Mr. Speaker, in the past four years we've seen examples of advertising that should never have come from government. We've seen examples of hyper sexualized images in advertising, and we've also seen examples of advertising which crossed the line and did not promote a particular government program or service. Already some of the advertising that is running on TV that I've signed off on as Minister of Communications Nova Scotia has taken away the slogans and is focused solely on the message and the identifier that the advertising is sponsored and paid for the Government of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps of most interest to you as Speaker of the Legislature, the bill will require me or any future Minister of Communications Nova Scotia to table an annual report on the paid advertising in the House of Assembly. Transparency and accountability are priorities for this government and this legislation will hold us accountable when it comes to communications services.

Nova Scotians have already noticed, going around the province, that unlike previous administrations when they came in and changed the minister's name on signs, highway signs for example, signs on libraries, on schools, we've taken them down; we haven't replaced them with signs with the minister's name. As much as the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal might like to drive down the highway and see his name on the way into the Legislature, we've decided that that's the wrong thing to do and we haven't done that.

Mr. Speaker, this government has no intention of using communications services for political gain. The legislation clearly delineates the non-partisan role of Communications Nova Scotia; it gives the authority to CNS to turn down advertising and gives them authorities they have never had before. This is important to us, but it's also important to the staff at Communications Nova Scotia. They have not had this ability to say no before.

Communications Nova Scotia needs to be focused on communicating about government programs and services in Nova Scotia; it needs to be a facilitator. In a few moments I'll be leaving to join the Minister of Agriculture to announce an investment that Communications Nova Scotia is making in the local economy. And that's the sort of thing that Communications Nova Scotia should be doing, trying to foster investments in local businesses, in our local industry, and ensuring that people are aware of the programs and services available to them in a non-partisan way.

They need to be focused on helping Nova Scotians understand what their government is doing and why, and this legislation will allow them to do just that while improving Nova Scotians' confidence in government.

Mr. Speaker, as we move forward there will be a number of changes in terms of how Communications Nova Scotia operates. This was a very important first step because as long as having this guiding legislation was delayed, and as long as it wasn't there with the ability to do these things, it meant a delay in that accountability to the Legislature and to the people of Nova Scotia.

This is a first step. This means that Nova Scotians will know what the guidelines are, what the rules are behind advertising and communications services. This means, Mr. Speaker, that Nova Scotians will know each year how much their government has spent on advertising, using their tax dollars, and what that was spent on.

Mr. Speaker, we will be publicly accountable to this. The legislation and guidelines will always be on-line, of course, and open to comment. I've already indicated to the Opposition Parties that we welcome their input on the guidelines and policy before it is ultimately approved by Cabinet after this bill passes, and I do welcome their suggestions because this is about making it work for the people of Nova Scotia, not the Party that is in power now, not the Party that could be in power at some point in the future - this is about making it work for Nova Scotians. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for bringing this bill forward. It all sounds very good, so when we can give a bit of credit here, credit will be given - I know he's having a bit of a heart attack over there.

We have been saying that the intent of this bill is to improve government communications by ensuring non-partisan ads and more accountability to taxpayers. Mr. Speaker, we do hope that the new government will fully implement the spirit of the bill in their day-to-day operations, although we do remain a little skeptical. Hopefully time will change that, based on the past history of government flip-flops over the last bit.

You know the legislation, as it is, lacks power to compel departments and offices to use CNS for non-partisan services or projects, so maybe it needs a little more power in that respect; it also neglects to hold ministers accountable for communications services that were procured outside the proper processes of CNS; and we do hope that this new legislation will help to rein in the outrageous spending of CNS in the last 10 years.

In 2002 CNS received about \$3 million and had 89 staff listed on its payroll, according to the Finance Department. A decade later the agency's budget increased to \$9.2 million and it employed 125 people as of March 31, 2012. CNS said the increase in payroll was in relation to the increase in demands of the previous NDP Government. I hope that this will change under the new government, as there will be no further partisan demands.

I also hope that this amendment will go beyond signage; as we know, in today's world, advertising is more than just signage and partisan messages can be conveyed in many mediums and sometimes the line to what is and what is not advertising can be blurred.

Now, we just have to think back maybe a year or a year and a half ago, two years ago - how long has it been now? - back to the Ships Start Here campaign. A perfect example of taxpayer-funded political advertising, a total campaign cost of \$1.4 million, Mr. Speaker, with direct provincial government spending making up \$620,000 for it. This advertising was largely made up in Atlantic Canada and clearly used by the previous government to take credit for the win.

Minister Peter MacKay would agree in saying the following about the positive decision for the \$25 billion shipbuilding contract, "That was entirely a waste of money and had zero impact on the decision today. The decision today was based on merit. Any lobbying, advertising, arm-twisting, tub-thumping was just like pouring that money into Halifax Harbour. It made no impact on the decision."

Now, I would agree with the minister, and I know many people in this House would agree with it as well, and hopefully this new legislation will bring an end to wasting taxpayer dollars on such a politically motivated venture.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? Even though it was politically motivated and we know it was politically motivated, it really didn't help them in the last election. We look forward to seeing the annual report that will come from the minister on paid advertising to Executive Council. We will also continue to hold the minister to account for all the activity

within the department and to ensure transparency and accountability for taxpayers. And with that, I thank the minister again for bringing this bill forward and look forward to the comments during this discussion.

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

HON. FRANK CORBETT: I want to thank the minister for bringing this bill forward, a bill that I don't want him to rise to his feet and congratulate me, but which we will be supporting. It's a bill, I think when you listen to the words of the previous speaker, that there was really no hand on the wheel for a long time and I was one of those ministers, you know, it's public record. There was no hand at the wheel so to speak over at CNS. So, you know, if at any time we can honestly and forthrightly bring forward legislation that brings the true responsibility of a department under the auspices of, especially your watchful eye, Mr. Speaker, as it comes to the annual report being submitted here, we and my Party will support it. It's a good idea. I don't agree wholeheartedly with everything that the previous speaker had said but nonetheless what I will agree with is the position, if you will, of the government who's saying that this is what we want to do. I fundamentally agree with that and we fundamentally agree with that. So we hope that's the direction it stays in.

We will support the government in this and this is not a slogan or a catchphrase but this is one of the issues that I think truly we should be able to be on the same side on because it should be about informing Nova Scotians, Mr. Speaker. So with those few words, I'll take my place and say our Party will be supporting this bill going to the Law Amendments Committee and further on for passage.

MR. SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague, the Minister of Communications Nova Scotia, I want to thank the House Leader for the Official Opposition and the House Leader for the NDP caucus for their comments. Both having previously served in government would know the challenges that are faced with Communications Nova Scotia and government's attempts to communicate its message to Nova Scotians but certainly a message that we heard is that Nova Scotians want to see transparency as well when their tax dollars are being spent. Today we introduced legislation from my department and this is one more example of providing them with more transparency as to how exactly we are using Communications Nova Scotia and how monies are being spent.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to see support from both Opposition Parties in moving Bill No. 7 forward. I look forward to it moving on to the Law Amendments Committee and returning back to the House. With that, I now move second reading of Bill No. 7.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 7. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 5.

Bill No. 5 - Importation of Hydraulic Fracturing Wastewater Prohibition Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 5, an Act to Ban the Importation of Hydraulic Fracturing Wastewater, be now read a second time. This bill that we bring forward is designed to prevent the importing or transportation of fracking wastewater into Nova Scotia from other jurisdictions. This legislation imposes fines of up to \$10,000 per day that the Act is violated. This bill is a step forward in protecting the environment and the health of Nova Scotians. We've heard that Nova Scotians don't want hydraulic fracturing unless we know it can be done safely in our geology of Nova Scotia. That's why there is currently a moratorium in place on hydraulic fracturing activity in this province as we await the independent report from Dr. Wheeler, which we expect to receive in the Spring of 2014.

Right now Nova Scotia has very few options to consider in the treatment and disposal of fracking wastewater. We've seen first-hand in this province how much work is involved in establishing a safe and effective means to treat this wastewater. We've seen this based upon the pilot programs that took place in Kennetcook and the treatment options being pursued in the Debert area of Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotians clearly do not want Nova Scotia to be seen as the waste dumping ground for other jurisdictions, and that's why we are moving forward with this particular piece of legislation.

I would like to thank the Council of Canadians, the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter, the Ecology Action Centre, the Responsible Energy Action group, and others who are giving Nova Scotians an organized voice on these and other environmental concerns. Concerns that have been raised by these organizations were echoed by citizens on the doorsteps during our campaign, and it fulfills our Party's election commitment to take action on this very important issue to address these concerns that Nova Scotians have.

I'm looking forward to hearing from my colleagues in the House as well as from other Nova Scotians during the Law Amendments Committee session. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, hydraulic fracturing has become a very important and contentious issue with Nova Scotians in recent years. There are those who would like to see the moratorium lifted and allow companies to explore our province's potential to produce shale gas, and there are those who believe that the environmental risks are too high.

Our caucus supports the moratorium on fracking and will maintain the support until we are shown scientific evidence that guarantees we can do it safely and without causing harm to our groundwater. We look forward to reviewing the Wheeler Report on fracking when it comes out in May 2014. As long as the moratorium remains in place, we believe that we should not allow the importation of fracking waste by-products from other provinces. Once the report is released in May, and should the government reverse the moratorium based on scientific discovery, we may find our province in a different situation with regard to accepting waste water from elsewhere. But, if we are still reviewing the environmental risks ourselves, then it is not responsible to accept waste water from our neighbours.

Our caucus has had a very clear position on hydraulic fracturing from the start. We will not support fracking in this province unless there is scientific proof that it will not endanger our groundwater. Environmental safety must be assured. There must be proven economic benefits and demonstrated support from the local community. Without those three conditions in place, there is little possibility of public confidence and support for hydraulic fracturing in Nova Scotia.

Beyond that, this bill will ensure that Nova Scotia is being responsible to its citizens. With fracking comes waste water; if Nova Scotia isn't ready for fracking, then we aren't ready to process the waste water. We know that there have been instances in the past where fracking waste by-products from other areas have ended up in Nova Scotia for treatment. The Minister of Environment says they are working on an initiative to safely treat and dispose of the waste water that has been sitting in holding ponds in Debert. I hope the minister will be forthcoming with any plans his department has to deal with this issue.

If the minister could provide members of this House with a timeline and details of what steps will be taken, it would be greatly appreciated. This has become too important an issue for us, as legislators, to not be made fully aware. Beyond my role as a member of this Assembly, as a mother it is important to me that we protect our environment for our children and future generations. We live in a beautiful province and it is our responsibility to maintain that. When the Wheeler report comes out in May and the government ultimately decides the province's position on fracking, I ask that the government make

their decision based on science, to instill confidence in all Nova Scotians. We believe this is a responsible move by the province and as such the PC caucus will be supporting this bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River.

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, as the NDP Environment Critic, I would like to be clear that our Party shares the concerns of Nova Scotians when it comes to hydraulic fracturing and its waste water. As the public's concern continues to grow over the process of fracking and the disposal of its waste water, these concerns are especially valid when considering the possibilities of environmental spills. This is why the NDP placed the moratorium on fracking two years ago and just last month the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities passed a resolution to support the NDP's province-wide moratorium. It's also why we secured the services of Dr. Wheeler to carry out the comprehensive, independent review of fracking that is currently taking place. I, like many Nova Scotians, am anxiously awaiting the results of that review.

On the surface of it the NDP has no issue with this bill. My only concern at this time is that in the Spring of 2011, the Liberals tabled a bill in this House that was essentially a wolf in sheep's clothing when it came to fracking. This bill - which I've heard the Energy Minister reference many times - was called an Act to Ensure the Health and Well-being of All Nova Scotians in the Use of Efficient Hydraulic Fracturing, and I can table that. Perhaps this is something the member for Halifax Chebucto is referring to when he talks about green fracking, which also sounds eerily close to the Conservative federal government's support for what they call ethical oil from the tar sands in Alberta.

While the bill did call for a temporary moratorium on fracking, it also called for an end to the same moratorium on fracking by November 15, 2011. One can easily argue that if the Liberals had their way three years ago, hydraulic fracturing could actually be taking place in Nova Scotia right now. At this point I don't believe the evidence demonstrates that fracking can be done safely in our province and other provinces are moving to ban hydraulic fracturing as well, like Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador.

As for this bill, there hasn't really been any fracking waste fluid shipped to Nova Scotia since 2011. However, members should note that our province is still working to address waste water from shale gas exploration in Kennetcook six years ago as well as waste fluid that was to be treated in a waste treatment company in Debert just outside of my riding. The Colchester Municipality has actually banned the disposal of fracking fluid in our county and I'm very pleased to see that happen. As such, it's unlikely that any materials would be shipped to the lone facility capable of processing waste fluids in Debert either way. So this bill is largely precautionary, but I believe you can't be too careful when it comes to fracking and we should not consider allowing Nova Scotia to be used as a dumping ground and disposal site for the oil and gas industry.

My greatest concern is that this bill does nothing to prevent the Liberal Government from lifting the moratorium on fracking in Nova Scotia before all the scientific evidence has been collected and disposing of that fracking fluid off the coast of Nova Scotia. If that were to happen, this bill would essentially be rendered obsolete.

However, in closing Mr. Speaker, when good legislation is presented to the House of Assembly, legislation which hopefully serves to protect the safety of all Nova Scotians including the environment we live in, our ground water, our earth and the air we breathe, then members should support it from across all Party lines. This is really one of those situations where in the spirit of co-operation we can all help to clear the air both figuratively and literally. Therefore, I'm pleased to say that I and my NDP colleagues support this bill to ban the importation of hydraulic fracturing waste water. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues for their comments on this very important issue. I move second reading of Bill No. 5.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 5. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, before moving on to other business, may I be permitted an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, in the east gallery today we are joined by a very close friend, close advisor, someone that's certainly been very close to me before politics and throughout my whole political career.

He himself has been in elected office at the municipal level and school board level since the early 1970s and has represented the constituents in the municipal district of L'Ardoise, Rockdale, Grand Greve, Lower L'Ardoise, Little Harbour, Point Michaud with distinction. Not only was he re-elected in the last municipal election but his fellow councillors gave him the distinction of making him the new warden for the Municipality of

Richmond. I'd ask my colleagues to welcome Warden Steve Sampson to the Legislature. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that the adjourned debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne be now resumed.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to rise before you and the rest of the members of this House and present my first Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your new position in this, the oldest legislative building in Canada. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it is humbling to stand here and address you and the other members of the Legislature, where so many have stood since 1819. I would also like to congratulate both the new and returning members - we have all been charged with the responsibility of working for our constituents to the best of our abilities, and I am eagerly looking forward to working with each and every one of you.

Mr. Speaker, please allow me to take this opportunity to thank my amazing team in Pictou West who not only gave their time, energy, and financial contributions but also their friendship and unwavering faith and belief in me. Many good times and laughs were shared and many new friendships formed during the journey that led me here today. Someone said that you can tell how a campaign is going by how much the fun the team is having - well, then I stand here as a testament to that. From wine and cheese parties to impromptu lunches and late night suppers, from falling on ice, suffering skinned knees and twisted ankles, dog bites, braving all types of weather, to having to be towed out of snow banks, we have all managed to have a good time and a laugh at the end of the day.

In all seriousness, Mr. Speaker, my team was indispensable and I am grateful for each and every one of them and the role they played in my journey here. They are too numerous to name individually and, for fear of forgetting someone, I choose to thank them as a group, as they know who they are and their importance to me - I have expressed my gratitude and thanks to them all personally.

There are two people I would like to single out today - my children - my daughter, Chloe Marshall, 15, and my son, Jack Marshall, 11. They understood the long days of campaigning and the late nights making phone calls and replying to e-mails, never complaining and ever a source of inspiration to me. I stand here in front of you, Mr. Speaker, with a twinge of guilt as a mother who had never missed a dentist appointment, a hockey game, a swimming lesson, a soccer game, a parent-teacher meeting and so on, until I began my political journey. My hope is that in the future Chloe and Jack will look back and say, my mom is one of the reasons why I live in this great Province of Nova Scotia.

I thank Chloe and Jack for their unconditional love they provide, for making me laugh, and for being kind. Mr. Speaker, I also wish to take a moment to thank my friend Andrew Marshall, the father of my children. Without him being the best dad ever, I would not be able to stand here with you all today. I thank him for always knowing that Jack and Chloe come first. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to represent the constituents of Pictou West and I would like to take this opportunity to tell you a little bit about Pictou West and the people who call it home. Pictou West is conveniently located in central Nova Scotia, geographically a large constituency that has the Northumberland Strait running along one side, then extending inland through the communities of Caribou, Tony River, Seafoam, River John, West Branch, Alma, Mill Brook, Gairloch, Salt Springs, Union Centre, Middle River, Scotsburn, Abercrombie and, of course the Town of Pictou, the birthplace of New Scotland.

Mr. Speaker, Pictou West is a large rural area comprised of many small communities and villages with the only urban area being the small Town of Pictou. Pictou West is a wonderful place to live and raise a family. It is full of natural beauty with many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors all year long - from swimming in the warmest waters north of the Carolinas to hiking the trails of Fitzpatrick Mountain and then snowmobiling the same trails in the winter, to jog in the Jitney Trail to enjoying the view at the Greenhill Lookoff, and of course enjoying our two provincial parks located in Salt Springs and Caribou. Pictou West is truly a scenic location.

Mr. Speaker, Pictou West offers many opportunities for residents and tourists alike to celebrate the rich diversity of cultures that exist in Pictou West. Events and festivals are happening all year long, from suppers at the many churches, the annual chicken barbeque in Tony River, Highland Homecoming in Pictou, River John Festival Days, lobster dinners, winter carnivals, the famous Scotsburn pork chop barbeque that attracted 1,200 people this past summer and last, but not least, the Pictou Lobster Carnival which was voted the number-one festival in Canada, through the WestJet's Fun 'n Festival Series in 2010 and is set to celebrate its 80th year in 2014. The Pictou Lobster Carnival marks the conclusion of a successful lobster season and is celebrated the second weekend every July. Lobster Carnival attracts tourists from far and near and former residents use this event to

return home to visit family and friends. I extend a warm invitation to you, Mr. Speaker, and other MLAs to join us in Pictou West for this celebration.

Not only is Pictou West one of the most beautiful regions in our province but there are many museums to enjoy including the Hector Heritage Quay, home of the famed ship *Hector* that brought the first Scottish settlers to Nova Scotia; the McCulloch House Museum, the Fisheries Museum, the Loch Broom Log Church just to name a few. Mr. Speaker, Pictou West is home to many old and architecturally interesting buildings. There are many century homes, old stone buildings, and the old Pictou Post Office which is noted in *Guinness World Records* as the only building that has a window in the chimney.

During the summer months, the Town of Pictou offers free entertainment featuring local entertainers on the beautiful Pictou waterfront. Mr. Speaker, Pictou West is home to many talented musicians including Dave Gunning, Fleur Mainville, Karen Corbin, Ashley George, and John Spyder Macdonald. Pictou is home to the deCoste Entertainment Centre which showcases internationally famous acts and national and local talent as well. The annual Pictou Rotary Play is eagerly anticipated and always a sold out show. An amazing opportunity exists to expand on the natural beauty of Pictou West and the many festivals and events to further promote and develop the tourism industry in our area.

Pictou West is the gateway to the province from Prince Edward Island via the Caribou-Wood Islands ferry. The ferry provides an invaluable link between the two provinces and many jobs in my constituency. Mr. Speaker, like many constituencies the economy has been tough the last number of years and job losses have abounded. We are fortunate to have a strong entrepreneurial spirit in Pictou West with many family-owned businesses. Some of these businesses are fairly large such as MacKay Meters, the Scotsburn Lumber mill, King Freight Lines, Gerald Battist Trucking, North Nova Seafoods, and of course the Pictou Advocate Printing & Publishing. Other small businesses include pharmacies, hair salons, restaurants, and gift boutiques. These businesses make up the backbone of Pictou West and rural Nova Scotia. We must do everything we can to make it easier to start, own, and operate a small business in the Province of Nova Scotia. We must eliminate the red tape.

Michelin Tire and Northern Pulp are both located within Pictou West, providing jobs for the entire county and beyond. These businesses provide not only good-paying jobs, but the economic spinoffs and benefits are immeasurable. We must find a way, however, to keep these businesses operating without compromising the health of our residents. Good health is a non-negotiable commodity that we cannot afford to take for granted. (Applause)

With new technologies and modern up-to-date science we must ensure that all businesses comply with the existing environmental laws and we must, Mr. Speaker, look at the environmental laws of Nova Scotia and ensure they are up to par with the rest of Canada and other first-world nations. There needs to be an open dialogue between government, the constituents of Pictou West, and Northern Pulp to ensure the health and

safety of our people and community. Madam Speaker, steps must be taken to clean up the mill in Boat Harbour, which is located in Pictou East, once and for all. Pictou West constituents do not support fracking. They are justifiably worried about the long-term effects to our environment. Therefore I am pleased the government has placed a moratorium on fracking.

I would be remiss, Madam Speaker, if I failed to pay homage to many of our farmers and fishermen who call Pictou West home. They are a major and important part of the economy in our area. Our farmers are struggling in today's world and we must do everything we can to support our farmers and encourage Nova Scotians to buy and support local. Nova Scotia lobster is world renowned. Lobster fishermen work hard in unpredictable conditions and they deserve a fair market value for their product. (Applause)

Madam Speaker, the communities, businesses, festivals, and events I named are but a few of the reasons Pictou West is such an amazing place to work, live, and raise a family and I apologize if I have missed any.

In my humble opinion, Madam Speaker, the greatest asset Pictou West has is its people. The people of Pictou West are hard-working, proud and community-minded. The community spirit is evident in the many events that take place year-round. Our people are always willing to step up to help a friend or neighbour in need. Benefits for people in crises are commonplace and a testament to the community spirit that radiates through Pictou West. This is evident in how the entire community recently rallied around the Hawkins family when little Reese Hawkins was ill and I am so happy to say is doing very well. In fact, Reese was recently granted a wish and will be taking a Disney cruise along with her parents and older brother. In turn, Reese's parents, along with friends, have raised funds to help support research for acute myeloid leukemia.

Madam Speaker, when there is a cause, you can bet the people of Pictou West will jump in and give a helping hand. When the Hector Arena in Pictou was close to shutting down due to the need for costly upgrades, once again the community rallied. Fundraising began immediately. Now the roof has been replaced, the ice surface replaced along with the boards, ice plant, et cetera.

The people of Pictou West are truly inspirational. This would be a good time to mention that when the YMCA decided to shut down the Pictou location, the O'Brien family stepped up and reopened the location. Pictou boasts the Hector Arena, the Fisheries pool, and a family-owned and operated gym.

I am disheartened to say, Madam Speaker, that Pictou West is slowly losing its greatest asset - its people. People are leaving in record numbers. Why would anyone want to leave? It is simple - jobs. Jobs are disappearing. Times are getting tough. Small businesses are finding it too difficult to compete and are closing as a result. Approximately eight small businesses have closed in Pictou West in the last year alone. Larger businesses

are laying off at an alarming rate. Getting by day to day is becoming more challenging. Everyday needs are becoming more expensive - power bills, fuel bills, insurance, groceries; the list goes on and on.

The government must find a way to make life more affordable and stimulate the economy. We will make the government accountable and hold them to the promises they made during the election. More importantly, we will work with them to put Nova Scotia first. We all know divide and conquer is not the answer to success.

Pictou West has another claim to fame that I must share here today. Madam Speaker, Pictou West has the worst road in Atlantic Canada, not something we are proud of but a designation we cannot deny. We have the worst road in Atlantic Canada. Everyone here is thinking (Interruption) Yes. Well, that must be so bad. It's not just bad, it is fatal. The Cape John Road must be repaired along with many roads in Pictou West and across the whole province. The government needs a plan to deal with the state of the roads across the great province. If we are able to expand on our tourism industry at all, we must provide safe roads not only for our residents but for tourists as well.

Madam Speaker, Pictou West is made up of many small communities that are each unique. Many of these communities offer churches, community centres, fire departments and schools. Within Pictou West I am proud to say we have seven fire departments. At the heart of many of these communities are the schools located within them. There are eight schools located in Pictou West, three within the Town of Pictou and the rest spread throughout the smaller communities. The small community schools are wonderful places to receive a quality education and foster community-mindedness that translates into not only a well-educated society but also encourages the kind of stewardship I spoke of earlier where people are quick to give a helping hand to those in need.

River John Consolidated has been struggling with the school board to prove its importance to the community of River John and how it benefits the students to stay within their own community for early education. The government must come up with a new system for determining school closures. I hope the government listens compassionately and remembers the future of rural community life becomes threatened when schools are closed. I am happy to hear of the government's plan to reinvest the funding in our education system that had been cut over the past four years. Education is key to our future success.

Madam Speaker, I question why, if the government is committed to reinvesting our education system as well as committed to expanding the delivery and quality of French language services in Nova Scotia, then why is French Immersion the only program in Pictou West in jeopardy? Not only are we possibly losing the French Immersion program in Pictou West altogether but the school board is refusing to provide transportation to the other side of the county for the Pictou West students who would like to be enrolled in the program. This is an injustice to our students in Pictou West, and I ask that the Minister of

Education and Early Childhood Development take time to thoroughly investigate this situation.

Madam Speaker, I am deeply concerned about the state of our health care system in Nova Scotia. Long wait times to see specialists; no available beds, resulting in patients lying for days in hallways; long-term care bed shortages, with the elderly being moved out of their communities. Too many bureaucrats and not enough front-line staff are all problems that currently exist.

The government has promised more money for the front-lines in health care, and we will hold them to it. To my knowledge, we are only one of two provinces that do not help to subsidize hearing aids for seniors. I have a constituent who is unable to replace her hearing aids because she cannot afford the \$5,500 price tag. We must do better by our seniors. Nova Scotia should join the majority of other provinces and subsidize the cost of hearing aids.

One area of concern that was not addressed by the government that deeply concerns me is mental health care. Too many people are waiting too long to get the care they require. This is placing unnecessary hardship and strain on not only the individual but on the families, impacting all areas of society, health care, education, and the workplace.

I would like to address the reluctance of so many to participate in the electoral process. I have found that a good portion of voters do not understand the process. They do not understand the difference between municipal, provincial, and federal politics. They do not understand that a vote for a particular Party in provincial politics is not a vote for the same Party federally. The confusion is compounded by the campaigning of federal politicians in provincial politics.

I am deeply concerned about the apparent voter apathy. Voters feel that their voice doesn't count or that politicians are all crooks or that it doesn't matter. The average age of voters is 55 years. My goal was to increase voter turnout in Pictou West while encouraging younger voters to make their voice heard. I am proud to say that my goal was realized. (Applause) Pictou West had the highest voter turnout in the province, with a little over 70 per cent. We now have a chance to prove that we are not crooks, that Nova Scotians come first, and that we can work together to do what is best for all the people of this great province. As I have said so many times to my son before going on the ice to play hockey, the game is about what is on the front of the jersey. The logo, the name on the front of the jersey, is far more important than the solo name on the back of the jersey.

Madam Speaker, I am thrilled to have our office up and running efficiently under the most dedicated CA an MLA could have. Michelle Livingston, I thank you from my heart to yours for all that you do.

In closing, I do wish to acknowledge my loving father, Frank MacFarlane, who is proudly watching from his home in Three Brooks. He is one of the last known gentlemen I know and love dearly. I have two amazing brothers who I must extend my gratitude to as well: my brother Todd MacFarlane and his family in Maine, and my brother Frank MacFarlane and his family in Kentville, Nova Scotia. They are two of the funniest people I know, with innate jovial spirits. I thank them for their words of wisdom and for always so graciously accepting their loss when playing against me in hockey, scrabble, baseball, soccer, and the list goes on.

We tend to save the best for the last. I wish to thank my late mother, Linda Ann Hadley MacFarlane, who passed away just a year ago. She was my anchor, my consultant, my supporter, and when needed, my harshest critic. She taught me that love is a necessity and not a luxury during these difficult times we are facing.

It seems fitting with that last statement that I encourage you all during this holiday season to extend that extra hand of support, whether it be sponsoring an underprivileged family at Christmas, volunteering at your local food bank or youth centre, or perhaps finding some spare time in your hectic schedules to be with someone you know who is alone and in need of companionship.

Madam Speaker, we as humans need to do better. Be kind and be well. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River.

MS. LENORE ZANN: Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here today standing on my feet in Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. I believe it's my second one in four and a half years. I want to begin by saying congratulations to all of the new members from both Parties who have now stood in their places and had the opportunity to address the House. I know it's an exciting opportunity, and you really feel a part of history while you're doing it. I know that many other members still have to get on their feet and do it, and I'm looking forward to hearing what they have to say as well.

It's always nice to see how proud people are of their homes, of the places they come from, and to hear all of the different events that take place in these communities, and also to hear from year to year the different things in the communities that each person is proud of, that is perhaps different from other members in past years. I look forward to hearing more people getting on their feet and talking about this beautiful province that we all call home. After all, I would like to remind all members here that we are all one. Nova Scotia is a very small province - 900,000 people is nothing, really, in the grand scheme of things. The more we can do together and to move our province forward to be full of joy and life and health and prosperity for our people, then I believe we are doing our jobs as members of this House of Assembly.

First of all, I would like to say the name for my riding, Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River, while a little bit of a mouthful, used to be Truro-Bible Hill. I just felt that the last time when I was in session, it was an important opportunity as the boundaries were being changed and names were being changed to address the issue that my constituency is actually made up of four distinct communities: Truro, Bible Hill, Millbrook First Nations, and Salmon River. In each of these communities, the people are very proud of their community, of what they do, of the different festivities that take place there, and I felt it was about time to address the fact that two of those communities were not included in the title. Therefore, I was given the opportunity to change it to add those two communities.

I'd like to begin by talking about my Millbrook First Nations community, who helped greatly in the last election. When I went from house to house, people were so quick to say, put up a sign, and we're so glad to see you in our community all of the time, attending powwows and attending funerals, attending important special emergency meetings that have been held - for instance, the Idle No More movement. At one point in time we were talking about what they were going to do to protest the federal government's bills that were basically taking away rights of First Nations people across the country and also taking away environmental protections for our waterways.

At one special emergency meeting that went until about 11:00 p.m. in Millbrook, it was decided that they wanted to talk about closing down Highway No. 102 for a short time to bring attention to this very important issue. They turned to me as their MLA and said, so, what about you? Would you stand with us if we do this? I thought about it for a minute and I said, yes, certainly I will.

In fact, I ended up calling my chief of staff at the time and the then-Premier Darrell Dexter and letting them know that we would be closing down Highway No. 102 down to one lane of traffic. I told them the times it would be taking place and that the RCMP would be helping us with this, so nobody would be hurt. In fact, it turned out to be a very good and successful, peaceful rally and a protest, and many people across the country joined in that protest in their homes and in their communities.

Unfortunately, it didn't stop the government in Ottawa from passing the bill, but as Environment Critic for the NDP, I certainly intend to keep any issue that would address the problems of attacking our environment in both Nova Scotia and in Canada, I would like to keep that well in the front line of fire for us to address.

I would also like to say that Salmon River, the home of Hockeyville, is another important community place in my riding. Several years ago they were chosen from right across Canada to be the community to represent the perfect little community for a hockey rink. At Deuville's rink, where many different minor hockey teams play and practise, and many kids have had an opportunity to get their start playing hockey, have taken place in that facility, which is a family-owned and run business. They built it about 25 years ago and it is a father and son team. The father is now in his 90s. I had the opportunity a few

years ago to sing *Happy Birthday* to him, as Marilyn Munroe, sitting in his lap, which they say he will never forget and has kept him living several years longer than perhaps he would have.

Salmon River also is a lovely community. They have a fire department there that has wonderful dinners and suppers. They celebrated their 50th Anniversary last year and had a parade, which I was pleased to take part in.

We also have Truro itself which, of course, is an old town in Nova Scotia. We have the first United Church in Nova Scotia and many of the Loyalists came and there are graves still to this day where you can locate some of the first Loyalists who came across from the New England States, and of course, also a wonderful Black community. Some came across as slaves and were given free land and some - even when you look into the history here - there were some members of the communities in Nova Scotia who still had slaves in Nova Scotia, even though many people think that Nova Scotia never had slaves. In fact, they did and there are some graves there, there is a gravesite. Unfortunately many of them are unmarked, due to racism and discrimination of the day. We know some of them who were buried there, and I am hoping that a plaque will be placed commemorating the Black Loyalists and other people who came over to Nova Scotia and settled there.

I am very proud of my African Nova Scotian community. Dr. Burnley “Rocky” Jones, of course, is a leading member of that community and I was very sad to see him go this year. He was a dear friend of mine. He was an executive on my NDP riding association. He was my buddy; he was one of my mentors, along with Alexa McDonough so I was very, very sad that his health began to deteriorate. We had many great times, lots of laughs and joy knocking on doors in the last election in 2009 and to see strapping Mr. Rocky Jones and tiny little me with my blonde hair going from door to door and being invited into people’s homes. People would suddenly start to party; a party would erupt as soon as we arrived. It was pretty amazing.

I look to him oftentimes and when I am in doubt about what to do or what to say about a particular issue, many times I think of Rocky and say, what would Rocky say about this? What would Rocky do here? I actually use that as my guide for some of my decisions. He didn’t always agree with some of the things that the NDP Government did but he was always a strong supporter of the NDP, in spite of some differences that he had. He and I shared some of those differences, as well, and he will be missed.

The other person, too - there are many wonderful people in that community but actually Rocky’s mom was a wonderful woman, Mrs. Jones, who taught at the Truro Junior High School, along with my mother. She went back to school at the age of 60 or 62 and got her teaching degree and started the first class on discrimination and race issues and African Nova Scotian history, along with my mother. The two of them really made a dent in some of the racist attitudes that were prevailing way back in the times when these kinds of classes were not part of the curriculum.

My mother also liked to teach about First Nations history and, in fact, I'm told by several of the band members, the councillors today, that they remember coming from St. Mary's School, which was a Catholic school run by nuns, and they came into Grade 7 and my mother was their homeroom teacher; they had Mrs. Jones as well. My mother taught history and they would say that they started off and they didn't know if they would be able to last for the year or two that they would be in junior high school because of former discriminatory remarks and activities by some of the teachers in their last school.

So these kids saw this little blond spitfire of a woman with this Australian accent come in and she said well now, class, I have these two books that I'm supposed to teach you history from, but I'm going to show you where these two books belong - and she threw them in the garbage can. She said I believe these books are full of racist and discriminatory stories about our First Nations people and our African Nova Scotian communities and I refuse to teach from them.

So she went to the archives and she found out the actual facts about the wonderful things that our First Nations and our Black community had done, like helping to build the Citadel for instance, and things like this which were not included in the history books at the time, and she proceeded to teach from those as well as books that had been written by people who belonged to those communities who knew the history. So in this way, Mrs. Jones and my mother had, I believe, a great deal of weight in the Truro Junior High School and how things started to unroll from there.

The other part of my riding is Bible Hill, which a lot of people wonder why it's called Bible Hill. I wondered that myself, and the story is that, of course, my area was an Acadian-settled area originally. That's where the dykes came from that hold out the seas and hold out the Salmon River and the Bay of Fundy. These dykes have been there for 400 years and in the area that is now called Bible Hill, obviously there's a hill there and after the British got rid of our wonderful Acadian people and sent them all over the world in ships, separating parents, children, mothers, daughters - it was a very, very sad occasion - well, when the British came up to Bible Hill, they found a bible in French that some French settler had left there.

Now, I'm also told that some of the Acadians from that area managed to escape and didn't get on the ships. They were friends with the First Nations, with the Mi'kmaq, and they were taken up into the hills and to other places. They walked miles; some of them died on the roads trying to get away, but many of them also survived. So we have many families now in Truro that actually date right back to the earliest settlers, and some of them are four generations and five generations of Acadian, which many people don't really realize when they hear Truro or Bible Hill. You wouldn't think it has an Acadian background, but it actually does.

Bible Hill has firefighters there, as well, and they have wonderful, wonderful dinners and suppers, and awards nights which I really enjoy attending. I go skating in Bible

Hill; I go for walks in Bible Hill - we have wonderful paths there. Of course, we have the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus now. Our NDP Government, in the last term, decided to make Truro and Bible Hill the centre for agriculture. We do incredible research there at the campus, including one researcher there has discovered a way of making needles on fir trees and pine trees stay longer on the Christmas trees so they can be shipped for long destinations across the seas.

Also, they've discovered that the property of sunflowers whereby sunflower seeds have a natural ingredient that is an insect repellent and they have partnered up with a company in Scotland to look into creating a value-added product for our farmers, so that if our farmers can grow more sunflowers and ship the seeds to Scotland they will create these all-natural hangers that you can hang in your kitchen that will dispel insects like fruit flies and things like that. The farmers would get a percentage of each of these products that would be sold, which is a fantastic way for our farmers to make extra value-added money.

Speaking of farming, there is a lot of interest in our agriculture industry in Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River, so I was very pleased that our last government was able to add in a bunch of different programs to help our farming industry. For instance, one of them was Homegrown Success. We put \$3.7 million into that. It was a federal-provincial program, 60-40, and I would love to see the province put more money into that now. I'm hoping that the Agriculture Minister will take a look at that and see if perhaps the province could put 100 per cent into that program. I know we were working toward that. That particular program was so successful - it was open for two weeks for farmers to apply, but there was so much uptake on it that farmers actually filled the roster in four days, and that was a \$3.7 million investment.

It's nice to see that Nova Scotia is the only province in Canada that has had an increase in farms. We have 3,900 farms in Nova Scotia now, and 236 of those farms are new ones. Some of them are smaller, some of them are larger, but there are 236 new farms, which is fantastic. As Agriculture Critic for the NDP, I'm very, very pleased to see that all of this great work is being done, and I would imagine that the Liberal Government will be continuing to try to help this keep growing.

Another one of our programs that the NDP put in place was THINKFARM. There was also the Limestone Program, which basically was a tile-drainage program for helping to drain the fields properly. We had promised to put the \$400,000 that was already in it up to \$600,000 just before the election, about six months before the election, so I'm hoping that will be something the minister will take a look at.

Also, Farm Next - we had suggested there should be another \$100,000 put into that. It was very, very successful. It's about farm succession, as there are many farmers who, of course, are growing older. They need to be able to give their farm to the next generation, either their own children, daughters, sons, or someone else. We originally had invested up

to \$30,000, but it would be very nice to see an additional \$100,000 added, which we did announce prior to the last election.

We would like to see the grass-fed beef program continue. It has turned a corner, and our beef market is doing much better than it was before. Unfortunately, our hog market was decimated, but the beef industry prices have recovered, and that is really great to see. I do know as well that the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture will be hoping to get an investment from this current government. A tax credit investment would be very much appreciated by Nova Scotia's farmer. I hope that the government and the minister will take a look at that; that's something I would like to follow up with. I know that a majority of the beef market in Nova Scotia - 8 per cent to 10 per cent of it - goes to Nova Scotia, and the rest goes around the Maritime Provinces. We will probably never have a global beef market, but if we can keep up our market going to the Atlantic Provinces, as we're doing, that would be fantastic.

We also have genomics people at Dalhousie University who are looking at ways of creating more profit for our cows, for our milk, and things like this. We have a new person who has just been hired for five years there, Yuri Montanholi, who's from Brazil - a researcher who specializes in genomics. It will be interesting to watch the results of his research as well.

The other thing I wanted to talk about when it comes to agriculture is the fact that we have a freeze-drying centre in old barns, and that does about \$1.5 million worth of work. We have a \$140 million processing plant on Highway No. 340; processing is a very important part for farmers as well. They would like to get into processing more, rather than sending it out of the province to then be sent back. That's something that I think we need to look at.

Inspection of our different sections is important as well. I know we have a federal inspection agency but we believe that the province will need to be able to keep an eye on a good inspection process as well.

Also our wild blueberries are an amazing thing that Nova Scotia has going for it. We have 48 million pounds of wild blueberries that go to market. Artisanal cheeses, as well, are very important to us. I'm truly hoping that the new trade agreements with China and Europe don't get in the way of our exports, don't get in the way of imports coming into Nova Scotia that will hurt our own local markets. I do know that our provincial government, the NDP, was very supportive of locally grown food going to local people and for most Nova Scotians to start eating local is a very important thing for our government. I would imagine that the Liberal Government will continue to push for that.

In closing, I would just like to say that Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River is a beautiful community with many growing aspects to it. We are one of the fastest growing communities in Nova Scotia, second only to Wolfville. I highly recommend that you come

through, that you come into town and that you do some shopping along Inglis Place and along all the streets in downtown Truro. We have many new restaurants there. We have great dress shops and even though Margolians is a loss and we miss it terribly, there are other wonderful shops that have sprung up in its place and business is actually booming. So come on down and visit us in Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River, come to a pow-wow and you'll be very welcome. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Madam Speaker, it is an honour to be standing here today among such an inspiring group of colleagues representing all Parties. I would like to begin my remarks by congratulating our Premier and all honourable members for their dedication throughout the campaign. The time and commitment required to run an election, win or lose, is really something that should be commended.

I would like to particularly acknowledge those candidates who ran in Fairview-Clayton Park: NDP candidate Abad Khan, Progressive Conservative candidate Travis Price, Green Party candidate Raland Kinley and Independent candidate Katie Campbell. Ours was a clean campaign and it was truly a pleasure to address the needs of our riding alongside such caring and compassionate candidates.

My interest in politics came at the age of 12 when my father's good friend and former Speaker of the House, Gerry Fogarty, ran as an MLA in the riding then known as Halifax-Bedford Basin. My father had volunteered to help on Mr. Fogarty's campaign and volunteered me along with him. From that successful campaign I was hooked. My love for politics allowed me to work on numerous campaigns and brought me to this very House 16 years ago when I started my job as a messenger, standing up in these very galleries, running audio tapes back and forth to Hansard for transcription, even working there for one summer - Hi, Bob - delivering packages to the various ministries, annoying Peter and Mike and where I had the opportunity to meet and work with people who became some of my closest friends; specifically my dear friend, the infamous David Sheppard.

I actually worked here for many years, Madam Speaker, and only left when I started my career as a teacher. It was during our swearing-in ceremony last month that I realized that things had come full circle. After leaving my teaching and counselling career, I was coming back to my home here at the House of Assembly and yes, I will probably still get a coffee for any of you who ask.

I would be remiss, Madam Speaker, if I did not mention those who helped me get to where I stand today. Firstly to the residents of Fairview-Clayton Park who believed in me and in our Liberal team and decided to put their X by my name. In fact, I would like to thank all the residents of my riding who exercised their right to vote in this election, regardless of who they voted for. We unfortunately exist in a world where the ability to vote freely and democratically is not always allowed, where women are not only unable to

run for public office but are not able to vote at all. We are truly blessed to live in a country that allows such freedoms and better yet, allows us to sometimes take them for granted.

I must thank my outstanding campaign team, many of whom have worked with me in the backrooms on various campaigns throughout the years, others who have never been nor have ever had the desire to be political but worked tirelessly in support of me, and all of whom I am so extremely lucky to call my friends. I had over 100 volunteers on my campaign. I would like to say a special thank you to the core group who spent the last year by my side - Marlisa Ghosn, Lisa Courtney, Michael Mercer, David Arab, James Ramia, Justin Ghosn, Elias Metlej, Ryan Spence, Tara Gault, Maurice Fares and last but not least my friend Steve Hiscock. Steve and I have worked on countless campaigns over the years and I am so proud to have been able to be the one to finally give him the much-deserved win.

I would like to thank the numerous young people ranging from age 10 to 22 who gave up their summer vacations and weekends to help me. I'd like to thank in particular Alla Al-arabi, Dylan Brown-St. Hilaire, Alex Ghosn, William Salah, Elias Salah, Simon Salah, Jana Ramia, John Ramia, Eliane Francis, Madeleine Anjoul, Franco Fitzgerald, Alex Blades, John Arab, my canvassing champion Seth Pickard Tattrie and the future Prime Minister of Canada and current Grade 10 rep at Halifax West, the exceptional Ray Anjoul.

I'd also like to give a special thank you to my cousin and official agent, Diana Metlege. Diana, the proud mother of four young children and owner of a successful law firm took on the daunting and demanding role of official agent with the same ease and diligence she has exhibited our entire lives. Diana has been by my side through the best and worst times of my life and I will always be forever grateful to her.

Like all of us here in the House today and like so many who came before us, our families play the biggest role in helping us achieve our accomplishments. I am blessed to have not only a large extended family, some of whom I have already mentioned, but an entire community - the phenomenal Lebanese community of this great province - that worked tirelessly in support of my candidacy.

My extended family - and there really are a lot of us - have always supported me. Being qualified to do something is only part of the process. In order to accomplish things in life, you have to be willing to take risks. Let me tell you, risk taking is much easier when you know that no matter how high or how far you jump, there will always be a group of people ready and waiting to catch your fall.

Not only did I have loving parents and siblings, I had aunts and uncles both here and in Lebanon who helped raise me, who taught me right from wrong and who encouraged me to always reach for the sky. As the youngest of 31 nieces and nephews, I had an instant entourage of friends and supporters who continued that support in full force

when I told them of my intentions to run for public office, even the four card-carrying NDP members.

I'd like to give a special thank you to my cousins Wadih and Cathy Fares, both of whom have mentored me in the art of life and the pursuit of my goals no matter the obstacle. Also my sister Paula who spent the majority of her vacation home this summer helping me on the pre-election campaign trail and whose love and support radiated across the country and into my heart throughout the entire campaign. Although she was not physically here, her presence and faith in me was felt every day.

My brother Peter and sister-in-law Leona, who kept me grounded throughout this whole process and continue to do so as I begin this journey. Always making sure that my feet were firmly planted in truth, integrity and good common sense. There are three children - my niece Rachel and my nephews Phillip and Peter. These three remarkable children mean more to me than I could ever express in words. They are each unique and exceptional in so many ways and help to bring light into my life and a laugh in my heart no matter the challenge I face.

My sister Marianne, who not only successfully took on the oft-dreaded role of fundraising chair on the campaign team but did everything and anything asked of her and stood by me through this whole process, my whole life really, as my biggest fan and best friend.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my parents, Phillip and Patricia Arab, both strong community activists who taught me from a young age that it was my duty to give back to our community and to advocate for those who needed help. They were, in fact, the ones who started me on this path and even though neither were able to be with me, both of them having passed away last year, I know that they were rooting for me, possibly pulling strings, and championing me on from the best seats in the House.

My parents were truly remarkable, helping anyone in need, from new immigrants, to our neighbours, to those in our church community, and everyone in between. There was never a time when I heard my parents turn someone away who needed help. Even in the last few years of their lives when illness had limited them, it was never able to limit their desire to help. I know that my parents would be proud of me today and proud specifically of the riding that I am so lucky to represent.

Fairview-Clayton Park embraces the true essence of what my parents were all about, Madam Speaker. It is a riding rich in diversity and steeped in history. Politically speaking it is brand new, comprised of the four ridings of Halifax Chebucto, Halifax Fairview, and Halifax Clayton Park. I am honoured to carry on in the footsteps of Howard Epstein, Honourable Graham Steele, and my mentor and friend, the honourable Minister of Finance. I know that I have big shoes to fill and hope to do my constituents and my predecessors proud.

The area we now call Fairview was known as the Dutch Village and was one of the original homes of the foreign Protestants who arrived in Halifax in the 1750s. First known as the Westerwald, or western forest, it was called the Dutch Village by non-German locals. In fact, some of the passengers of the foreign Protestant ships were settled temporarily in the Dutch Village while they waited for a more permanent settlement in Lunenburg County, another part of our beautiful province near and dear to my heart.

Clayton Park, although geographically next door, has a much younger history and is named after a family that owned property in the area. The Clayton Park development began on July 12, 1962. My mother would often tell the story of when her father bought the property that my house was built on. My grandparents, proud residents of Agricola Street in the city's North End, bought land nearby Mount Saint Vincent University in 1959, much to the chagrin of their families and neighbours who couldn't understand why they would ever want to live so far away from the city.

The riding has the highest number of new immigrants and refugees in our province. It will be a pleasure to be able to help these constituents feel welcome to this province and city in the same manner that my father and ancestors were.

Fairview-Clayton Park is home to Halifax's first suburban shopping centre, the Bayers Road Shopping Centre, and was home to one of Halifax's first suburban high schools, the original Halifax West, which was open from 1958 to 2000 and was my alma mater. Fairview-Clayton Park is also home to a number of notable Nova Scotians, including Joel Plaskett and the members of his band, Thrush Hermit, as well as Chris Murphy and the members of the band Sloan.

Not only is it rich in history, Madam Speaker, my riding is also an up-and-coming community here in Halifax. We are on the verge of very exciting things and I am so proud to be able to be part of this evolution. I'm proud to be able to work with our city councillors and with our federal counterparts to make sure that the residents of our community are well represented on all levels of government.

I'm also proud to be part of this Liberal team. Each and every one of the MLAs sitting here next to me are hard-working, kind-hearted, and dedicated to their ridings. It is an amazing privilege to be part of such a cohesive team and to know that we all have our province's best interests at heart. I passed on numerous opportunities to leave Nova Scotia because I've always believed in our province and have always wanted to make my home here.

As a teacher and a counsellor I've had the privilege of working in inner-city schools, as well as some of the best rural schools in our province. I have spent the last seven years working on the beautiful South Shore, the last five years in Chester Grant at Forest Heights Community School in the riding of Chester-St. Margaret's. I would like to thank the students and staff at Forest Heights, as well as the members of the Chester, Hubbards,

Mill Cove, Tancook, and New Ross communities for their unofficial support of me, and I hope they know that they now have two representatives in this House.

Being a teacher, I understand first-hand the issues facing all of those involved in the education system in our province. Our education system is not reaching its full potential. We must assess the quality of the curriculum that is being delivered and divert resources for our students. It is time that we view our children as our most important resource, our most important investment.

I've also been a certified Canadian counsellor for the past seven years and have worked as an advocate for preventive mental health in our province. As I spoke to the residents of Fairview-Clayton Park, I heard first-hand their concerns surrounding the mental health issues facing so many. We have existed for far too long in a reactionary society - we wait for a crisis to occur and then bring in supports. We throw around mental health terms in our day-to-day lives without understanding the true meaning and overuse these words to the point of ineffectiveness. We need to look at our mental health in the same way that we are encouraged to look at our physical health, and we need break down the taboos surrounding mental health issues and free ourselves from the shame attached to them. This has been something that I have championed for in my professional and personal life, and something that I will continue to do in my new role as MLA. (Applause)

Madam Speaker, our new government knows that there are challenges ahead related to our economy, our population, and rising health care costs. That is why I am proud that we will be investing in education, making smart investments in our economy, and focusing on patient-centred care within our health care system. I'm looking forward to helping build a better Nova Scotia and being a strong voice in this House for the constituents of Fairview-Clayton Park, and I thank you. (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I must begin by saying congratulations for being appointed Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to congratulate the member for Eastern Shore for being appointed Speaker of the House.

My congratulations to the Premier and all members of his caucus - the voters of this province have placed their faith in you and I respect their wishes. I would also congratulate all current members of the New Democratic Party for their own personal success, and of course congratulations to my own colleagues in the Official Opposition. I'm sure we will be a strong and fair Opposition voice, and together with our colleagues to my left we will make sure the government is addressing the issues that are important to Nova Scotia.

Listening to the members who have been on the floor speaking in the Throne Speech Address, I think about our beautiful province - we are blessed to be living in the Province of Nova Scotia wherever you go. The Bras d'Or Lakes, the Cabot Trail, on a

lobster boat in the Georges Bay, Cape George, Antigonish County, the South Shore, the Annapolis Valley; we certainly are blessed to be living in probably the most beautiful place in the country, if not only the world. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, having the honour of being a member of this House of Assembly from 2006 to 2009, I really appreciate this opportunity to be here again representing the constituency of Pictou Centre. Many new members, I am sure, on election night were ecstatic and overwhelmed by what was happening, I felt the same, the fact being able to return to this historic location and represent the constituency back home in Pictou Centre.

I must offer a word of caution though as I remember back after the election and the dust settled in 2006, we were on that side, and over here on this side the Liberals were present and the Official Opposition were the New Democratic Party. In 2009, after the dust settled, there were some musical chairs and the New Democratic Party ended up over there as the government and the Liberals moved to the Official Opposition and we took our respective places over to the left. In 2013, things continued but, however, just to caution, Madam Speaker, we shouldn't be too comfortable in our chairs.

Madam Speaker, all members of this House realize that family support is essential when one decides to run for public office. Unfortunately, five of my six children were not able to be home during the election, but they kept me busy answering their late-night phone calls, inquiring about the progress of the campaign. My youngest son was available on weekends. However, my wife, Patsy, a retired schoolteacher, did the work of the five who were not able to be home. If something had to be done - meals for the volunteers, errands to run, organizing canvassers, knocking on doors, computer work - she worked tirelessly doing whatever had to be done. She's a true inspiration for me, and I thank her for all her love and support.

It was Saturday afternoon and I was scheduled to hit the ice with two other coaches at four o'clock to have our first on-ice practice with the Pictou County Junior B Scotians. About an hour prior to practice, I received the anticipated call that the election was on. A message to the Speaker of the House, who is the owner/manager/team doctor and everything for the Eastern Shore Mariners: if they end up higher in the standings or if they beat the Scotians again this year, it's because I'm not behind the Scotians' bench. I want you to know that.

What a marvellous campaign team I had in Pictou Centre. I had approximately 200 volunteers. I'm so proud and honoured to have had so much support in this past election. I would like to take this opportunity to thank some of the members of my campaign team: Campaign Chair Brian Knight; Office Manager Harvey Ford; Official Agent Brian Buckles; Fundraising Chairs Ian Campbell and Darrell Rushton; Sign Chairs Alan Murray, Jim Aucoin, and Glenn Landry; Phone Chair Audrey MacGillivray; Office Coordinators Jean Murray, Rose Shaw, and Norma Decoste; Town of Trenton Chairs Wayne Otter,

Barry Trenholm, and Fred Reid; Stellarton Chairs Amby Heighton, Jeannie MacDonald, and Ed Cormier; and New Glasgow Chairs Brenda Wilson and Patsy Dunn.

There are many other volunteers, and I'm going to mention just a few more: Bonnie Hafey, Kathy Decoste, Ryan Sharpe, Verna and Foster Elms, Jim Lynds, Walter Smith, Ron Marks, Brian and Darrell Marcott, Scott MacLean, Kathy Cambell, Jenny Harquail, Janet King, Harry Demone, Madelyn Evans, and of course, my sister Thelma.

Three special ladies honoured me by casting a vote in support of me during the past election: the first lady, Nan McKean from New Glasgow, at 102 years of age; a second beautiful lady, my Aunt Mary - Mary Dunn - cast a vote in my favour, and she is 101 years of age; and of course, Madam Speaker, I must mention also my own mother, who is presently 94 years of age. They were three of my biggest fans and followed the proceedings of the entire election.

I'm very pleased with our election platform, and I still think it was the best platform, with numerous suggestions and ideas outlining how this Party would improve the province and kick-start the economy under the leadership of the honourable member for Cumberland South.

I was thoroughly delighted on election night to watch the TV screen and see my Pictou County colleagues, the members for Pictou West and Pictou East, win their respective seats. They will be great representatives for their constituencies, and I look forward to working with them and sharing ideas. It is also pleasing to return and work with a few of my former colleagues: the member for Sydney-Mira-Louisbourg, the member for Argyle-Barrington, and the member for Hants West. I am looking forward to working with all members of our caucus.

I would like to tell the members in this Assembly a few words about my constituency, Pictou Centre. There are three towns in the core of Pictou County: Trenton, New Glasgow, and Stellarton. When you talk about the Town of Trenton you immediately think of the history of the steel industry in Pictou County. Trenton will always be known for the first pouring of steel in British North America, the very first steel-making industry in all of North America. In fact, Madam Speaker, in 1883 my great grandfather, James Dunn, was a member of the crew that poured the first steel in North America. James Dunn worked 64 years in that plant, retiring at the age of 83; I don't think the pensions were very good back then. He died in 1960 at the age of 96. Presently there is a monument in the town in front of the town office depicting the birthplace of steel in British North America.

His son, Harvey, also worked 55 years in the plant. My father, a machinist by trade, worked 46 years in the Trenton plant. He retired after 46 years without missing a single day and that's probably why I had to make it to school every day during my school years at home. If he was able to grab a lunchcan and go down over the hill to the steel plant, I had to go to school for a few hours.

Madam Speaker, I must say that I'm worried about the present state of affairs with the Trenton facility, the wind turbines, and DSME - Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering. The Government of Nova Scotia is presently a 49 per cent owner of the facility and in partnership with a South Korean industrial conglomerate. However, the approximately \$60 million provided by the previous government has not lived up to any expectations. We presently have a small, skeleton crew at this large facility. Indications in 2010 from the partnership stated that there would be 500 employees working at this plant.

Madam Speaker, when the present company Daewoo received permission to strip the entire plant of its railcar equipment and machinery, the end of the railcar manufacturing at Trenton was over. I believe this was a mistake. If that equipment was still available in the plant today, we would have several hundred workers employed. The railcar industry saw 1,300 jobs at peak employment. In fact, after completing Grade 12, I had a working stint in the plant and there were approximately 2,300 employees at that time.

Madam Speaker, the Town of Trenton has been facing significant economic turmoil during the past few years. Out-migration has affected all areas of Pictou County, including Trenton. Most services and businesses have moved on to other locations. Trenton residents must travel to New Glasgow, the commercial district for the community. With a declining tax base, the town has trouble financing existing services.

Madam Speaker, one very bright area for the town is the ownership of one of the nicest parks in the province, 565 acres of centuries old coniferous trees, six kilometres of walking trail, six kilometres of bike trails, a 3,000 square foot family swimming pool and the opportunity to fish trout from a couple of ponds. Plans are underway to make some major renovations at the park and this will enhance the great location for family fun.

Madam Speaker, when one mentions the Town of Stellarton, you automatically think of the rich history of coal mining and the home to Sobeys, the second-largest food retailer in Canada. Stellarton is home to the Nova Scotia Community College, the Nova Scotia Museum of Industry, several recreational facilities, walking trails, a track and field facility, an indoor soccer complex to name a few and it is also the home of former Premier Dr. John Hamm.

The Town of New Glasgow, Madam Speaker, was settled in 1784. The town is named after Glasgow, Scotland; Glasgow being a riverside town. The central location means a daily flow of traffic and activity that contributes to the economy of the area. As a commercial centre for Pictou County, the location helps business to obtain goods and services and for people to access services.

Pictou Centre is home to many wonderful yearly events - the Trenton FunFest, the Stellarton Homecoming Festival, New Glasgow Musical Jubilee, the Johnny Miles running event, Festival of the Tartans, Race on the River Dragon Boat Festival. New Glasgow is the home of a few former NHL players: Colin White, Jon Sim and Derrick Walser.

Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have several critic areas of responsibility. One of my favourites, of course, is Education. I have spent 30 years in the educational system, both as a teacher and as a high school administrator. We have great teachers in this particular province but perhaps the educational system is broken and hopefully with the work of all three Parties we can improve this system. (Applause) Our greatest resource is our children. Therefore education is an extremely important part of my responsibility. Changes must occur in the educational field and I am looking forward to working with the minister responsible for this portfolio.

The election is over and we must face the challenges that face all Nova Scotians - high taxes, high electricity rates, weak economy, lack of reasonable jobs, wait times experienced at our health facilities, out-migration of our youth, red tape that frustrates small business, the price of gas at the pumps. These are a few of the issues that voters continued to discuss during the election.

As the Official Opposition, we are ready. We are ready to hold the government accountable. We want to see Nova Scotia prosper. Government will be faced with many decisions in the months ahead and many will be difficult. Hopefully the government will rely on the Opposition Parties to share the responsibility for making these decisions. If this occurs, we will have the opportunity to succeed. The electorate have long lasting memories and they are expecting things to get better. It's time for the new government to act.

I wish to conclude my brief words by saying I am looking forward to working with every member in this Legislature in an effort to making Nova Scotia a better place to live and raise a family. It's obviously exciting to be in a position where you can make a difference. It is our duty in this House to make things better for Nova Scotians. We must put our Party's differences and philosophies aside and zero in on the real reason we are here - to assist and improve the quality of life for all Nova Scotians. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Madam Speaker, it certainly is an honour to stand here today and reply to the Speech from the Throne. First of all, congratulations are in order for the Official Opposition, I want to congratulate you for being re-elected and especially to the new government I extend warm wishes. The people of Nova Scotia have spoken so it's certainly an honour to speak today and to bring some insight into why we are here.

First of all, I want to start by saying that I was first elected to this House of Assembly in 2006. There was a gentleman in my community, I just want to kind of frame this as I give my speech here today, a senior in my community, an elder, took me aside and said Sterling, I want to present to you and say that I want you to remember where you come from and who you are. I've never forgotten that lesson or those kind words and certainly that's something that has stayed with me since I've been elected.

I also want to point out that I spent 38 years as a commercial fisherman and there's actually going to be a quiz later on in my speech so I'm going to give you an early indication. I know politicians wouldn't do this, wouldn't cheat and go on Google and try to get some information here but there is going to be a quiz. I'm going to make reference to how much alike a politician and a lobster are. You can start working on that now and I have come up with a list of 12. Just remember to get your pens and papers ready and there will be a little quiz later on in my speech.

Also I was re-elected in 2009 and I became the new Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture and the Environment. I really enjoyed that position and I know the challenges that are facing the members opposite, the new government, and I wish you well. I do that by knowing that right now I made reference to the process that you are actually going through, especially the new ministers, that the information that you are receiving is like receiving information literally from a fire hose, and that is coming at you full force - I see a few nods of the heads over there so I think I'm on track - or it is equivalent to learning to swim and your partner literally dumps you in the deep end. You learn very fast. I still see some nodding of the heads here so I believe that my message is correct and I wish you well in your endeavours and I look forward to working with my colleagues.

Again, Madam Chair - I keep saying Madam Chair, it's Madam Speaker, I apologize. I spent nine years at the municipal government so that reference to Chair is from that background, so Madam Speaker, I apologize in advance. Again, members, I was re-elected on October 8, 2013. Today I sit with my colleagues from all across Nova Scotia and they are: the MLA for Cape Breton Centre; a friend and colleague, the member for Sydney-Whitney Pier; the member for Sackville-Cobequid; the member for Chester-St. Margaret's; the member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River; and, ladies and gentlemen, Madam Speaker, our Acting Leader of the NDP, the member for Halifax Needham, whom I'm honoured to serve with.

Madam Speaker, I just want to have some words of advice to the newest members, the newbies to this House of Assembly, and I want to caution you. I want to caution you to be very careful when you go up against our Leader, the member for Halifax Needham. You can take that with a grain of salt or whatever but I would caution you because on November 13, 2013 our Leader and the CBC Provincial Affairs broadcast laid out and rolled out our path forward in the next session of the Nova Scotia Legislature.

Madam Speaker, some of the highlights from that broadcast were that this will be the first session for this newly elected Liberal Government. It will be a change in the role for the New Democratic Party. What will not change is our focus on the important issues that matter most to Nova Scotians like providing better care, access to health care through Collaborative Emergency Centres, and also in keeping the HST off electricity and home heat, energy conservation through ground-breaking Efficiency Nova Scotia and, of course, reducing poverty through a variety of direct and indirect measures.

We've worked hard on these issues, Madam Speaker, for many years in government and outside of government. We are proud of our work and we are proud of the accomplishments and will continue to pursue a better future for families, seniors and for our beautiful Province of Nova Scotia.

Madam Speaker, this new government has inherited a province with much better circumstances than the one that we had when we formed government in 2009. (Interruption) Oh, yes. Unlike the recessionary economics that we faced with declining revenue and a heavily indebted province that had the worst economic performance of any, I repeat, of any Canadian province for the last 20 years. They have inherited a province on a different path with a balanced budget, a stronger credit rating, and a more disciplined Public Service capable of living within its means and dramatically reducing emergency room closures.

Madam Speaker, on November 13th our Leader also pointed out that 10 per cent fewer seniors are living in poverty. Also, targets for land conservations were met and exceeded, and the largest economic development opportunity in many generations in a multi-million dollar ship building contract, which will result in new, good-paying jobs and a growth in the province's GDP.

Madam Speaker, fellow colleagues, our Leader from Halifax Needham also pledged our caucus will be vigilant in ensuring that the better path of our province is not going to be jeopardized due to the changes in government policies. As a new government acts to fulfill its election promises we will work hard to ensure that the important services Nova Scotians value and need are not damaged.

For example, Madam Speaker, this government promised - I repeat - promised to get rid of district health authorities in favour of a health super board, and this must not be allowed to create chaos in our health care system; it cannot be allowed to result in even more wasteful and costly severance packages, taking money away from front-line care; and it must not be allowed to reduce - I repeat - reduce local decision making in health care. So these are just some of the important issues which this caucus, and our Leader, spoke about on the November 13, 2013, CBC broadcast.

Madam Speaker, before I address some other topics I want to thank and certainly feel I should reflect again on where I have come from and thank a few people who especially assisted in helping me get re-elected in the October 8th election this year. Some of these people are Adrian Conrad; Tina Nickerson; Joy Melanson; Judi Milne; Jeff Langille; Stephanie Wiles; Connie Eaton; Steven Hopper; Suzanne Jeremy; Cheryl Wentzell; Paula Curie; and my official agent Elizabeth Rhuland; Ken Seddon; Heather Kelly; Lisa Masen; Betty Lou Benham; Roy O'Donnell, who seconded my nomination; Bruce Atkinson; and Mervin Hartlin. Some who have worked and helped also on the campaign were Courtney Wentzell; Kathy Johnson; Linda Symonds; Linda Smith; and a special thank you to the former MLA from Queens, Vicki Conrad, for all her help.

Madam Speaker, I do want to have a special thank you to my family, my sister Mary, and Carl Amero, for their assistance in my campaign, and usually you take advice from your older sister which I always do. My own family, my children Ginger and Suzanne, and my number one, my number-one supporter who I've been married to for 40 years as of August 31st of this year. (Applause) That was 40 years as of August 31th to a person called Luella Jean.

Madam Speaker, I move on to some of my other speaking notes here but I'm going to get to that quiz so don't let me forget that - I'm looking at the time too.

It is interesting as we move on here. I want to talk certainly about Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal - I'm very thankful for the critic area which I have received and I also have received the critic area of Fisheries and Aquaculture, and I will give you a heads-up that there will be a quiz later on and I have a list of 12 things of why politicians and lobsters are so much alike, they're so similar. So I'm looking forward to that - I hope you have a pen and paper in hand.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the other critic areas. Natural Resources - I look forward to working with the minister from Yarmouth and we actually have a meeting set up for in a few days and I look forward to that, talking about some of the conservation measures that we have done regarding 12 per cent protections of lands across Nova Scotia, one of the EGSPA goals. All the Parties in this House agreed to that a number of years ago, and I'm very honoured to see that fulfilled and brought forward to not only protect 12 per cent of our lands across Nova Scotia but we exceeded that and reached 13 per cent.

There's a number of questions dealing with natural resources, like access to Crown lands and some of the lands that we talked about. I know that there are certain recreational groups that want access, they want gates to be open. I look forward to having these discussions with our ministers at the appropriate time.

Mr. Speaker, I guess to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, the critic area - I'm honoured to have that as a critic area. I look forward to the questions. It's unfortunate, and I don't see it as being unfortunate, but today in Question Period, when the member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank, from the government side, asked questions to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, I see that my job is going to be easier because you're going to bring my questions to the floor of this House of Assembly and I can assure the member opposite that I'll be bringing these questions forcefully to the floor of this House and we'll be pursuing that. I look forward to that.

The Minister of Transportation and Infrastructural Renewal certainly has already, I know, had protests in the early days of this government at his constituency office. I just want to get that on record and I'll bring that forward. Also, the first day of the session of this House there was a protest by CUPE right outside the gates, very few hours, regarding

protests about cutting the paving crew in that particular paving plant. I actually have a pamphlet that I had the honour of receiving from that particular protest. Madam Speaker, I won't take any . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Excuse me, you can't use any props in the House.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Madam Speaker, I can ask for a ruling but I'm going to read from this and I'm going to table it but I would be more than interested in asking for a ruling.

MADAM SPEAKER: Go ahead then.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. In the past traditionally we read from the document and I give notice that I will be tabling it after I do read so I'll continue on.

Madam Speaker, the document reads that just one day after being sworn in, the Premier signalled his plan to pull the plug on our public paving plant, but by doing so, "the Liberals have just eliminated competition between a small group of highly profitable contractors who've dominated the paving industry in our province and us, the taxpayers."

I'll read the final paragraph here: This move by the new government spells bad roads ahead for the majority of Nova Scotia motorists and happy days for the big contractors who had been making exorbitant profits until the in-house paving plan forced them to be more competitive. This was submitted by CUPE, a message from Nova Scotia's Highway Workers Union, CUPE Local 1867. Madam Speaker, I'll be tabling that pamphlet.

You can see, Madam Speaker, that with the assistance of my colleague, the member for Waverley-Fall River- Beaver Bank, we will be making sure that Nova Scotians will be bringing the issues regarding roads, roads, roads. Actually that was a quote from the member from the government side when she addressed the Speech from the Throne, I actually documented that. That was the quote from the member from the Liberal side, the member for Lunenburg, who used the issue regarding the number one issue in her election was roads, roads, roads. So I look forward to being a Critic for Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and that's certainly important to me.

Madam Speaker, this caucus member certainly in this session will be asking the questions like I alluded to here and we'll be holding our government accountable and I certainly will be paying attention and making sure that we will be addressing the issues that are important to Nova Scotians.

Before I get into the fishery, I want to talk about who I am, and as a fisherman, I want to publicly say that I am surrounded by colleagues from all across Nova Scotia. I find it very important to express - to know where you come from and where you have been and

where you are going. To me, as a young fisherman, I can tell you that I was out of the school system when I was 14 years of age, and I had my first commercial boat when I was 15. I was a fisherman for 38 years until I got interested in municipal politics. I spent nine years with the Municipality of Barrington and was elected three times as warden there. I went on in 2006, as I mentioned earlier, and became interested and involved and elected as a provincial MLA. (Interruptions) Actually, as you get older, to the member opposite, you get wiser. You make some decisions that actually benefit you going down the road.

I just want to emphasize the importance of speaking as a Fisheries Critic. I look forward to that. I look forward to the challenges and the issues that were brought forward to the previous government, and with my background I really felt that was something that was important to coastal communities right across Nova Scotia.

Before I get into some of the topics here, I want to point out one of the reasons why I wanted to come to this House seven or eight years ago. I know that other politicians, some famous politicians, take a walk in a winter snowstorm to figure out where they want to go in their political career. I literally took the walk along Cape Sable Island beach to determine whether I wanted to come and do this job here. One of the little boxes that I could not tick off was that - this was something like nine years ago - if I did not pursue this opportunity, and if I was fortunate to live 20 or 30 years down the road and if I was in some retirement home or wherever, and I looked back on my life and said I wished I'd done that, I couldn't tick that box off - so I am going to go and try to get nominated and elected for our Party and be an MLA. That was the check-off mark.

The reason I did that was because at the time fishermen in our community could not get access to capital to purchase a fishing licence. I know that all of us around here come for different reasons, but I can tell you, that is one of the reasons why I wanted this job. Young fishermen could not enter the fishery. I know the member for Argyle-Barrington would say he was the one that changed that. I will say to him, yes, you changed it, but I campaigned on that and I made sure that was on the radar of the present government then - the PCs - and one person can make a difference in this House. We made a difference.

There were three points at the time, why I wanted to run. The second one was, there was a seniors home in Barrington that was reported and announced several times by all governments for the last 30 years, that this was going to be built. Madam Speaker, I did get called on a point of order in my very first speech for introducing a prop, and I want to just bring this to your attention. The prop that time was (Interruption) No, it was not a fish. It was the actual blueprint from Bay Side Home, which was 30 years old, and it was that thick. I got up and gave my Vanna White impression: here was a blueprint, 30 years old, of this home for seniors in our community that needs to be finished.

I can tell you today, that home is finished in the mandate that we were elected on. We did it. We got it finished. The blueprint was documented and tabled, and I got up, and a

point of order was called, and then the Speaker gave up, he read me the riot act, read me the policies about how dare you, Mr. Belliveau, how dare you use a prop in this House.

I remember our Leader at the time, Mr. Dexter, sitting there and I said okay, Mr. Belliveau, you're in a little bit of a pickle here and how are you going to get out of that because your Leader is looking at you and you're going to have to address the Speaker. So I got up after the Speaker gave me his lecture about the Rules of the House and I apologized for not learning the Rules quickly enough, we were in there within 10 days, and I said I'll tell you what, I will learn the Rules in this House but you're not going to get me to stop talking about seniors or Bay Side Home until that is complete. That home, today, is one of the best across Nova Scotia and it's complete. So that is what one individual can do, and many individuals across that constituency wanted that home built.

The third thing that I ran on is transportation and that's why I'm very fortunate to be here today and have the critic area of transportation. There was a by-pass in Barrington which had been promised by four Premiers - I repeat, four Premiers - that previous to 2006 said the Barrington by-pass of Highway No. 103 will be completed. I remember Rick Grant coming up and doing an interview with me and I said that this had been promised for 30 years, blah, blah, and it's not.

Actually, one of my best friend's first jobs was doing the survey lines on that road. We had the crew come up and do a little story, and I can tell you that within six months that was on the tendering process of the present government and the road was complete. So you can get things done in this House, you just have to be consistent; you have to be focused on what you're trying to do and you can do it. People say, well you are actually not in government now, you are in a critic area, you're not going to get things done but I can assure that when it comes to roads, there's going to be work done and not only in the present government's constituency, but also in the other Opposition constituency.

I can assure you that the work will be completed there. If not, there's going to be a major issue and you will hear from it on the floor of this Assembly.

Before I get to the list I want to just say that one of the things I am deeply interested in - and the member opposite, the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, may want to pay attention to this - one of the things that I am deeply interested in is the underdeveloped species across our coast. I know the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism has spent time on the water, has spent time in the fishing industry. In the previous government, we went to Ottawa last February and made a presentation to the federal government and said that we were willing to make a financial contribution to collect science, to go out and make sure that we can develop new species, such as stone crab, whelks - I can give you a list of many different species that are not being utilized now and the fishermen know that these species are there. We need to diversify our economy, especially in rural Nova Scotia.

My question is that we made the commitment to develop at least two species in Nova Scotia and if you can just see how other Atlantic Provinces would make that same financial commitment, we could have growth in these communities regarding the fisheries. The first question is, are we going to pay for the science to do this? I'm hoping that the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism is certainly paying attention and that funding is going to be in place to do that.

Madam Speaker, I think it's time now. I'm sure that all of you have your pen and paper in hand, and I think everybody across Nova Scotia may know that there are a lot of similarities between a lobster and a politician. Again, I spent 38 years on the water fishing for lobster and other species. I spent seven years in this particular building and usually you have a lot of time or different times to make comparisons. People will say, how did you ever come up with 12 similarities between a lobster - give me a break here - and a politician? So pay attention. Let's see how close we are.

The similarities between a lobster and a politician:

- (12) Both need a hard shell to survive in their environment;
- (11) People will try to bait you or are out to trap you;

Question Period comes to mind.

- (10) Sometimes you need to throw some back - they're not a keeper and they need to mature;
- (9) Be careful how you handle them - they could come back to bite you;
- (8) No matter what region you are from, everybody thinks theirs are the best;
- (7) Both a politician and lobster may or can hide out until the enemy passes;
- (6) Both are always looking for a free meal;
- (5) They both always look great at dinner;
- (4) Politicians and lobsters are territorial and will defend an area possessively, or they'll certainly claim ownership;

You may not like this, but it's actually true:

- (3) Both are cannibals, and at times will consume members of their own species;

It gets better. This is the one I like:

- (2) Many people agree the best use is for fertilizer; and
- (1) If they are not careful, both can find themselves in hot water.

I think that's amusing. You have to have a little fun here.

I just want to end with a few comments on what we bring to the House. I was actually given a lecture by my former elementary school teacher, Sylvester Atkinson, on this point. Back in 2006, I got a congratulatory phone call from Sylvester Atkinson, who said he wanted to thank me for being elected here. I said, because of all my background, being involved with the fisheries and being on municipal council, I hope I bring common sense to the House of Assembly. He stopped me in mid-sentence and said, there's no such thing as common sense. It is rare sense. So regardless if you believe in rare sense or common sense, I really, truly believe that we all collectively bring the positive, our diverse backgrounds, to the House of Assembly and that's why we are going to make life better for all Nova Scotians.

I just want to wrap up some of my comments on this. We all bring different, diverse backgrounds. I look around me and we literally have a shepherd to my right, we have a preacher, we have a farmer, we have an actress, we have a coalminer's son, and a fisherman. You can't get a much more diverse background than what's around here today. I feel honoured (Interruptions) Well, the paramedics are in there too. I heard that we have a sprinkling of chartered accountants in here. (Interruptions) And teachers, yes, don't get carried away. I was just doing the background, literally the background here. I wasn't doing the whole 51. I know where I come from, and I know where I'm going.

I just want to end with this: on Remembrance Day in Liverpool, I had the honour of being a guest speaker, and I think this summarizes, before I close - I just want to add these few comments that I had for that particular audience at that time on Remembrance Day. Because I really believe, I think there was a member here who made reference to veterans in their Reply to the Speech from the Throne. So I think it's important that we bring this out.

Madam Speaker, it is the veteran, not the preacher, who has given us the freedom of religion. It is the veteran, not the reporter, who has given us the freedom of the press. It is the veteran, not the poet, who has given us the freedom of speech. It is the veteran, not the campus organizer, who has given us the freedom to assemble. It is the veteran, not the lawyer, who has given us the freedom of a fair trial. It is the veteran, not the politician, who has given us the right to vote. It is the veteran who salutes the flag and it is the veteran who serves under the flag.

So, Madam Speaker, in closing, it leaves me with one question: do we know who we are and do we know where we have come from? But the only question for this new government is, do they know where they're going? (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Madam Speaker, thank you for the honour and the privilege of rising to give this address here today. I'm very grateful to be part of this very talented and diverse group that we have in the House. I'm also deeply humbled to be here as the representative of the people of Cumberland North. I would like to congratulate all the members on their electoral successes and to extend a sincere thank you to all the candidates who put their names forward. The electoral system in Nova Scotia is truly a fine example of how the democratic process should and does work.

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, while I was campaigning I met a number of people who didn't seem to appreciate this. I met many people who were disillusioned with our political institutions and who did not feel that they wanted to be part of this system. There are many among us who do not understand the value of their vote and the importance of participating in the democratic exercise. That was troubling to me and when I met someone with this point of view, I was sometimes at a loss as to how to address it, but I did have the opportunity to have my own faith in our system of government enhanced when I met Milu Rodrigues of Amherst.

I knocked on his door one evening during the campaign and Milu had the opportunity to tell me about his experience being a refugee from Idi Amin's Uganda in the 1970s. He hinted to me of the horrors that he had witnessed there and he thanked me for offering to serve in this role. He explained his appreciation for our system of democratic government and how he would always be grateful for the welcome and support that he received as a new Canadian from the Liberal Government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau. I wish that more people throughout the province had the chance to hear Milu's story so he could explain to them the importance of each and every vote and just how bad things can be under a non-democratic regime.

Today I have many people to thank, Madam Speaker. The success of our campaign in Cumberland North was earned through the hard work of many individuals. I'm going to mention a few in the hope that the many whom I'm not able to specifically name will understand. My campaign was ably managed by Russell Scott. Russell loaned us the experience of his own previous campaigns and the wisdom that he gained through his success in business. Russell and I began the campaign as mere acquaintances but by the end we felt like brothers to one another.

Young Thomas MacLaren, who was participating in his first campaign, handled his official agent duties with an extreme level of organization. I was always impressed by his maturity and his ability to remain calm under the many pressures of the campaign.

One of the senior members of our team, Charlie Bishop, proved to be a tireless road warrior, Madam Speaker. His dedication to the door-to-door campaign simply never wavered. I have to say, Charlie is a gentleman in his 70s who has undergone many campaigns and I was extremely proud of him and the encouragement he gave me throughout. Our campaign office was a hub of highly organized chaos thanks to the

dedication of Diane Yarymowich and Gloria LeFurgey. Our campaign message was always expressed clearly and concisely with the guidance and support that we received from Geoff Degannes, Craig Farrell and Len Hendra. Rod Gilroy, a newcomer to the Liberal side of things, brought an extreme desire to win, a wealth of experience and a new outlook on how to run a Liberal campaign.

I have to give special recognition to someone I consider a special mentor and counsellor and throughout the campaign the person who was always there for me was Cathy Bragg-Gilmore. Cathy was the first to suggest that I could possibly attain this office and she worked tirelessly to make sure that happened. My never-ending gratitude is extended to Cathy and I'm extremely proud to be the first Liberal member to be elected in Cumberland North since her late husband, Ross Bragg, took the seat 20 years ago. I was hoping Ross's two children would be here to hear that, but I see they've departed.

Of course, I've left the last and most heartfelt thanks for my family, Madam Speaker. My sons, Joel and Andrew, provided their constant support for me from afar as they were both pursuing their lives elsewhere in Ottawa and in Moncton. My youngest son, Brendan, did have the pleasure of always being in the thick of the campaign. He was there and he never backed down from any chance he had to help whether it was knocking on doors, which was truly awful for him, or driving me around, which he didn't mind quite so much.

My wife, Nancy, of course, supported me. She was an astute advisor, a charming and outgoing companion at all the social functions that we had to attend, and she was also a very vocal cheering section; all this from someone who had no previous political experience and who, if you asked her, would call herself an introvert. I know that Nancy never dreamed that she could walk up and knock on a stranger's door, let alone that she would do up to 100 a day for day after day. My sincere thanks and love to my family for being there for me throughout the campaign.

This was my first campaign that I had been involved in in any capacity and I feel very fortunate to be blessed with this dedicated group of people who made it such a wonderful success.

I also want to take this opportunity to provide the members of this House with an introduction to the great riding of Cumberland North. Sometime over the four years prior to October 8th, I wondered if anybody in this Chamber actually knew where Cumberland North was, what the people there were up to or what their needs were. I have great hope that going forward from here that is going to change very dramatically.

Cumberland North touches on the mighty Bay of Fundy and it crosses the Isthmus of Chignecto, which is the land connection between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. It's the sole area for entry by land to Nova Scotia and for a vast stretch of the riding it's bordered by the beautiful Northumberland Strait, which, by the way, has the warmest

waters north of the Carolinas. (Interruption) We obviously have some Northumberland Strait cottage people. It goes along the Northumberland Strait on Route 6 until it meets the Colchester border in the Malagash area. It's an area rich in history, in resources and in people.

Right at the New Brunswick border, on the Bay of Fundy, you will find the site of the historic Village of Beaubassin. Beaubassin was the second French settlement in the New World after Port Royal. It was settled in 1672 by a surgeon by the name of Jacques Bourgeois, whose descendants still live in the area. One of Jacques Bourgeois' descendants is the Honourable Cindy Bourgeois, who sits on the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia here, in Halifax.

The Beaubassin site is now owned by the federal Crown and sits right on the edge of the Tantramar Marsh, which is the world's largest saltwater marsh. Much of that area is on land reclaimed and protected from the powerful ravages of the Bay of Fundy by a system of dykes. Beaubassin is a highlight of the beautiful Fort Lawrence area, which is as I've said the entry point to Nova Scotia. It's the first opportunity for visitors to learn about our beautiful province and a place that I intend to see become the point where visitors will learn of the marvellous experiences that they can enjoy in Cumberland County.

The Town of Amherst is my home, Madam Speaker. It's the place where my parents, Lewis Farrell and Alice Savoie, came to seek their fortunes during the Second World War. Amherst was a thriving industrial centre at that time. We were busy building airplanes and other machinery for the war effort. Back then, people didn't go to Alberta to seek a more prosperous way of life; they came to Amherst. Now currently, Amherst still has a core of manufacturing with firms such as LED Roadway Lighting, IMP Aerospace, and PolyCello. We are also a distribution centre for several large companies such as Staples, GFS food service, and Maritime Pride Eggs.

Amherst has a wonderful build heritage and visitors come in awe of our stately homes and the architecture of many of our public buildings. Amherst also has a rich political history being the home of four fathers of confederation: Sir Charles Tupper, Robert B. Dickey, Edward Barron Chandler, and Jonathan McCully were proud Nova Scotians with strong roots in Amherst. They participated in the Confederation conferences and were instrumental in bringing Nova Scotia into the Confederation of Canada. Sir Charles Tupper served as Premier of the Colony of Nova Scotia prior to Confederation and went on to become Prime Minister. Jonathan McCully was a Liberal lawyer, legislator, senator, and later a judge. I feel a special affinity for his story having a couple of these things in common with him and I've also had the opportunity to portray him on the stage in a dramatic presentation which was created by my good friend Dale Fawthrop.

Leaving Amherst and travelling east on the Sunrise Trail you'll pass through many small communities such as Hastings, Warren, Truemanville, Shinimicas, Linden, Tidnish, Northport, and Port Howe. All of these places have their own special charms, Madam

Speaker. They are home to farmers and fishers and they are also some of the most wonderful and beautiful shorefront communities anywhere in the region - and by the region, I mean beyond Nova Scotia.

The Village of Pugwash is home to the largest underground salt mine in Atlantic Canada. The mine is a major employer in the region. Pugwash is also the birthplace of 20th Century industrialist Cyrus Eaton. Along with Bertrand Russell, Eaton founded the original Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs. This became an institution which organized subsequent peace conferences held at Eaton's Thinkers' Lodge in Pugwash and in other locations around the world. This resulted in this group being awarded both a Nobel Peace Prize and a Lenin Peace Prize. Both these medals are proudly displayed at the Thinker's Lodge in Pugwash.

Pugwash also displays all of their street signs in both English and Gaelic - and I plan to have the member for Timberlea-Prospect come and translate those for me sometime soon. Pugwash is also known for their wonderful summer festivals. They host, in the period around Canada Day, the International Gathering of the Clans, as well as later in July. Their community spirit is further displayed through their HarbourFest where thousands will flock to enjoy both entertainment and hospitality, and to, on occasion, view the Tall Ships as well.

Next along the shore, Madam Speaker, you would come to the Village of Wallace, which was originally known as Ramsheg, or "the place between". Wallace is famous for its sandstone quarry. The distinctive grey-coloured Wallace sandstone was used in the construction of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, the Province House in Charlottetown, PEI, as well as in this very building. The Wallace sandstone was used in the construction of this honourable Province House right here, where we sit today. This summer I had the opportunity to attend in the Community of Wallace when they were the proud recipients of the Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award. This was a testament to their level of active participation in supporting their community.

Finally, along the north shore of Nova Scotia is the Community of Malagash. Malagash was the location of Canada's first rock salt mine, and there's a museum at the community centre there which recognizes this part of their proud history; Malagash is an active shellfish aquaculture centre, as well as a traditional farming and fishing community; and the temperate microclimate makes Malagash a prime grape-growing region, Madam Speaker, and, as we all know, where you have grapes you have wine. Jost Winery is the largest operating winery in the Atlantic Region. Jost is a major employer in the area and their fine product is known far and wide. I would invite you all to come up to the many great celebrations they have each summer.

Madam Speaker, this is an extremely truncated tour of Cumberland North. I could go on and on about the riding and its many charms, and the things it has to offer but, alas, I've been told that I'm only allotted one hour for the task so I'll have to move on. I'll leave

it at this, but I do encourage everyone to visit and to experience these many wonders first-hand.

In conclusion I want to talk about the time when I first had the opportunity to meet our honourable Premier. He came and visited me in Amherst in October 2012. We sat and we talked about what he had accomplished as the Leader of the Official Opposition at that time; we talked about my desire to become a candidate in the upcoming election. It didn't take me very long to decide that I wanted to be on his team; I wanted to be part of what he was creating. I felt an immediate connection to him as a person, and to the messages he was delivering. Based on this, I went to the people of Cumberland North and I made certain commitments, and as I sat in this House, Madam Speaker, and listened to the Speech from the Throne, I knew that I had made the right choice. (Applause)

To hear His Honour the Lieutenant Governor confirm the commitments of this government to families, small business, and local communities, assures me that I'll be able to go back to the people of Cumberland North and say that we delivered on our promises. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I now ask the House Leader for the Official Opposition to provide us with the business for tomorrow.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, of course Opposition Day tomorrow will be between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. After the daily routine and Question Period, we will be calling Bill No. 6, the Elections Act, and Bill No. 8, Nova Scotia Jobs Fund Transfer Act.

Madam Speaker, again, we will sit between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. I move that the House do now rise.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise, to meet again on Wednesday, between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The adjournment motion was submitted by the honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid:

“Therefore be it resolved that the Premier assure Nova Scotians tonight that he will honour the previous government’s important commitment to long-term care, including 350 new long-term care beds, 750 replacement beds, and plans to allow 3,000 more people access to home care.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HEALTH & WELLNESS - LONG-TERM CARE: NDP GOV’T. COMMITMENTS - PREM. HONOUR

HON. DAVID WILSON: Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand on my feet tonight in late debate on this most important issue.

I know that today during Question Period, questions were asked of the Liberal Government around their commitment to continue to support announcements, and more importantly, long-term care facility replacements and bed replacements that were announced by the previous government, and their commitment to do that.

If I heard correctly, the Premier and the Minister of Health and Wellness have committed to support those projects announced prior to the last election. I know that the residents throughout Nova Scotia who are looking forward to replacement beds or looking forward to a new facility to address their long-term care needs feel some relief.

Now, saying that, I hope the government lives up to that commitment, and it will be my job and our caucus’ job to make sure that they do that. I was very glad to be part of a government that brought forward those lists. As the Minister of Health and Wellness indicated earlier today, there was a review of the needs of Nova Scotians across the province, and a list was compiled on some of the areas and some of the communities that really needed this issue to be addressed. I know the work that has gone into that was extremely important, and one of the things that came out of that report was the fact that these requests and these needs for long-term care beds - the new ones and the replacements - and the long-term care home care support placements were needed throughout ridings across the province.

Every member of this Legislature who was here prior to the last election knows how important these services are. There was no attempt at all to try to limit one riding or another just because of who their MLA is. One of the things we’ll look forward to in the

coming months and years is to make sure that those commitments made are kept. Hopefully it's some relief to some of those communities that have been waiting a long time. Long-term care and services for seniors have been a challenge for a number of years.

I know in my role in Opposition, when I first entered this Legislature, the Progressive Conservative Government tried to tackle the issue of long-term care, and what is the right number of long-term care beds that we need here in a province with a population of just under one million people? I've been a strong advocate that to address the issues of long-term care and support for seniors in our province doesn't only depend on constructing a new facility or adding new beds. It's a complicated issue, but it's an issue that you need to move forward on, on a number of fronts.

I criticized the Progressive Conservative Government when I was in Opposition. They seemed at that point only to be looking at building new facilities across the province. What lagged behind was increasing support for home care. What I heard as an MLA, what I heard as Minister of Health and Wellness, was that people wanted to stay in their homes longer. Improving services to allow that to happen needed to have some investment. That's why last year there was an increase in investment in home care support of over \$22 million, so that we could start to do that. You could ensure that services were there and options were there for Nova Scotians. The most important thing is that Nova Scotians have options when it comes to them turning to government or turning to the health care system to get support for a loved one, be it a husband or wife, mother or father, aunt or a family member.

I think all of us should know personally, or someone who was a caregiver for someone who might have an ailment or who is a senior in the Province of Nova Scotia. It's not easy. It takes a lot of time and energy to support a loved one at home who might need home care, and many Nova Scotians take that task on themselves. Some of them continue to work in jobs full time, and then when they get off work they go home and support a family member. Most often it's a father, or a mother, or a spouse, or another family member. So the services they need when they do get to a point where they need support needs to be in place and they need to have those options. I'm hoping that the new government continues along the path of ensuring not only that there are replacement long-term care beds available across the province but there are new facilities that need to be constructed, but, more importantly, continued investment in home care and home services because you need to make sure that people have those options.

As I said earlier, most Nova Scotians, if not all, would rather stay in their home, especially towards the end of their life, Madam Speaker, in the comfort of where maybe they raised their family or where their loved ones are. That's why I hope, and I will keep this current government accountable to ensure that they keep that promise because there are communities across the province that are looking forward and have been waiting many, many years for the announcement that was made earlier this year, communities like New Glasgow, Wolfville, Mahone Bay, and also in Queens County.

Those are some of the areas that were announced for new or replacement construction in 2014. Also in that planning, in that review that was done, in 2015 there are a number of other communities represented from all Parties here in the Legislature, in Amherst, in Chester, in Clare, in Shelburne, in Sydney, in Antigonish. One of the areas where we have Sisters of St. Martha, who have been providing care for their colleagues for many years, and they came to government with a situation that they are at a point where many of the sisters are elderly. They're finding it very difficult to continue to provide that care and came to government and asked for government to support a new, 25-bed long-term care facility in Antigonish.

Madam Speaker, I hope that the government recognizes the importance of that project to move forward because the Sisters of St. Martha - I'm not from Antigonish but I know of the good work that they've done in not only providing long-term care for their colleagues but really building that community, building the facilities that are there, like the hospital for example so that their residents can gain access to appropriate health care.

Also The Birches, a home for special care in Musquodoboit Harbour, Madam Speaker, is another one of those projects. I was encouraged by the Minister of Health and Wellness who said all those 11 projects should be going ahead as they continue to be government and it will be my role to make sure that that happens.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in my place tonight to speak to this very important topic, one that, in fact, particularly in the last few weeks, has been very much top of mind, as we say, or one of the hot-button issues that we are looking at in the province. One of the things, as we all know as MLAs, is that this will be one of those issues that each of us at one time or another will be asked to have a look at. Is there something that you could do to assist my mother, or my father, or actually in long-term care facility and continuing care, in particular, it can be of any age but this evening we are talking more about long-term care, the facilities available to Nova Scotians, also care in the home. These are the areas that we do need to address.

There is that startling basic demographic that we are all cognizant of in the House and the latest updated information, which now puts us at just about 18 years away, in 2031, when almost 30 per cent of Nova Scotians will be 65 and over. It's almost an unfathomable thought when we think about it - 25 per cent by around 2026, close to 30 per cent by 2031.

So the demands for continuing care through that latter part of the life cycle is going to challenge all governments, will challenge the federal government, provincial government, and at the local level to respond as strongly as we possibly can. In fact, since the year 2006, which really was the beginning of the Continuing Care Strategy, we've added about 900 beds to aging facilities and opened almost 1,000 new beds, yet the recent

series of articles done by The ChronicleHerald indicate that we still have a list of 2,500 people who are hoping to get in a nursing home.

I know from my area - I'm not really speaking as much here from the Department of Health and Wellness statistical profile of who is on that wait-list - but I know to get in the facilities in the Annapolis Valley, to get into the Grandview Manor, Heart of the Valley in Middleton, people go through the assessment but they really work for that early assessment to get their name on the list because we do have a wait-list and that is the reality all over Nova Scotia. In all nine district health authorities there is a wait-list for people to get into nursing homes.

But there are actually different degrees, or a range of need to get into a nursing home and that's one of the issues that does face us. One of the areas why I think a real strong focus, and this is really where we're going in our first 100 days in office, is to take a look at what more supports can be given to elderly Nova Scotians to be able to stay in their home because as the former Minister of Health and Wellness just outlined as during his time in office, this is what he heard most often. It was one of the quotes that The ChronicleHerald used that I have said often and that I've heard many seniors say, help me stay in my home.

I think that is the operative word - provide a system of helps. Some are on the high end of medical interventions, and it's interesting that more and more medical procedures, medical helps, are in fact being brought to the home. Don't come to the clinic, don't come to the emergency room, we will come to you and I believe that's going to be one of the strongest system of helps that we can bring to this issue because we've already put a tremendous amount of money into continuing care. I think we're now up around - one of the facts that I was looking at today - we're into \$538 million just on the continuing care for our seniors, which is a remarkable amount of money to be in that half billion dollar range.

So we know that we're really challenged in this province and this is one of the reasons that I'm very opposed to the new Health Accord, and I don't mind being on the record. When you don't look at a profile of your population, what are the needs of your population? We are clearly now number one in the country with the oldest average age population. That is one of the statistics that we've had confirmed through a number of different Statistics Canada studies.

This issue is not going away, and why we need to have a very, very significant review of the Continuing Care Strategy, but also to continue the dialogue. I think this was one of the reasons why we had this wonderful series that was just carried out by The ChronicleHerald, because we know that in some other jurisdictions in some other countries there are some innovative and other initiatives that are taking place that are helping seniors stay in their homes.

I know seniors who have no family members to come and support and work with them, even on some very, very basic tasks, whether it's looking after the lawn care, or in this season, looking after snow removal. I know in the riding that I represent we have a lot of big, old farm homes in the country, and it is still dependent on the wood furnace, and it's getting that help to get the five, six, seven cords of wood down in the basement. In fact, when we talk to stakeholders about what do we do to have a more robust home care program, it's interesting the number of times they move a bit away from their professional expertise and what they can offer to actually saying, you know, it is those small, daily tasks - if we had a stronger volunteer network.

I guess one of the areas that there are many community organizations, many church organizations that used to support our seniors. I absolutely believe that despite some of the very good things we need to do in the Department of Health and Wellness to support seniors, that whole consciousness around the whole community supporting seniors to stay in their home and to create a stronger climate of wellness and well-being as they advance in age. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Madam Speaker, it's an honour today to have a few minutes to speak in late debate on a topic that has been spoken about many times for many hours in this House, in this Chamber. I know that I have spoken many times on it over the years, and I know that the now-minister has spoken many times on it over the years.

I don't mind saying that this goes back a long way, a very long way, and some changes are definitely required. When I first came here in June 2006 I was standing in my place speaking about this when given the opportunity. I don't want to use the word "critical," but I did question our own ministers through our course of government, through the NDP's course of government, too, and now again I will have the opportunity to question yet another new Minister of Health and Wellness who I know understands this, as a long-time critic of this, and who comes from an area where it's consistent with the rest of the province where these issues exist.

This is going to go all the way back to this single-entry system, and I'm sure some of these ministers and former ministers and members of this House are getting tired of hearing me talk about this. I'm not saying that I have all the right answers, but I can tell you that nobody yet, as far as I know, has gone back to review this system of how people enter into the long-term care facilities. This has been an ongoing issue.

It changed quickly back a number of years ago, and it needs to be reviewed. It needs to be looked at, Madam Speaker. There is time now to do it. Something has to be done.

Now I will say also that not everybody wants to go to a nursing home, as they call it. I talk to many people, just like I'm sure all members in this House do and have over the

years, who have been elected - we deal with it all the time. We deal with the wait-lists, and it has become - I hate to say it, but in the last four years - there was a time prior to the last four years that you could pick up the phone and you could contact the Department of Health and Wellness and say, where is Mr. So-and-so or Mrs. So-and-so on the list? Their family is inquiring, they have been through the assessments that are required, the financial pieces that are required. What happens? Well, we can't tell you that.

That only makes life worse for those family members who are desperately trying to look after their loved ones every day or have someone come in. People work, as we know. There are all kinds of factors. We need to be able to open that up so we are very transparent, that we are honest and forthcoming with people when they do call us to say, where is mom or dad on the list, or whomever? Why can't we just answer the question? What is the big secret around long-term care in the Province of Nova Scotia? I do not understand the answer to that. I have no idea why this is where it is - how we even got here for that matter. It's ridiculous. It should never have been that way.

It's bad enough the system the way that it's set up doesn't work, and I don't discredit the people working in the system. There are not enough of them, obviously. There are some issues there in the way that it's done, you know, we see people who may come from Cape Breton and end up at the Windsor Elms and vice versa, or wherever in the province - the so-called 100 kilometre rule in place.

There was a time not too many years ago, and I know this from experience - 17 years on the road as a paramedic - I know all about how patient transfer works and folks go into nursing homes, and we all do because our families have been there - a lot of our family members have been there and gone through this process. So we know, generally speaking, how this process works or should work. It should be fairly simple but it's not. So there's a lot of room to improve how that happens.

On the other side of that, we need to say to these people who say I want to stay at home, well, government is famous for it - not all governments - they are famous for developing programs that say: we're going to assist you to keep you in your own home and we're going to give you \$400 a month, but before we do that, we're going to put you through this rigorous program. We're going to make you fill out this application and take this statement, and we're going to ask how much money you make.

Well, I want to ask you, Madam Speaker, what difference does it make how much money you make? Wealthy people get sick, poor people get sick, the people in the middle get sick, all have needs, and a lot of the needs are the same. Why does it matter what amount of money you make as to whether you qualify for some kind of health care assistance in this province? They are all taxpayers - a lot of these people their whole lives. They've worked hard and helped the government coffers to represent these programs and put money into it. So some people are \$100 over, some people are \$1,000 over, \$3,000. Should it matter how much money we make as to whether we need assistance or we don't?

There's a lot of room to improve this very system and, again, I know that I've been up many times talking about this and so far it has not changed a whole lot, if at all. It has probably gotten worse given the fact that things have tightened up by way of even being able to get information.

Part of our jobs out there - and we've heard different speakers today talk about do we know where we are or where we came from, et cetera; a very good point. Do we know who we represent? Do we know why we're here? Do we know what our jobs are? Yes, we do. Those people come to us who elected us and say: we need you to help us find out where mom or dad is on the list. That shouldn't be a great big task, but somehow that's a terrible thing. Heaven forbid we give out a little information. Everything is a secret in government. It's time to open that up.

I'm really, really hopeful, Madam Speaker, that some changes do come by way of departments, bureaucracy, all of that, so that these very simple questions, the answers can be given and should be given. This is not a big deal. They want to know if they're fifth on the list, or 10th on the list, or 100th on the list, so they can make plans going into the future months ahead, or years ahead in some cases, before they can get some kind of assistance. That is an important step for families and we need to realize that. The stress that is on family members - and I know again, having been there, not only working in the health care field but we all have our own families. We've all contributed in some way, probably in many ways and many of us in looking after our parents in some fashion. It's not an easy task and I can tell you having to deal with these people all the time, as well, you see the stress that it causes them.

Families have a very difficult time looking after families. There are some who are very good at it, who want to do it. There are some who just can't and, Madam Speaker, as we all know, that is understandable. We can appreciate that. That's why there's a system in place to help look after people who are sick in this province, and thank God we have it, and in this country. So as we go forward, I hope we take the time and not rush it, take the time that we need. We know, I guess the paper says and we've heard for some time there are about 2,500 on a wait-list. We know we're not going to go out and build 2,500 new beds.

Now, I get a bit of a kick out of the NDP who put forward this motion about all the beds that they've created. Well, I've got to tell you the only beds that ever got rebuilt were beds that were announced prior to the 2009 election, Madam Speaker, that the Tory Government announced. Now, let's make that clear for the record. That was announced by our people in those days and that's fine. They got done and they got completed. Then there was an announcement for another bunch of new beds - when was that? It was just a couple of months prior to an election. Everybody saw that for what it was, I think, and that was clear on October 8th. You can't wait four years and say we're going to do what we're going to do and then not do it.

Anyway, Madam Speaker, that's neither here nor there because that day is past - it's a new day and there is a new government. Elections tend to create hope in people, no matter where they are around the world, and this province is no different. When you talk to people on the street, they say great, we have a new government, we'll live with that. The people of Nova Scotia have spoken, but we have expectations at the same time. That's the right thing to do. They'll be watching, those people who have been waiting in places like Unit 500 in the Hants Community Hospital will be anxiously waiting to see if there are changes toward the long-term health care system and how those placements are done.

The phones will still ring, the appointments will still be made, the people will still come in and they'll be asking about their mom or their dad and whoever it might be - their brother or their sister waiting placement - they'll still want to know those answers. I know it will take time to make those changes and I think we need to be right up front and honest - we understand it will take time and a giant department like the Department of Health and Wellness that has a huge budget that manages nearly half the provincial budget alone in health care. Things have to change. I think the minister knows that. He has been in this House a long time; he's gone through many budgets; he has asked many questions in the estimates. If anybody knows, I'm sure that he knows.

I don't mind saying this, as I've said to others, I know that I am here to support good programs that will come forward, to support ideas that will make life better when people are sick, to get placed in a time frame that is acceptable, and to also create programs to look after people at home. The minister mentioned things like snowplowing and cutting grass, and coming from the country where I come from there are still large homes, and we don't want everybody to just abandon their homes and move into a nursing home. Not everybody wants to do that, and I hope we have a focus on supporting those folks who want to stay home until the end.

And some of them do want to stay home and they want to die in their homes - and that is fair, there's nothing wrong with that. A lot of people you talk to, even those in nursing homes will tell you they would rather stay at home, they would rather die at home. That's their dignity; they deserve that. It is our job as policy-makers in this province to do it and to make it easier for that to happen if at all possible and to support them through those programs.

I don't care what their incomes are, I don't care if it is \$400 or \$600, or whatever the assistance is required, you need people, and there are nurses looking for jobs - they were called CNAs, I don't know what you call them today - LPNs and so on who are looking for jobs. There are home care abilities, I hope we take the time to look at every aspect of the long-term care operation in this province.

With those few words, Madam Speaker, I will take my seat.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member's time has exhausted, as has the time for late debate.

The motion is carried.

We are adjourned.

[The House rose at 4:08 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 117**

By: Mr. Tim Houston (Pictou East)

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

Whereas when Karen Lynn MacDonald lost her life eight years ago, due to an allergic reaction to peanut oil, her friends and family vowed they would do something to ensure her story would not be forgotten; and

Whereas the Karen Lynn MacDonald Allergy Awareness Society was formed to provide information about food and other life-threatening allergies and to ensure no one in Pictou, Antigonish, or Guysborough Counties would be without an EpiPen simply because they could not afford it; and

Whereas this society has been successful in raising awareness, working with schools and fire departments in all three counties, and ensuring there is always a supply of EpiPens readily available to these schools, fire departments, and those who cannot afford to purchase EpiPens;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate the Karen Lynn MacDonald Allergy Awareness Society for their dedication to this lifesaving endeavor.

RESOLUTION NO. 118

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 10 Nova Scotia employers were recognized for championing persons with disabilities by being presented with the Lieutenant Governor's Persons with Disabilities Employer Partnership Awards; and

Whereas the award acknowledges and honours employers who promote best practices towards the employment, independence, and service to persons with disabilities; and

Whereas Sherry Keen of Windsor Elms Village in Falmouth was the deserving recipient of a Lieutenant Governor's Persons with Disabilities Employer Partnership Award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Sherry Keen on receiving the Lieutenant Governor's Persons with Disabilities Employer Partnership Award and thank her for her work in making Nova Scotia more inclusive.

RESOLUTION NO. 119

By: Hon. Pat Dunn (Pictou Centre)

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

Whereas Bruce Langille's distinguished career in the volunteer fire service, which stretches over four decades, has had a significant impact in northern Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the communities of Onslow and Belmont recognize Mr. Langille for his more than 20 years of service on the volunteer fire brigade, retiring at the rank of captain, and for his expertise and valiant efforts during both Swissair and Hurricane Juan recoveries; and

Whereas the community of Bible Hill recognized the value, passion, and dedication Mr. Langille has made as a founding member with the Special Hazards Response Unit for 23 years, where he retired as chief in March 2013, but will continue to be an active volunteer;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend our thanks and congratulations to Chief Bruce Langille of his years of volunteerism, dedication, and valuable contributions in the pursuit of public safety.

RESOLUTION NO. 120

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

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

Whereas Evelyn Richardson Memorial Elementary School Grade 1 teacher, Denise Reashore, was a recipient of the 2013 Education Week award; and

Whereas this year's theme "Teaching for a Sustainable Future" is one Denise Reashore lives by at school and outside of school; and

Whereas Denise Reashore is an avid environmentalist who formed an Environmental Club where students help with a school garden and, through her coaching, the class entered the Nova Scotia Recycles contest, coming in first place in 2012 and second place the previous year;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Denise Reashore for receiving the 2013 Education Week award, thank her for her dedication and commitment to the school and students, and wish her continued success in her career.

RESOLUTION NO. 121

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

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

Whereas 10 Nova Scotia employers were recognized for championing persons with disabilities by being presented with the Lieutenant Governor's Persons with Disabilities Employer Partnership Awards; and

Whereas the award acknowledges and honours employers who promote best practices towards the employment, independence and service to persons with disabilities; and

Whereas Shelly Delaney, of Marco's Grill and Pasta House in Yarmouth, was the deserving recipient of a Lieutenant Governor's Persons with Disabilities Employer Partnership Award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Shelly Delaney on receiving a Lieutenant Governor's Persons with Disabilities Employer Partnership Award and commend her on her efforts to make Nova Scotia a more accepting and inclusive place.

RESOLUTION NO. 122

By: Hon. Jamie Baillie (Leader of the Official Opposition)

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

Whereas the Order of Nova Scotia is the highest honour of the Province of Nova Scotia that recognizes outstanding contributions or achievements by members of our community; and

Whereas Dr. Edwin Kinley of Halifax was selected to receive this great honour, in part for his remarkable medical career where he not only personally saved hundreds of lives as a pioneering cardiovascular surgeon, but also taught others to save lives; and

Whereas Dr. Kinley is also a distinguished community leader who represented constituents in the Nova Scotia Legislature and served our country in the Royal Canadian Naval Reserve;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Dr. Edwin Kinley on receiving the Order of Nova Scotia and thank him for his selfless service to others and his commitment to promote community health that generations of Nova Scotians will continue to benefit from.

RESOLUTION NO. 123

By: Hon. Jamie Baillie (Leader of the Official Opposition)

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

Whereas today is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities; and

Whereas over one billion people, or approximately 15 per cent of the world's population, live with some form of disability; and

Whereas evidence and experience show that when barriers to their inclusion are removed and persons with disabilities are empowered to participate fully in society, the entire community benefits;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge the International Day of Persons with Disabilities and continue to work toward a world of equal access for all.