



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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First Session

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:	
No. 55, Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Hon. M. Furey.....	1917
NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 1188, Haworth, Rebecca - CIS Award, Mr. B. Horne.....	1918
Vote - Affirmative.....	1919
Res. 1189, Lightfoot Tower - Restoration: Zoe Valley Library/Chester Mun. - Thank, Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	1919
Vote - Affirmative.....	1919
Res. 1190, Canso/Hazel Hill Vol. FD - Thank, Mr. L. Hines.....	1920
Vote - Affirmative.....	1920
Res. 1191, Benjamin Moore "Main St. Matters": Quinpool Rd. Mainstreet Dist. Assoc./Mayor/Vols. - Thank, Mr. J. Stroink.....	1920
Vote - Affirmative.....	1921

Res. 1192, Farmer, Cst. George: Leadership - Congrats., Ms. P. Arab	1921
Vote - Affirmative.....	1922
Res. 1193, Crouse, Randy: Antigonish Challenger Baseball Prog. - Congrats., Hon. R. Delorey	1922
Vote - Affirmative.....	1923
Res. 1194, Stairs Mem. United Church - Anniv. (100 th), Hon. J. Bernard	1923
Vote - Affirmative.....	1923
Res. 1195, Starks, Tyler: Champion Tune-up Your Garage - Congrats., Hon. K. Casey	1923
Vote - Affirmative.....	1924
Res. 1196, Bide Awhile Animal Shelter: Work - Recognize, Mr. A. Rowe	1924
Vote - Affirmative.....	1925
Res. 1197, Matheson, Cheryl: Prom Dress Prog. - Congrats., Mr. B. Maguire	1925
Vote - Affirmative.....	1926
Res. 1198, Boys and Girls Club Truro/Colchester: Commitment - Congrats., Ms. L. Zann	1926
Vote - Affirmative.....	1926
Res. 1199, E. Hants Fam. Resource Ctr.: Roots of Empathy Prog. - Participation, Ms. M. Miller	1927
Vote - Affirmative.....	1927
Res. 1200, Eskasoni Cultural Journeys: Work/Dedication - Recognize, Ms. P. Eyking	1927
Vote - Affirmative.....	1928
Res. 1201, Lamerson, Cheryl - Lun. Bd. of Trade Vol. of Yr., Ms. S. Lohnes-Croft.....	1928
Vote - Affirmative.....	1929
Res. 1202, Wood, Mr. Les: Senior Fitness Prog. - Thank, Hon. K. Murphy (by Ms. J. Treen)	1929
Vote - Affirmative.....	1930
Res. 1203, Gloade, Levi: Death of - Tribute, Ms. L. Zann.....	1930
Vote - Affirmative.....	1930
Res. 1204, Grcic-Stuart, Sonja: English Language Skills Development - Congrats., Ms. P. Arab	1931
Vote - Affirmative.....	1931
Res. 1205, Wright, Dr. Tarah: Australia Endeavour Fellowship - Congrats., Mr. J. Stroink.....	1932
Vote - Affirmative.....	1932

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS:

No. 209, Prem.: CRDA Audit - Status, Hon. J. Baillie	1932
No. 210, Prem.: Cap. Health/Nurses - Disciplinary Action, Hon. D. Wilson	1934
No. 211, ERDT - CRDA Audit Records: Hicks LeMoine - Payments, Hon. J. Baillie	1935
No. 212, Justice - Barton Case: Wrongful Conviction - Min. Agree, Mr. A. MacMaster.....	1937
No. 213, EECD: Sch. Boundary Review - Commun. Meetings, Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	1938
No. 214, Health & Wellness: Input System - Complexity, Mr. C. Porter	1939
No. 215, Justice - Correctional Facilities: Incidents - Reporting, Mr. G. Gosse	1940
No. 216, Health & Wellness: Disease Analysis - Population Coverage, Mr. C. Porter	1941
No. 217, TIR - Toll Highways: Min./Gov't. - Support Confirm, Hon. S. Belliveau	1942
No. 218, Agric. - Prog. Delivery: Simplification - Plans, Mr. T. Farrell.....	1944
No. 219, ERDT - Jobs Fund: Cabinet Control - Remove, Ms. K. MacFarlane	1945
No. 220, Environ. - Environ. Home Assessment Prog.: Funding - Time Frame, Ms. L. Zann.....	1946
No. 221, Health & Wellness - Dart. Gen.: 5 th Fl. Dev. - Update, Hon. D. Wilson	1948
No. 222, DIS: Prov. Landline Tel. Contract - Evaluation Team, Mr. T. Houston.....	1949
No. 223, Com. Serv.: Roots for Youth - Min. Comments, Ms. K. MacFarlane	1951
No. 224, DIS: Contaminated Sites - Identified Properties, Hon. F. Corbett	1953
No. 225, Com. Serv. - Nova Scotians: Income Assistance - Numbers, Mr. E. Orrell.....	1954
No. 226, EECD: Cobequid Children's Ctr. - Investigation, Mr. E. Orrell.....	1956
No. 227, Immigration - Ivany Report: Immigration Goals - Legislation Introduce, Mr. G. Gosse	1957
No. 228, Agric. - Food Inspection: Chronicle Herald Article - Clarify, Mr. J. Lohr.....	1958
No. 229, Justice: E. Coast Forensic Hosp. - Ankle Bracelets, Mr. A. MacMaster.....	1959

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS:

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:

No. 8, Nova Scotia Jobs Fund Transfer Act

Mr. E. Orrell.....	1961
Mr. G. Gosse.....	1964
Mr. J. Stroink.....	1964
Mr. A. MacLeod.....	1967

No. 46, Lyme Disease Strategy Act

Hon. P. Dunn.....	1971
Hon. David Wilson.....	1973
Mr. J. Stroink.....	1976
Mr. T. Houston.....	1978

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5):

Yarmouth Ferry Serv.: Return - Celebrate,

Mr. K. Irving.....	1983
Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	1985
Mr. A. MacLeod.....	1987
Hon. K. Colwell.....	1988

ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Thur., Apr. 17th at 9:00 a.m.1991

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):

Res. 1206, Hamilton, Nika/Clique Beauty Studio: Dart. East

- Welcome, Hon. A. Younger1992

Res. 1207, École du Carrefour Students/Faculty -

Feed N.S. Fundraising, Hon. A. Younger.....1992

Res. 1208, Hills, Calista: Canada Cord - Congrats.,

The Premier.....1993

Res. 1209, Sackville HS Kingfisher Boys Basketball Team:

Subway Hoop Classic Tournament - Congrats., Hon. David Wilson.....1993

Res. 1210, McNeill, Beth: E. Hants & Dist. C of C Marketing Course

- Congrats., Ms. M. Miller1994

Res. 1211, Ashley, Carla: E. Hants & Dist. C of C Marketing Course

- Congrats., Ms. M. Miller1994

Res. 1212, Isenor, Emily: E. Hants & Dist. C of C Marketing Course

- Congrats., Ms. M. Miller1995

Res. 1213, Saint, Kirk: E. Hants & Dist. C of C Marketing Course

- Congrats., Ms. M. Miller1995

Res. 1214, McNeill, Pam: E. Hants & Dist. C of C Marketing Course

- Congrats., Ms. M. Miller1996

Res. 1215, Stewart, Sarah: E. Hants & Dist. C of C Marketing Course

- Congrats., Ms. M. Miller1996

Res. 1216, Prest, Sharon: E. Hants & Dist. C of C Marketing Course

- Congrats., Ms. M. Miller1997

Res. 1217, Balish-Bailey, Shelley: E. Hants & Dist. C of C Marketing Course

- Congrats., Ms. M. Miller1997

Res. 1218, Tucker, Wayne: E. Hants & Dist. C of C Marketing Course

- Congrats., Ms. M. Miller1998



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2014

Sixty-second General Assembly

First Session

2:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We will now begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill No. 55 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008. The
Halifax Regional Municipality Charter. (Hon. Mark Furey)**

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that this bill be read a second time on a future day.

Just before we go into the order of business, Notices of Motion, for the second day in a row I forgot to read the topic for late debate, as submitted by the honourable member for Kings South:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly celebrate the return of the ferry service between Yarmouth and the United States and acknowledge the economic benefit the ferry brings to our province.

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1188

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

Whereas the Canadian Interuniversity Sports Athletic Season Awards winners were announced prior to the start of the 2013 CIS indoor track and field championships in Edmonton, Alberta; and

Whereas Rebecca Haworth, a fourth-year science student from Waverley, Nova Scotia, has a 4.06 GPA in psychology and is the founder of the Special Tiger Sports program which provides opportunities for Special Olympians to spend a day playing sports with Dalhousie varsity athletes, and also volunteers with Dalhousie Health Mentors and peer partners programs, is a co-president of the university's Varsity Council, is an assistant track and field coach at the Halifax Sacred Heart School, and Rebecca broke the AUS and Dalhousie high jump record this year and placed second at the CIS championships with a new jump record of 1.82 metres; and

Whereas for the second year in a row Dal high jumper Rebecca Haworth received the student athlete community service award from the Canadian Interuniversity Sports;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Rebecca Haworth on her award and wish her continued success in her volunteerism, academics, and athletics.

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. 1189

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 Lightfoot Tower and adjacent Zoe Valley Library, located on Regent Street in Chester, are Chester landmarks, with the tower being built in 1904 and the house built in the 1800s; and

Whereas the Lightfoot Tower was originally built so that the family who owned the property could see the yacht club and the yacht races in the harbour, but has become a favourite stopping place for tourists and a source of pride for the community; and

Whereas the Lightfoot Tower is undergoing extensive renovations to restore it to its former glory;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate the Municipality of Chester and the trustees of the Zoe Valley Library, as well as the current librarians, for their commitment to restoring the Lightfoot Tower and keeping the library open, while respecting the historical significance of the property.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie.

RESOLUTION NO. 1190

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

Whereas Canso/Hazel Hill Volunteer Fire Department has been offering an essential service to its communities since 1927; and

Whereas they have assisted their communities when in their most vulnerable time of need through house fires, grass fires, vehicle accidents, medical emergencies, and so many other items; and

Whereas they respond all hours of the day, holidays, and weekends, and these volunteers have missed family events, anniversaries, and more, while most are juggling their day jobs and their families;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me as I say a heartfelt thank you to all volunteer firefighters and their families, and be ever so mindful of the importance of their roles in the lives of so many.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

RESOLUTION NO. 1191

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

Whereas Benjamin Moore, North America's most respected interior and exterior paint manufacturer and colour authority, announced its biggest initiative ever to revitalize communities across North America through the launch of the Main Street Matters; and

Whereas the campaign asked consumers around the country to cast their vote for the 20 main streets that should be revitalized of the more than 100 North American cities nominated; and

Whereas Benjamin Moore selected Quinpool Road in Halifax as one of only three main streets in Canada to win - Quinpool Road truly embodies the notion of main street, with a tightly knit community of independent and many family-owned retailers and businesses with a long history in the central Halifax neighbourhood;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Quinpool Road Mainstreet District Association, Mayor Mike Savage for creating two videos to help place Halifax in the top 20 spots, and all the volunteers who immediately sprang into action to develop what became the basis for the entire city's bid for recognition.

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 Fairview-Clayton Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 1192

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

Whereas Constable George Farmer is an excellent police presence in the community of Fairview-Clayton Park and is part of the community response team of officers; and

Whereas Constable George Farmer is actively trying to reach at-risk youths in difficult times, while he strives to promote a safe and happy community for everyone; and

Whereas Constable Farmer makes an effort to attend all community events, represents a positive presence for the children and youths of the neighbourhood, and he brings a sense of pride to his profession and to his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Constable George Farmer for his leadership and for being an ideal role model.

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. 1193

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

Whereas in early March 2014 Randy Crouse's dream of starting a baseball program for children aged 4 to 18 with both cognitive and physical disabilities became a reality; and

Whereas his Antigonish Challenger Baseball program was one of nine finalists across the country in the Win 4 Kids grant program, hosted by GoodLife Fitness centres; and

Whereas the Antigonish program was the top project in the country, winning 33 per cent of the votes and \$37,000 that will go towards uniforms, equipment, and field rentals;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Randy for achieving his dream that will allow more children to experience the joy of playing baseball.

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. 1194

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

Whereas Stairs Memorial United Church began as a building erected on the grounds of the Ropeworks factory, owned by the Stairs family in Dartmouth North; and

Whereas the current Hester Street location of Stairs Memorial is a pillar to all in the Dartmouth North community, even beyond its congregation; and

Whereas this year's centenary was celebrated with a community picnic, a jamboree, a formal dinner, and an all-community 100th Anniversary church service;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Minister Sarah Reaburn, celebration committee organizers, and the entire Stairs Memorial United Church family on their 100th Anniversary.

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 Education and Early Childhood Development.

RESOLUTION NO. 1195

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

Whereas an online contest called Champion Tune-up Your Garage was held last summer; and

Whereas Tyler Starks, a 28-year-old accountant in Debert, Colchester North, entered the contest; and

Whereas Starks is the grand prize winner and will receive \$15,000 from Canadian Tire to use for his garage renovations;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Tyler on his win and wish him continued pleasure as he enjoys renovating in his garage with the many new tools and pieces of equipment that he has earned with the grand prize.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

RESOLUTION NO. 1196

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

Whereas Bide Awhile Animal Shelter, a pillar of our community, moved into a purpose-built facility in Woodside Industrial Park in 2008 after operating for 30 years in downtown Dartmouth; and

Whereas the tireless work of volunteers is what drives Bide Awhile, maintaining its ability to care and provide shelter for so many homeless animals and promote animal issues education in our community; and

Whereas Bide Awhile Animal Shelter hosted a bake sale fundraiser at Halifax Shopping Centre on April 12th to help cover the costs of vaccinations, food, deworming, spaying, and neutering of rescued animals;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly recognize the long-standing and admirable work of Bide Awhile Animal Shelter and wish them success for their upcoming fundraisers and all future endeavours as well.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

RESOLUTION NO. 1197

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

Whereas high school graduation is an exciting time in a teenager's life and the prom is often seen as a magical way to celebrate this milestone; and

Whereas along with the excitement and anticipation of this special evening comes the stress of finding the perfect dress; and

Whereas Cheryl Matheson from the Spryfield Pathways for Education Program wanted her students to have a prom they deserved, and she began a campaign to supply prom dresses to students who would otherwise not be able to afford a dress, and the community embraced this idea and many beautiful dresses have been donated and now the girls will look fantastic on their big night;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Cheryl Matheson for making high school graduation a more memorable occasion for many teens.

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. 1198

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

Whereas the Boys and Girls Club of Truro and Colchester just celebrated 50 years of serving the community by offering year-round programs to youth between the ages of 5 and 18; and

Whereas the club offers young people a safe environment to learn, play and develop confidence and new skills, including Rogers Raising the Grade program for older youth, by helping them to navigate their future after graduation; and

Whereas the club is subsidized by the United Way and looks to the community and government for donations or supplies and volunteers;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate the Boys and Girls Club of Truro and Colchester for their commitment to helping young people flourish and wish them continued success into the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hants East.

RESOLUTION NO. 1199

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

Whereas the East Hants Family Resource Centre is currently offering the Roots of Empathy program to Grades 1 and 2 students at Maple Ridge Elementary School; and

Whereas this program supports the provincial agenda of promoting forms of learning that promote empathy and positive relationships; and

Whereas the East Hants Family Resource Centre is playing an integral role in educating and sensitizing young students for the betterment of their lives;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the East Hants Family Resource Centre for participating in the Roots of Empathy program and supporting the development of young Nova Scotians.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 1200

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

Whereas Eskasoni Cultural Journeys has been awarded the Product Development Award at the Tourism Hall of Fame Awards, hosted by the Destination Cape Breton Association, for going the extra mile to deliver an outstanding and innovative visitor experience; and

Whereas through their hard work, Eskasoni Cultural Journeys is able to offer visitors a chance to take in the world's largest Mi'kmaq community; and

Whereas one is able to experience authentic Mi'kmaq culture through music, story-telling and many cultural performances put on by the community of Eskasoni, which is also the world's largest Mi'kmaq-speaking community;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize the hard work and dedication of Eskasoni Cultural Journeys as they continue to share their history and culture with the rest of the world.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

RESOLUTION NO. 1201

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

Whereas the Lunenburg Board of Trade gathered on November 28th for its annual general meeting; and

Whereas the community organization honoured the many businesses and people who proudly make up the town and surrounding area; and

Whereas Cheryl Lamerson, an active member of the community in a variety of capacities and founder of the not-for-profit Lunenburg Consignment Shop, was named Volunteer of the Year;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Cheryl on her hard work and tremendous achievements in earning this honour.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

RESOLUTION NO. 1202

MS. JOYCE TREEN: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the honourable member for Eastern Shore, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas Mr. Les Wood of Musquodoboit Harbour recently identified a need in his community for fitness opportunities for senior citizens and set out to fill the gap in the service, while recovering from a bypass operation last year, Les realized he needed to create a healthier lifestyle for himself and simultaneously created opportunities for his fellow seniors to become more physically active; and

Whereas Mr. Wood started a walking club at a local church hall, attracting a growing number of local seniors who also wanted to improve their level of physical fitness and the walking group has seen great success and continues to attract more and more participants; and

Whereas in the future, Mr. Wood plans to bring in guest speakers who will focus on proper nutrition, blood pressure, and community health programs to further enhance the program;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly join me in thanking Mr. Les Wood for starting this excellent program and encouraging his fellow seniors in the Musquodoboit Harbour area to be more active and healthy.

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 1203

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, after my resolution I would like to ask for a moment of silence.

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

Whereas Chief Bob Gloade is a much loved, progressive and positive leader for the community of Millbrook First Nation, recently winning his second election as chief; and

Whereas both Millbrook First Nation and Indian Brook have recently suffered many losses of respected, loved and wise elders including: Blanche Mousseau, Ben Martin and captain and spiritual elder, Noel Knockwood, whose passing was celebrated yesterday in Millbrook; and

Whereas just this morning we have learned that Levi Gloade, the father of Chief Bob Gloade, also passed away with his loving family by his side;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature sends our prayers and compassion to the communities of Millbrook First Nation and Indian Brook, for the losses of their cherished elders and send condolences to the families of both the Knockwoods and Chief Bob Gloade of Millbrook First Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to request a moment of silence for Levi Gloade, father of Chief Bob Gloade of Millbrook, who passed away this morning with his loving family by his side.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

I would ask that everybody please rise for a moment of silence in honour of Levi Gloade.

(A moment of silence was observed.)

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1204

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

Whereas Sonja Grcic-Stuart is an English as an Additional Language Consultant for the Halifax Regional School Board; and

Whereas Ms. Grcic-Stuart is an excellent supporter and advocate for language instruction for newcomers to Canada and is outstanding in her field; and

Whereas Ms. Grcic-Stuart strives to ease the transition for families and children coming to Canada and to assist them in understanding the school system, while promoting innovative language learning techniques;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ms. Grcic-Stuart for her ability to help students and their families with social and cultural integration through the development of programs that facilitate the growth of English language skills.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

RESOLUTION NO. 1205

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

Whereas the Endeavour Scholarship and Fellowship Program forms part of Australia's awards initiatives established in 2009; and

Whereas the program brings together, under one banner, scholarships offered by the Department of Education, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Australian Centre for International Agriculture Research; and

Whereas Dr. Tarah Wright of the environmental science program has been awarded one of these two prestigious Australian Endeavour Executive Fellowships;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Tarah Wright and wish her continued success in the future.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The time is now 2:31 p.m.; we will conclude Question Period at 4:01 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: CRDA AUDIT - STATUS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, on March 21st the Premier visited Amherst to speak to the chamber of commerce there. Many people from Cumberland County attended looking for answers as to why there has been such a long delay in completing the

forensic audit of the Cumberland Regional Development Authority, or CRDA. The Premier told them there will be more information soon, and I'm glad to know he is on top of the issue. This is a \$200,000 audit, reviewing nearly \$20 million of taxpayers' money, and it is almost a year late, a delay that has been attributed to a local law firm, Hicks LeMoine, which was withholding key audit evidence.

I'd like to ask the Premier now to confirm that that audit evidence has been turned over to the auditors and update the House on when we can expect the audit to be completed.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): I'll ask the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism to respond.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: This audit started in January 2013 and obviously we are quite concerned as to the length of time that this audit has taken. I do believe that the Leader of the Opposition may be incorrect with some of the assumptions that he does make but I can advise him that the issue relating to any evidence that was being held by the law firm in question has been turned over to the auditors but there are other issues that they are reviewing as well.

MR. BAILLIE: I certainly invite the minister to provide more information so that people in Cumberland County, including their representative, have all the facts to judge exactly what is going on. Mr. Speaker, holding back audit evidence is wrong. It is particularly wrong when taxpayers' money is involved. The delay in this case has been attributed publicly to Hicks LeMoine, the law firm for CRDA.

It is good news to hear today that we have confirmation that the audit records have been turned over. Unfortunately, when the minister was asked why it took so long, in allNovaScotia.com in February, he refused to say whether his department had anything to do with turning over the records from the law firm to the auditors of CRDA. Taxpayers deserve to know if they have been asked to pay what is essentially ransom money to get access to their own audit records. So I would ask the Premier or the minister, could they tell the House whether the Government of Nova Scotia paid any amount of money to Hicks LeMoine to recover the audit records?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I do believe that the Leader of the Official Opposition does hold a certain professional certification and I would suspect that he would appreciate that during an audit it would be inappropriate to start having discussions regarding an audit until its final conclusion, in order not to in any way jeopardize or taint the audit. We look forward to seeing these results as soon as possible. I would remind the Leader of the Opposition, again, this audit began in January 2013, under a previous administration in this province.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, it's because the audit is almost a year overdue that I am asking the minister these questions today. In a way it is very sad. The new government

came in, this truly was a problem of the previous government, but six months have gone by and still we are no further ahead at seeing a forensic audit or the results, so that people in Cumberland County and indeed all Nova Scotia taxpayers, can judge for themselves what went on.

What taints audits, Mr. Speaker, is when people who hold important files withhold them; what taints audits is when a government comes in and sits back for six months and leaves those records hidden from the people of Nova Scotia; what taints audits is when a government is asked a simple question like did they pay that firm our money to do what they should have done in the first place, which is to hand over those records - it doesn't take a chartered accountant to know that that answer is offensive to the people of Nova Scotia.

I'll ask the Premier or his designate the question that all Cumberland County residents want to know, when will this audit be done? The only way to make sure that people can have any confidence in it is if he stands in his place, right now, and assures the people of Cumberland County that those results, no matter what they say, will be made public for everyone to see.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, again, this audit started in January 2013. It's being conducted by an external party that is not under the control of our government. We are looking forward to seeing the results of this audit as soon as possible.

The information that the Leader is asking for, I have no doubt will all be made available once the audit is finally completed. I am certainly hopeful that the external company which is undertaking this audit on behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia will be able to complete its work in the very near future.

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

PREM.: CAP. HEALTH/NURSES - DISCIPLINARY ACTION

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, my question through you today is to the Premier. As the Premier said in 2007, essential services legislation does not work because it leads to increased tension in negotiations and leads to wildcat strikes. Morale is already low at Capital Health and I think we would all like to see it improve.

I'd like to ask the Premier, does the Premier think disciplinary action will do anything to improve the working conditions for the nurses at Capital Health?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. It was brought to the floor of the House yesterday that the employer, Capital Health, is calling in a number of nurses who have taken illegal job action, so it is the right of the employer to question whether or not - why that illegal job action had taken place and we wait to hear the outcome of the conversation.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier told CTV News: "I can tell you, quite frankly, if people were working for me as the premier of this province, and working for the government, and they took illegal action, I'd be calling them into my office, as well." I'll table that article.

I'd like to ask the Premier, does the Premier believe his comments yesterday were helpful in improving nurses' morale at Capital Health?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I think all members of this House know there are laws in this province and they want all Nova Scotians to respect them. It's as simple as that.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Upon hearing the Premier's comments about calling them into his office, many health care workers wrote us, Mr. Speaker. One health care social worker suggested that the Premier was kicking a hornet nest; another nurse said that while the Premier wouldn't meet with them during Law Amendments Committee or during the debate on essential services legislation, they would be willing to meet with the Premier now.

I'd like to ask the Premier through you, Mr. Speaker, since these nurses are willing to take the Premier up on his offer to be called into his office, will the Premier agree to meet with them after Cabinet next week?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the honourable member knows, and considering that he is the former Minister of Health and Wellness, he knows that the nurses actually work for Capital Health, they are the employer. Capital Health has actually called the employees to meet with them, and I would encourage them to meet with their employer so that we can continue to move down the road, ensuring that essential services are in place. If the union then wants to take job action and go on strike, they can do so.

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

ERDT - CRDA AUDIT RECORDS: HICKS LEMOINE - PAYMENTS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask this question to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

A few moments ago I asked him quite simply whether the Government of Nova Scotia had paid money, any taxpayers' money, to Hicks LeMoine to turn over audit records, something they should have done of their own free will, as anyone else would be compelled to do so.

There is no reason not to tell us today whether they did or not, so I would like to ask the minister directly, did taxpayers pay Hicks LeMoine to turn over those audit records - yes or no?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, there is a third party that is conducting an audit on behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia; that audit started in January 2013 by the previous government. We are certainly looking forward to seeing the results of that audit, but I have no intention of debating what may or may not be in that audit until such time as that audit is provided to the province.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, it's pretty obvious to anyone here today, I'm not asking him to tell us what's in the audit we're all waiting to see - we have all been waiting to see for more than a year, my question is purely and simply, did the Government of Nova Scotia pay money to Hicks LeMoine so they would turn over audit evidence?

What the auditor does with it is completely a different question. There is no reason why the minister should hide from the taxpayers of Nova Scotia whether more of their money was thrown at that law firm or not today - there is none. I will ask the minister directly, why won't you tell us - more importantly why won't you tell taxpayers whether you used that money to pay ransom, essentially, to Hicks LeMoine or not?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the Leader of the Official Opposition to go outside this Chamber and to make the comments that he is making because I believe very clearly he has chosen to use the House as a means to impute motive against a law firm in this province. If he wishes to do so, I would hope he would not hide behind parliamentary privilege in making such a statement. No government stands here and debates the contents of audits until audits are completed - we are not about to change that process.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the only person hiding today is a Minister of the Crown who will not tell taxpayers of Nova Scotia whether he used their money to pay a law firm to do what they ought to have done anyway for free. I'm not actually questioning the motives of the firm, I'm questioning whether the government itself used our money to get something that should be available to the auditor at no charge. It seems pretty simple to me. The minister is not going to answer the question, the audit has been going on for a year and a half, all Nova Scotians want to know is what really happened to their money in the case of CRDA. There's no good reason why that audit should take a year and a half - the Royal Bank is audited in less than 50 days every year and it's 1,000 times the size of CRDA, yet here we are still waiting.

I will ask the minister, since he won't tell us simply whether they paid for the evidence or not, how long is this going to go on before Nova Scotians get the answers they deserve?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I don't know how good the Leader of the Official Opposition's front stroke is but I certainly know now how good his backstroke is, seeing how quick he is to try to distance himself when called to account for his own comments here in the Legislature.

I share in the frustration at how long this has taken. This was an audit undertaken by a third party, independent of government. We certainly hoped this audit would have been completed; it started in January 2013 under a previous government. We are looking forward to the results of that audit, which I do hope will be completed as soon as possible, but I would think the Leader of the Official Opposition as well would not be encouraging us to have an audit completed before the auditors clearly feel that their work has been carried out.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

JUSTICE - BARTON CASE: WRONGFUL CONVICTION - MIN. AGREE

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker yesterday the Minister of Justice indicated that cases such as those of Gerry Barton are sometimes more complex than what we hear in the media. She also said that there has not been a verdict of the nature I spoke about, but I was speaking about the 2011 Court of Appeal decision that Mr. Barton was wrongfully convicted. Does the minister agree that Barton was wrongfully convicted as found by the Court of Appeal?

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I will simply say this, that as the Attorney General it is not appropriate for me to make any comments on this topic while it's still proceeding before the courts.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, the minister acknowledges that Mr. Barton was treated unfairly. Why hasn't she convened an independent judicial inquiry to consider compensation for Mr. Barton?

MS. DIAB: Mr. Speaker, it appears that the member opposite is having difficulty understanding the response. I have no further comments to make on this topic until a verdict has been reached by the judiciary. Thank you.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I know that Mr. Barton could go ahead with trying to prove that the judicial system - that there was a malicious prosecution at the time, but it's difficult to go back to 1971 and find all the documents and what would be required to prove that. I don't believe a court case should have any bearing on a man who is deemed wrongfully convicted.

We do know that from the Marshall Inquiry it was recommended that when a person is wrongfully convicted, an independent judicial inquiry should be held to consider compensation. That's all that I'm asking about today, Mr. Speaker.

I don't expect an answer, Mr. Speaker, but I will ask one more time, aren't we supposed to learn something from the past? If the justice system does not feel some pain

here by way of compensation to Mr. Barton, will the attitude that they displayed in the past come up again to haunt us in the future?

MS. DIAB: Mr. Speaker, documents that were presented in court proceedings are public, or they will be public, and I would invite the honourable member opposite to go and view those whenever he wishes. At the moment, the case has been heard. We are awaiting written submissions. After that, the judge will make his findings. When that happens, when it's appropriate to do so, we will present - if we have any statements to make at that point in time, we will. At the moment we have no further comment to make on it, because it has not been decided in the courts. Thank you.

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

EECD: SCH. BOUNDARY REVIEW - COMMUN. MEETINGS

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Parents and community leaders in HRM affected by the school boundary review involving Grosvenor-Wentworth Park and Park West are concerned. They are being told their school board representatives will not meet with members of the community to hear their concerns while this review is proceeding.

My question through you to the minister is, why does the minister feel it is acceptable for elected school board officials to refuse to hear concerns from community leaders?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, the member should know, and others in the House should know, that a boundary review is the responsibility of a school board. School boards do boundary reviews all the time, and there are steps along the way where parents and community members can be heard. While that process is underway and it is the responsibility of the board, this minister will not interfere.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, the elected school board representative for Park West School is telling concerned community members that she is not allowed to meet with people to hear their concerns, because she could lose her right to speak to the matter as well as lose her right to vote.

My question through you to the minister is, what is the point of having elected boards if their members will not listen to the valid concerns of their constituents?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I would say to the parents and community members in Park West or in the area that is affected by the boundary review that if they have concerns about their elected board member, they should go directly to their board chairman.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, Janet Lee is a community representative on the Park West School Advisory Council and she is here today to highlight this issue in her community. She has requested a meeting with the minister.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, will the minister meet with Ms. Lee, and will elected school board representatives be advised that they have the right and a duty to meet with concerned community members about this particular issue?

MS. CASEY: We have received correspondence from many families and many parents in the Park West area. We have responded to those and we have encouraged them to allow the school board to continue the process, and for those parents to participate along the process so that their voices can be heard.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: INPUT SYSTEM - COMPLEXITY

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question through you today is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Nova Scotia has an aging population, something we are very well aware of, and unfortunately health care costs are expected to continue to increase - monitoring health care, diseases, vaccines, outbreaks, et cetera, will help make our system safer and more efficient.

Having a system that simply collects data and reports on this data doesn't seem to be that complicated compared to some of the other systems like the private sector banks, credit agencies, and so on. My question to the minister is, why is the input system so complex compared to the systems we see in the private sector?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: A number of years ago the province started a national program called Panorama that we were all hoping was going to be one of the very strong solutions to greater surveillance in our province but we discovered that it was very costly, going very slowly, and as we analyzed some first data, not able to achieve some of the results that we were hoping to achieve.

MR. PORTER: Today in the Public Accounts Committee we learned just that, some of that discussion took place. The deputy minister explained that the cost estimate for an electronic surveillance system could come into the 2015-16 budget year. My question is, how much study needs to happen before we have an estimate of the cost getting this system to create these efficiencies and to better protect Nova Scotians?

MR. GLAVINE: The member opposite raises a good question because the greater surveillance, the greater data collection that we do have, we can work with that to achieve stronger results, especially when it comes to anything of an epidemic nature, we're able to take a look at the history of individuals. He asked about where we are, and at the current

moment there is a great deal of that information that is hard-copied; it is not in electronic records. We have been able to do very well with the records we do have, as we saw from the vaccination problem with a pediatric specialist this Fall, and we are able to notify all of the parents and all those concerned. This is a program where the platform is now being laid out to make sure we start down the road of an electronic medical record that will have all of that surveillance information.

MR. PORTER: A moment ago the minister mentioned about the paper copy being kept and we know that is creating some issues within the system, our lengthy research time, risk of loss, cost, and the inability to respond to risk as effectively and as thoroughly as an electronic system could. Today in Public Accounts Committee something of great concern was mentioned. The Deputy Chief Medical Health Officer said that the current system is not fit to function in the current environment. So my question to the minister is, can Nova Scotians feel safe when the Deputy Chief Medical Health Officer says our system does not work in the current environment?

MR. GLAVINE: After Public Accounts Committee today I did have a session with the department officials because I do want that kind of assurance that I can tell Nova Scotians that, in fact, we have a good system, but it is a good system that needs to be modernized and updated. We have not found our records wanting when they have been called upon to provide good information, appropriate information, and in as reasonable a time as some of the manual record keeping is able to provide.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Whitney Pier.

JUSTICE - CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES: INCIDENTS - REPORTING

MR. GORDIE GOSSE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Justice. On March 30, 2011, the previous government announced a system for reporting major incidents at the Nova Scotia Correctional Facility. According to the policy, any assault committed by a person in custody against another person within a correctional facility while in custody of sheriff's services or while in court, resulting in serious injury that requires in-patient hospitalization, must be reported.

According to a February 14th article in *The Chronicle Herald*, which I will table, a February assault on a female prison guard where the victim suffered a broken jaw and was knocked unconscious was not disclosed to the public. This was not the only serious incident that has gone unreported under the government.

My question for the minister is, why are all serious incidents at the correctional facilities not being reported by her department?

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, we have excellent staff at our correctional facility that do very good work in a very difficult environment. Any time a staff member is

hurt, that is a concern to us. We've been working very hard with our staff and with our union. We have a zero tolerance policy, and these incidents are reported. Thank you.

MR. GOSSE: Mr. Speaker, according to the same disclosure policy released on March 11, 2011, it is the Minister of Justice who decides whether or not incident reports will be posted on the department's website or disclosed to the media.

My question to the Minister of Justice is, can she tell this House of any serious incident, including drug seizures, assaults, power outages, or wrongful releases at the correctional facilities that have occurred in 2014 that she has not chosen to disclose publicly? If so, why not?

MS. DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of any such incidents that have not been reported that were supposed to be reported, as per the Acts and regulations. Thank you.

MR. GOSSE: Mr. Speaker, every day the guards at our correctional facilities put themselves at risk to protect both the public and the safety of inmates. They have a tough job, and the public has the right to know that the government is taking the necessary steps to keep our correctional facility workers safe.

My question for the Minister of Justice is, what steps has she taken since becoming minister to improve the safety of workers and inmates at Nova Scotia's five provincial correctional facilities?

MS. DIAB: Thank you very much to the member opposite. Look, these are correctional facilities. These facilities house many dangerous offenders who have broken the law. We have many checks and balances in place. There will always be challenges - challenges that we not only face in Nova Scotia but that are faced across Canada and North America. We continue to work with our staff. We are looking very closely at all the details to review and to ensure we're doing everything we can to prevent these things from happening. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

HEALTH & WELLNESS: DISEASE ANALYSIS - POPULATION COVERAGE

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. When trying to analyze a disease, understanding how it is being spread, where it is being spread, and to whom it is being spread are key determinants in how we fight said disease.

If there were a situation where the health system needed to find a level of population coverage for a specific disease, could the health system do that in a timely fashion?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, what I can assure the member for Hants West is that we have a system that is as good and as strong as any in the country. Only Quebec and Ontario have even started down the road of electronic systems of surveillance around disease. If we take a look at H1N1 and the response of our province and when that was handed over to the Department of Health and Wellness specialists in the crisis centre, and how quickly we mobilized our officials to get the vaccination out, I think that incident alone speaks very strongly about the kind of work that is being done at Health and Wellness around disease control.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, this will be my final supplementary as well. Just quickly to the minister, if a specific area or a demographic is specifically susceptible to a disease or has a high rate of a disease, can our current system isolate these communities to develop campaigns of awareness to help reduce that risk?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, to the member for Hants West, I know that it would not be as quick as if they had an electronic system in place. I'm pleased to say that we are active on the file of getting an e-record that would be very quickly able to isolate a cohort in the population that could be most impacted by a particular communicable disease. While we're not there yet, the records that we have, the people in place at the Department of Health and Wellness, as was identified by Dr. Frank Atherton today, who is the deputy in the department in that area of medical health, a public health official - I think we can be well assured here in our province that we would be as timely as any other part of Canada in responding.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

TIR - TOLL HIGHWAYS: MIN./GOV'T. - SUPPORT CONFIRM

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Do the minister and his Liberal Government support toll highways?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. With respect to toll highways, there are no plans. We haven't had any discussions with respect to where we would or wouldn't go with toll highways. The one toll highway in our province, within the Cobequid Pass, has been one, I think, that's shown success with respect to how the road is maintained and operated. That model has proven pretty effective for successive governments in this province.

We certainly have an infrastructure deficit in this province, there's no question about it. We haven't gone down the road of toll highway conversations. We're going to stick to our capital plan. We're going to use the federal government as partners to try to leverage dollars for those major builds. Right now, we're just trying to do the best we can within the envelope for our capital plan and our operational budgets, so we haven't made

any decisions whatsoever. We'll continue to take it one day at a time, and we'll do our best to keep the roads safe. Thank you.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, we look back at the 1990s, when the minister was a young lad playing street hockey, when the decision was made to build a P3 road - in Opposition, he and the Minister of Natural Resources used to say, that was 25 years ago; no one cares.

Well, Nova Scotians care. Let me remind everyone that the Highway 104 Western Alignment Act says that the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act does not apply, the company does not have to apply for building limits, it doesn't have to pay taxes, and it's exempt from the oversight of the Public Utilities Act. Not to mention the lead lawyer on the file who negotiated the contract was none other than the now-Liberal Senator Jim Cowan. Coincidence? I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker.

Nova Scotians know what happened in the 1990s, and we're already seeing that history does repeat itself. My question to the minister is, has he had any discussions or correspondence on whether or not the Liberals will move ahead with toll highways in other parts of our province?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, just for clarity, I'll tell the member that when I played street hockey, that was in the 1980s, when there was a Progressive Conservative Government. There were too many potholes; I really couldn't play street hockey. Just kidding, just kidding. Just a joke. Trying to keep it lighthearted, but there weren't too many smiles across the way, so I'll stick to the question.

The reality is, the member did talk about previous governments, and what I've said in the past about previous governments and what my colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources says, still holds true today. I'm not guided by any decisions of any past government of any stripe. That's not how we do business. We're taking things in 2014 for the people of Nova Scotia. We're going to make the best decisions that we can.

Again, there have been no commitments. We haven't had a whole lot of information with respect to toll highways other than the one that's currently in place, and that's where we're at today. Again, we're not guided by any of the past; we're looking at the present and making things better for the future. Thank you.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I'll take the bait, because if we go with this minister's policy on paving and turning pavement back into gravel, we're going to have a lot more potholes.

Nova Scotians are reminded every time they pass through the tolls of Cobequid Pass that it was the Liberal Governments of the 1990s that placed the toll on every - I repeat, every single vehicle that enters and exits our province. As the minister has said

many times in the House, the reason the Liberals cut money to building highways is due to the federal government's decrease in transfers to our province. For those Nova Scotians who are watching at home, it is exactly what this Liberal Government said in the 1990s, and that's why they had to move to P3 roads.

If the federal government is reducing transfers, and we know that the Western Alignment Corporation is ahead of schedule in paying back its obligations, what year will they pay back their obligations, and does that mean that the Liberals will take the tolls off Highway No. 104 or continue taxing Nova Scotians? Thank you.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, again, just for clarity's sake, I did not say at any point that the federal government reduced the amount of money coming into the province. The Building Canada Fund, the Gateway funds, these large-scale, infrastructure programs - we've set an agreement in a certain time for a certain amount of money. That money is guaranteed from the federal government. What we do when we complete projects is we estimate when those projects will be completed, and then we forecast the money received based on that. I have never said that the federal government reduced money. I've said that those projects and those infrastructure programs are invaluable for the people of Nova Scotia, and we'll continue to work with our federal partners on those.

The member does criticize the Cobequid Pass. I think that from the important link it is for transportation for our province and interprovincial travel for our economy, of course, through that area and for all Nova Scotians, I think the mechanism that was set up for the tolls has proven to be beneficial. There are certainly problems with the weather in that area with respect to snow and ice and those types of things, no question about it, but I don't think that Nova Scotians feel saddled by that decision, I think it's one that has helped improve traffic between our province and the other provinces, and again, we have no commitment with respect to toll highways at this point. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

AGRIC. - PROG. DELIVERY: SIMPLIFICATION - PLANS

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the honourable Minister of Agriculture. Last weekend I attended the annual general meeting of the Nova Scotia Cattle Producers Association, in which we enjoyed a lovely dinner of beef grown right in Cumberland North. At that meeting I talked to some farmers there who own small, mixed-farming operations that sell organic meat and produce to local markets. These are family operations, where the owners and their families perform all of the functions required to produce their goods and get them to market.

I asked them if they were satisfied with the programs being offered by the Department of Agriculture to assist farmers in the province. Their response was that they had not bothered to apply for any government programs for several years due to the

complexity of the program requirements and the amount of paperwork and red tape involved. My question for the minister is, what is the Department of Agriculture doing with regard to simplifying program delivery for the benefit of this important industry?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the honourable member for the question. Indeed, we have changed programs to make it easier for people to apply. We've directed our staff to help the individuals who do apply and the farms that do make applications, to help them with those applications if there's any difficulty. From what I hear from my staff, it's the first time in many, many years that they have had so many people coming into the offices, calls to visit the farms and to go out and actually participate and help them do the documentation. I think we have made a very important step forward. It's a change that I made immediately after becoming minister, and it gives more accountability and easier access to these important programs for farms of all sizes.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

ERDT - JOBS FUND: CABINET CONTROL - REMOVE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, who has insisted that his government will be making changes to the Cabinet-controlled Jobs Fund. However, neither the minister nor the Premier will answer whether or not they will actually remove it 100 per cent from Cabinet's control.

Mr. Speaker, my question needs only a simple answer, yes or no, will the minister remove the Jobs Fund from Cabinet's control?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise my honourable colleague that as we indicated - as the Premier did before the session - legislation will be coming forward during the session that will address the very question that she is raising today.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, which leads actually into my next question. The minister has said that he will introduce legislation to change the Jobs Fund during this session, and I'll table that document. However, on the first day of the Spring sitting, the government released their legislative agenda, and changes to the Jobs Fund were not included - and I'll table that as well. Not only was the legislative agenda released last week, after the Traves report, but the Premier has been in favour of removing the Jobs Fund from Cabinet for years. The government cannot pretend they were unprepared for this.

Why wasn't legislation about the Jobs Fund included on the government's legislative agenda, knowing for years what changes should be made?

MR. SAMSON: I'm not sure how much clearer I can be, Mr. Speaker. Whatever we said in the list of bills, we did not include every single piece of legislation that would come before us. I do believe, again, the dangers of reading questions in this House in that as I indicated in my first answer, legislation to address the issue with the Jobs Fund and economic development direction for this province will be coming during this sitting of the House.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, in 2010, in light of the Auditor General releasing a report calling for Cabinet-controlled funding programs to end, the Premier said the Auditor General was backing up what he had been saying for years. That went along with my other documents I tabled.

Years later we have had two Auditor General Reports and a government-commissioned report by Dr. Traves calling for Cabinet to release control of this fund and the Liberal Government hasn't budged. When can Nova Scotians expect this government to follow the advice of these two leading experts - and we'd like to know what month?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, our government, when we were elected, heard loud and clear from Nova Scotians with concerns they had regarding the previous administration's use of taxpayers' money for economic development purposes. We undertook a number of reviews; those reviews are in.

Legislation will be coming very shortly and I certainly look forward to receiving the support of the honourable member for Pictou West in support of our legislation to ensure that economic development in the future will be done in a responsible way and one that Nova Scotians can be proud of.

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

**ENVIRON. - ENVIRON. HOME ASSESSMENT PROG.:
FUNDING - TIME FRAME**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Environment. In August of last year, the Department of Environment announced an expansion of the Environmental Home Assessment Program. Homeowners would receive more help replacing oil tanks and addressing septic system issues with this expansion - and I will table that release. Families who need to replace their oil tanks should receive up to \$1,000 to purchase a tank, based on income, and homeowners with septic problems should receive up to \$3,000 to repair or replace their systems.

My question today for the minister - the funding totalling \$1.5 million was to be available this Spring. Will the minister tell the members of this House when Nova Scotians can apply for help from this expanded program?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member opposite for the question. I guess the first thing to note is yes, that was an announcement made in August. It's one that I was aware of before the election was actually called, but it's one where the funding was not explicitly made available as part of that announcement. It was a deferred expense proposed by the previous government, and it's one with respect to how we're proceeding with our programs and services as part of the budget process that this House and the estimates committee has been going through. Certainly that's part of what is being evaluated as part of that process in budgeting.

MS. ZANN: Well Mr. Speaker, that answer does not make me feel very confident with this government going forward because, as we know, most Nova Scotians have oil tanks and that is how they heat their houses. In fact, we have about 200,000 domestic oil tanks, and tanks that are in poor condition are the leading cause of oil spills. Oil spills can cost tens of thousands of dollars to clean up, something which low-income families just simply can't afford. Therefore my question to the minister is, what is the minister's message to Nova Scotians who want to prevent oil spills but needed the support from the province in order to do so?

MR. DELOREY: I guess the key message is that this government has a wide variety of programs and services that are available to people of low income and certainly senior citizens end up being a large portion of that population, unfortunately. We do have a wide number of programs and services offered to help with various household improvements that are available within the province and certainly my messaging is to look at all programs and services offered by the government. The 211 number is available, or local MLA constituency offices, to help all of the citizens of this province to get the answers they need for the services and programs appropriate to them.

MS. ZANN: As Minister of Environment, one would hope that he would be very concerned about the environment as well as in helping Nova Scotians continue to be able to afford proper heating for their homes in a safe manner that is not going to affect the environment. Helping Nova Scotians replace aging oil tanks doesn't just make good environmental sense; it makes good economic sense too. Vilco Ltd. in Waverley and AFL Tank Manufacturing Ltd. in Arichat, for instance, both manufacture oil tanks and would have benefited from this program.

My question for the minister is, why won't he commit to putting Nova Scotia's environment and economy first by following through on the expansion of the Environmental Home Assessment Program, which is going to be a very positive program for the environment and for the people of Nova Scotia?

MR. DELOREY: I appreciate the opportunity to respond to that and I guess the most direct response I can provide to that is I would encourage the honourable member across the way to read the legislation that actually guides the purpose and the mandate of the Nova Scotia Department of Environment. We are a regulatory body and that is the primary responsibility of this body, of this department, and it is the direction that I take very seriously. I am guided by the legislation and the regulations governing this department and that is how I make my decisions.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS - DART. GEN.: 5TH FL. DEV. - UPDATE

HON. DAVID WILSON: My question today is through you to the Minister of Health and Wellness. I know I was pleased, prior to the past election, Mr. Speaker, in my role, to see the Department of Health and Wellness making progress on the plan for the development of the fifth floor at the Dartmouth General. I know many residents over in Dartmouth, and many members of the Liberal Government, currently, were pleased to see that progress moving forward. So I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness if the minister could indicate that this important work is ongoing.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I don't know how work done for four years is actually being measured because the briefings that I have indicate very little work. Our government is picking up the call from the Dartmouth General and from the QEII Foundation to start to look at this project and the need for work to be done there, but it is still a long way in terms of planning for the fifth floor.

MR. DAVID WILSON: I think the Minister of Energy won't like those comments. Maybe the minister missed a briefing note so I'll educate him a little bit. The Dartmouth General's plan was to add two operating rooms and 51 in-patient beds, Mr. Speaker, and I know that Capital Health has been working to come up with a plan of design for that. So can the minister confirm, for the benefit of the people of Dartmouth and maybe the benefit of the Minister of Energy, that the department still plans to add two operating rooms and 51 beds to the Dartmouth General?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, we know that across the province there are a number of facilities that need upgrades and updating, and the need for work at the Dartmouth General is very apparent. It is part of a larger plan for the redevelopment of the Centennial Building, and I think the work being done to prepare and plan is now picking up momentum. Hopefully, residents of metro will not have to wait too much longer before there is some firm news.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of Energy is helping me as I prepare for my final supplementary. I know, and the Minister of Energy knows, that the overall plan initially did not call for the redevelopment of the fifth floor of the Dartmouth

General. It was the previous government that indicated that that needed to happen, and Capital Health was directed to go back and redesign the utilization of the fifth floor with operating rooms and in-patient beds.

The minister just offered in his answer that soon we'll hear from him on what that plan is. Will the minister give this House and residents of Dartmouth, and the Minister of Energy, a timeline on when the two operating rooms and 51 in-patient beds will open on the fifth floor at the Dartmouth General?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, there is actually a more pressing concern at Dartmouth General as has been identified, and that is with infection control requiring work on the second and third floor. That is a priority of our government.

As we move into the larger plan for Capital Health, I believe you will hear very shortly that the fifth floor is part of the bigger Capital Health plan.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

DIS: PROV. LANDLINE TEL. CONTRACT - EVALUATION TEAM

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the minister responsible for information management. (Applause) I thought you might like that. I see him checking his notes over there.

Yesterday, the people of Nova Scotia learned that an outside consulting firm will conduct an investigation into the provincial landline telephone contract. This is a contract that could be valued at more than \$64 million. It appears that whichever company lost out on the bid feels that the evaluation team in charge of the bid was biased. Despite the controversy, the minister has not yet informed taxpayers who made up the province's evaluation team. This is something that I think Nova Scotians deserve to know.

My question today for the minister is, will the minister be forthright with Nova Scotians and tell us today who in the Liberal Government was responsible for making this controversial contract decision to begin with?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if I follow the question. The member from the other side is saying that someone in the Liberal Government made up the contract or awarded the contract. That is not the case. So if we could get some clarification as to what role he thinks the Liberals played in this contract, then perhaps I could answer his question.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm so disappointed. We waited six months to ask a question and he still can't understand what we're asking. Perhaps the minister missed some news out of his department that he is responsible for, but there is quite a significant contract

that has to do with provincial landline telephone business and it could be a contract worth up to \$64 million, so there is some controversy over how that tendering process was followed with the bid team. Sadly, this isn't the first time serious questions have been raised about the tendering process for government contracts under the Liberal Administration. The government already has a bad record on making patronage appointments.

Nova Scotians deserve to know how decisions are being made with their money. I don't know why the minister is so reluctant to provide details on how government contracts are being awarded. I will ask him for a second time if he would be honest and tell Nova Scotians . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I would like to remind the member for Pictou East that it is unparliamentary to refer to any member of this House as being dishonest.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the minister and to the House. My question today is, why is the minister so reluctant to provide details about how government contracts are being awarded?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, the way government contracts are awarded in this province is fair and without political interference. The Liberal Government has nothing to do with this contract and for anyone in this House or anywhere to imply that we did, is wrong. I will give you a little bit of background with this contract. The contract was awarded within our procurement process. There were employees within the Public Service Commission's Information Management Department who looked over the contract, scored the contract, and at that point made an award.

The contract had not been given to a vendor and at that point there was suggestion made that perhaps we did not follow our own process within procurement. At that point, when this was brought to my attention, I halted the process. I turned it over to internal audit, independent of government, independent of our Party and any Party in this House. An internal audit took the process at that point. They have hired a consulting firm, which is Grant Thornton, who is reviewing the process and we look forward to that report coming back which, again I will repeat, is completely independent of the Liberal Party. Thank you.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I am glad I was able to refresh the minister's memory on this very significant situation because now we seem to know a lot about it. Obviously, every Nova Scotian deserves to feel that they have a fair chance when they are trying to earn government business and certainly every company deserves to feel that they have a fair chance to earn government business.

In this case we do have a situation where a company feels that they didn't and that the process was biased and sadly, the Liberal Party has a long history of rewarding its friends, when in government, from the old cash-for-liquor sales kickback scheme right up to the appointment of the province's new Protocol Officer, it pays to be a Liberal supporter, so I certainly . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

MR. HOUSTON: Will the minister responsible for this decision guarantee taxpayers today that political considerations are in no way a factor when determining who benefits from government business?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to tell this House that there will be no political interference with this contract or any other contract given in the Province of Nova Scotia. I will go further to say that it is irresponsible for a member who holds a designation to actually question the internal auditors, who also hold similar designation in this province, and question their ability to be fair and impartial.

I would also go on further that it is not fair to actually question Grant Thornton on them being impartial. I would ask the member to not attack people within the Public Service and also consulting firms in the province that hold designations and have ethical duties that they abide by. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

COM. SERV.: ROOTS FOR YOUTH - MIN. COMMENTS

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Community Services. Yesterday, the minister accused Roots for Youth of criticizing SHYFT and Yarmouth for receiving funding. I'll table that document.

The minister was incorrect in her accusation, and this was entirely unfair. The point made by my colleague, the member for Pictou Centre was that both organizations are worthy of government funding and that all youth deserve equal attention, especially those who are homeless, and that the minister should consider regional needs when making decisions.

My question is, will the minister apologize for inaccurately characterizing Roots for Youth's request?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I believe I accused political actors in this House of pitting non-profits against each other. (Applause) As someone who is from the non-profit community, I'm well aware of the political games that go on with the respective funding for non-profits in different regions of the province.

I've made the commitment to the honourable member that I will come up and spend the day and we will see that organization, as well as a few others in her area. I stand by that commitment. I hope that she can arrange that day with my staff, and I look forward to that next month.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, the minister insisted that the decision to fund SHYFT was to keep a platform promise. She said, "... not less than five minutes ago ... the Premier was accused of not keeping political platform commitments, and here I did. It was in the platform." I'll table that statement. The problem is that funding for SHYFT was not mentioned in the Liberal platform, and I'll table the platform.

My question is, now that the government has made it clear that this was a political decision, will the minister agree to stop playing politics with at-risk youth in Nova Scotia?

MS. BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, just because it's not in writing in a platform during a campaign, I think when the Premier and the member for Yarmouth stand before the media during a campaign election and unequivocally say they are going to fund SHYFT, I think Nova Scotians can take them at their word, and the fact that it is funded. I really don't know what the issue is.

You know, when I put my name on a ballot and I came from the non-profit community, I had no idea (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Community Services has the floor.

MS. BERNARD: When I came from the non-profit community and worked with homeless women and women and children leaving domestic violence for many years, I knew that sitting in this House was going to be a different experience. But at no time did I ever think that I would have to defend a decision to fund a community organization that had not had previous funding or that it was released from government funding over the previous years in this House. It is just absolute lunacy that I am here defending that decision of this Party, of this government.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, just to quote the minister again from yesterday, "... I think it's really unfair when organizations criticize other organizations for getting funding." I'm sure that Dave Porter, executive director for Roots for Youth in Pictou County, would find that statement unfair.

Mr. Speaker, the minister said she would come to Pictou County and tour a number of facilities with me, and I am most grateful for that. The decision to deny Roots for Youth funding was made some time ago, yet the minister admitted yesterday that she was hearing about this organization for the first time. I just want to remind, there is a quote from the platform for this government, "If we're going to put Nova Scotia First, we need to care for

our citizens. Affordable housing and support for families are not luxuries - they are a moral responsibility. We want to make sure that those who need help get it, and those best able to help have the resources they need.”

Pictou County’s Roots for Youth needs help desperately. There were five people laid off this week. My question is, is the minister willing to reconsider her department’s decision to deny funding once she tours the facility and sees its merit? Or is the tour just a stall tactic?

MS. BERNARD: No, Mr. Speaker, it’s not a stall tactic. I’ll go to any corner of this province and look at any non-profit if they have a solid business case and a good case for support. I will remind the honourable member that in the last couple of months since we’ve been elected, we’ve invested \$500,000 in transition houses, including second-stage housing. We have invested \$2 million in 23 family resource centres that had not seen a bump in funding in 10 years. We have funded a youth shelter, and we have increased funding to the child tax benefit, so that 1,300 children who are low income now take advantage of that tax rebate. Not only have we met our commitments, we’ve gone beyond our commitments.

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

DIS: CONTAMINATED SITES - IDENTIFIED PROPERTIES

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Internal Services. (Interruptions) All the hits all the time. One of the files this new department has is that of environmental services. In July 2013, new regulations regarding contaminated sites took effect. These require the persons or body responsible for properties to declare if they are contaminated, whether they exceed ministerial protocol or not. This also includes government properties.

My question to the minister is, can he give us an update on how many government-owned sites have been identified or brought to his attention thus far, and the plan of action they may be remediated at?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, at this point I cannot give a finite number as to how many sites there are. We are still reviewing them. I will get that number and pass it on to the honourable member. Thank you.

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, according to the Premier, the goal of creating this department was to get the government’s house in order, which should include making sure it cleans up its own contaminated sites. The regulations set out by the Department of Environment took effect in July 2013, and they state that the party responsible will have two years to clean up or manage the contaminated sites, which includes a duty to take all reasonable measures to remediate, remove, and prevent contamination.

My question to the minister responsible for environmental services is, can he tell us the number of sites or the bases that have been identified as being above ministerial protocol following the July 2013 regulations, and what the estimated cost is to have these cleaned up in the next two-year window?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member has mentioned, we did create this department to find efficiencies in government, and that's what we are doing. As I mentioned earlier, I will get that information for the member and pass it on to him. At this point I do not have the exact number. Thank you.

MR. CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I understand this is a huge and difficult undertaking for the minister, given the number of properties owned by the government. Recently, with these new regulations that have taken effect - this is only one from the government department, TIR we've been talking about - but there are other properties such as in Health and Wellness, Community Services, housing, and Education, and there may be even more that need to be addressed. I'm sure the minister understands the concerns of all Nova Scotians when it comes to these sites.

My final supplementary to the Minister of Internal Services is, can he tell us how much is allocated in the budget for these cleanups, or does he plan to ignore the two-year cleanup window the Department of Environment has assessed?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, the department is looking at these properties. Any environmental concern that could harm residents or people in Nova Scotia is a concern to us, and it should be a concern to every member in this House. I can assure them that we will ensure that Nova Scotians are safe and that they are not harmed from these properties.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

COM. SERV. - NOVA SCOTIANS: INCOME ASSISTANCE - NUMBERS

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Community Services. Nova Scotians are struggling to pay the bills. Many hard-working families are barely making ends meet, and unfortunately, some are even unable to afford the basic necessities.

My question to the minister is, what is the current number of Nova Scotians who receive income assistance?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: I thank the honourable member for the question, Mr. Speaker. Currently, there are a little over 29,000 families, which translates into a little over 40,000 people province-wide.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, every Nova Scotian who is able to should have the opportunity to know the dignity of work. The Harvest Connection program allows income assistance clients to gain working skills and keep a portion of the money earned from working in the seasonal harvesting of field crops like berries, vegetables, and apples, and the harvesting of Christmas trees.

My question to the minister is, what is the current number of participants in the Harvest Connection program?

MS. BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I don't actually have that current number, and I'll get that back to you. One of the issues that we're looking at in our transformation is that currently, folks who are on income assistance and want to work in a part-time position to maybe transition into the workforce are able to keep \$150 per month, and then after that it is 30 per cent of their income. For persons on disability it is \$300 and 30 per cent.

One of the areas that we're looking at is perhaps maybe a transformation where that safety net would be there a little longer and be a little wider, so the incentive to move off the system and to permanently attach to the labour force would be the goal in the end, which is our goal in the department. For many Nova Scotians on income assistance, that is their goal as well.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, social safety nets exist to help our most vulnerable, but Nova Scotia needs everyone reaching their highest potential if we are ever going to get our economy back on track.

In estimates, the Minister of Community Services spoke at length about dependency on the social system. She also shared her goals for income assistance, saying, "Do I see income assistance increasing over the next couple of years, in terms of the people coming on it? Honestly, I don't. I have instructed my department this year that I want to see a net zero, so that for every person coming on, I want to see a person coming off." I'll table that from Hansard.

Mr. Speaker, to me, that sounds like we're going to accept the status quo. My question to the minister is, has she resigned to the fact that Nova Scotia is going to maintain its current income assistance levels, and does the minister accept that we live in a province where Nova Scotians simply trade places on the assistance line?

MS. BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I'm so disappointed with that question because the honourable member knows that my goal in the next four years, and hopefully beyond, will be to attach people who want to work, who can work, to the labour market. I clearly said that in the first-year transformation, that was the goal we were going to set: if one person comes in, one person comes off.

I don't want income assistance to be seen as a career path. So we have to work with folks who are able to work right now, help them find jobs. We're there also to support people who are facing multiple challenges and barriers within their lives, so that they can reach their full potential in the labour market. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: On a new question, the honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

EECD: COBEQUID CHILDREN'S CTR. - INVESTIGATION

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, this question is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. The minister, in media reports last night, said she was unaware of the dollar amount involved in the Cobequid Children's Centre or whether any monies can be recuperated. One lady has already paid \$1,500 for April and received six to seven days of care for her children, plus she has items belonging to her children locked inside. Another family paid \$660 in cash for April and May and are wondering if they will ever see it again.

My question to the minister is - promises have been made concerning an investigation - when can this investigation start?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I do have some statistics that I can share with him. I will say that the door was closed to that centre on April 14th, and on April 16th, having failed in other ways to communicate with the owner, we did send by registered mail a letter to the owner. In that, we were able to identify part of the money that we believe was an overpayment because they were only open for those few days in April and we have requested that money, that amount, \$4,300, be forwarded to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. That is only part of the repayment, the other part has to do with the calculation on individual subsidies.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to hear that some of those monies are going to be recuperated, so I guess to my next question. As of today, has she been able to find out if the facility has gone into receivership or if there was money garnished by the federal government, and whether parents expecting money back will be able to get it?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, our priority is to make sure that the children who had places at that daycare do find another space. That has been our priority and we will continue to work with those families. There were 45 students there at the time of the closure and we have 27 of those students who have now, with our assistance and the work of other centres in the area, found a placement. So that is our priority, but that's not to say that we will ignore or give up on the monies that are owing to the government.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Whitney Pier.

**IMMIGRATION - IVANY REPORT: IMMIGRATION GOALS
- LEGISLATION INTRODUCE**

MR. GORDIE GOSSE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Immigration. The Ivany report, *Now Or Never: An Urgent Call To Action For Nova Scotians*, shared a goal of seeing Nova Scotia receive its appropriate share of the international immigrants to Canada, which is approximately 7,000 new permanent residents per year. Will the Minister of Immigration introduce legislation respecting the immigration goals set out in the Ivany report, and if not, why not?

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise in the House and address this question. Immigration is a top priority for this government and it is a top priority for this minister. I've taken my job as Minister of Immigration very seriously because I want to attract and retain immigrants, including international students, who will choose to make Nova Scotia their home. I look forward to advancing various initiatives that will focus on the importance of immigration to Nova Scotia in using all possible pathways, so not just international students, not just through the Nova Scotia Nominee Program, but all federal pathway systems to Canada.

MR. GOSSE: Mr. Speaker, the previous government worked hard to push the federal government to increase the number of immigrant nominees that Nova Scotia receives. Our immigration strategy, *Welcome To Nova Scotia!* helped the province nominate the highest number of immigrants in the province's history.

My question to the minister is, in negotiating with the federal government, has she given them a number to consider when increasing the cap is key to making progress - what is the number that the Immigration Minister has given to the federal government as her goal for immigration nominees?

MS. DIAB: Mr. Speaker, in fact, what I found out was that through the previous government we closed our international student stream; it does not exist any more provincially. What I found out is that some of the other provinces still have it. Through the various discussions I've had with the federal Minister of Immigration, I've made it very clear that Nova Scotia is not satisfied with the CEC federal stream and that we intend to ask them to market the stream for the Province of Nova Scotia because, at the moment, the marketing strategy is not working for us provincially when it comes to these international students.

I also made it very clear that we want to keep the lines open, that we will introduce our own international student streams, and I've had positive discussions on that with the Minister of Immigration federally.

MR. GOSSE: Mr. Speaker, increasing the federal Immigration Nominee Program cap placed on Nova Scotia takes a lot of lobbying, it's important that the work starts right

away. As the Ivany report says, it's now or never. Will the minister report back to this House next week on her goal for increasing the immigration nominee cap so that all Nova Scotians can assist her in urging the federal government to move quickly on this issue?

MS. DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I very much agree with the notion, now or never. I always live for now, taking a very, very close look at what has happened in the past so that I can improve on my future. Developing and working on increasing our numbers, we've got to develop an efficient partnership between universities, local businesses, our multicultural communities and every MLA in this province, so, definitely, I agree with that.

The federal government is also initiating a new stream called the Express Entry, which will begin in January 2015, and I'm hoping that Nova Scotia will be a key player in Atlantic Canada in implementing and designing that stream.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

AGRIC. - FOOD INSPECTION: CHRONICLE HERALD ARTICLE - CLARIFY

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. We have over 5,000 food establishments in this province and we have 24 public health inspectors who are responsible for inspecting those establishments. That equals out to about 210 places per inspector.

On April 11th, in a *Chronicle Herald* news story, which I will table, the minister's regional manager said that the vast majority of these establishments have low or no deficiencies; however that contradicts a story in which they reported a number problems including pests, vermin, and failing to protect food from contamination. My question to the minister, will the minister clarify to this house these contradictory statements concerning food inspection in that article?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Indeed, we do over 10,000 inspections a year and there are some discrepancies, as has been reported in the paper, and that's understandable. Indeed, the numbers of infractions that are found are a small portion of the actual inspections that are done.

MR. LOHR: I'd like to thank the minister for that answer. Mr. Speaker, a basic requirement of the provincial regulation is that every licensed establishment must have food safety training, however not all restaurants are meeting that requirement. One that was pointed out in that article was a business in New Minas where five inspections took place between February 2012 and January this year and not once did the owner/operator have the required training - once again that was in that April 11th article. Does this concern the minister? Why would five inspections have taken place that had failed and no disciplinary action has been handed down?

MR. COLWELL: I cannot comment on any individual inspection on any restaurant because it still may be under investigation. In the event that there are violations, fines will be levied and corrective action will be taken.

MR. LOHR: It is my understanding that warnings were handed down in that case but evidently they are not working too effectively. In fact, 27 food operations were issued, in some cases multiple warnings. A Halifax food establishment was cited six times in the past year for lack of trained staff and a Windsor business has been cited over 30 times, since May 2011, for multiple violations, including lack of trained staff.

My question to the minister is, Nova Scotians expect more from their eating establishments than just warnings that are repeatedly ignored - how does the minister plan to address this situation?

MR. COLWELL: Our department works closely with the restaurant association and also our inspectors are instructed to cite violations - if indeed they are violations - and they try to work closely with the restaurants to make sure that these violations are corrected. If they are not corrected, appropriate action will be taken, and have been taken in the past. Anyone who wants to see what the violations are or how restaurants stack up in violations, they can go on the government website and see very clearly where the inspection was done and the results of the inspections. They are all public.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

JUSTICE: E. COAST FORENSIC HOSP. - ANKLE BRACELETS

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Just three months ago the government indicated that they are considering ankle bracelets for some patients at the East Coast Forensic Hospital in the interest of public safety. Last year, 42 patients went absent without leave from the facility. Has the minister made any progress on a tracking system for patients for their safety and for the general public's safety?

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, what was the question? Can you please repeat that? There was too much . . .

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness, please repeat the question.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question was that three months ago the government indicated they were going to look at using ankle bracelets for some patients at the East Coast Forensic Hospital. Last year there were 42 people who went absent from the facility, and I was asking the minister if that minister has made any progress on a tracking system for patients for their safety and for the safety of the general public.

MS. DIAB: Thank you very much for repeating that. Again, Mr. Speaker, I've said that, and I've said that many times. These people are patients. They are in a hospital. Having said that, I can tell you that I have met with the Minister of Health and Wellness, and we are looking at various options and exploring that. Thank you.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I just want to share a couple of quotes, and I take the minister at her word that she is exploring this. I want to share a couple of quotes from her government when they were in Opposition, by the member for Cape Breton-Richmond. That member had indicated that cutting back the GPS monitoring program, and said, "If it is decided that individual should be released because of the nature of the crimes that they've been charged with, an ankle bracelet should be an option."

Clearly, when in Opposition, this government believed in ankle bracelets. So could the minister give us some indication, in terms of specifics, in terms of timelines, of when this government looks to move on more ankle bracelets?

MS. DIAB: Mr. Speaker, we do use electronic monitoring and other options in situations where it is effective and efficient. If he's talking about bail supervision, as he very well knows, these are implemented by a judge in the court and these are not within our discretion in the government. Thank you.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I know that a judge would probably like - if he or she is going to require that a patient wear an ankle bracelet, that the system needs to have the ankle bracelets to be worn, and only the government can supply those. My question is, when will the Minister of Justice take action and let us know about what action is being taken to increase the number of ankle bracelets available to health professionals and law enforcement?

MS. DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I am informed that we can give you a bit of an answer. Let me just defer that to the Minister of Health and Wellness. (Interruptions)

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, yes, I promised the member for Hants West that I would have a 20-minute introduction to Health and Wellness estimates, and an hour later the Speaker was ringing a bell to shut me down. But anyway, the member for Inverness raises a really important question. I know it's one that is of great concern to the *Taavel* family. One of the real improvements that have been made is that unescorted passes are no longer provided until the most rigorous and complete risk assessment is carried out. We know that in the last number of months this has helped to make an improvement.

Yes, the Minister of Justice and I did meet with our department people to take a look at if this is one of the directions that we want to go in terms of ankle bracelet monitoring, and I can tell the member that within a couple of months the recommendation is going to be brought forward. As you know, we've had a very strong look at the buddy system, which is used in the U.K., and we are now working to determine, are we talking

about the same kind of patient. That's very important in terms of making a decision for that future use here at the East Coast Forensic Hospital.

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

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, I know time is short - 40 seconds - I'd like to know if the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal can give us an update on the report on Kytes Hill.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the report is finished. It's just in the final drafting stage. The member has been very engaged and that is an important corridor for the people in the Sydney-Glace Bay area. We are looking at roundabouts and some other options to slow down the traffic and make it safer.

It is an important question and I'll just hand it to the Minister of Health and Wellness - no, just kidding - it is really important for us and we're going to look into that so I truly do thank the member for the question. Anything I can update him with, I certainly will do so. Thank you very much.

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

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy House Leader for the Official Opposition.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy House Leader for the Official Opposition.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 8.

Bill No. 8 - Nova Scotia Jobs Fund Transfer Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to rise in my place today to speak to this Bill No. 8, an Act to Transfer the Assets of the Nova Scotia Jobs Fund from

the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism to the Nova Scotia Business Incorporated.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot about this bill over the number of years and we've heard a lot of different names on it. First was the Industrial Expansion Fund, then it was turned into the Jobs Fund and there's a bunch of different people who will just call it the Cabinet slush fund. This has existed for a number of years, many numbers of years over a number of different governments. So after many decades of government spending tax money - and we think sometimes irresponsibly - it is time that we take the steps to assure Nova Scotians that era is behind us. That is exactly what Bill No. 8 does.

The people we represent, the people I represent in this House, are tired of seeing news stories about government secrecy in funding programs. They are tired of reading about deals that were made in back rooms and seeing half-truths about their money and where it is being spent. It's time we permanently removed the Jobs Fund from the control of Cabinet and make sure that we keep all deals independent and under the control of Nova Scotia Business Incorporated.

Mr. Speaker, we introduced this bill back in December so we are hoping that other government officials have been able to read this bill and take a little heed. We know Nova Scotians work hard for their money. Jobs losses or people moving away are things we have grown accustomed to.

Mr. Speaker, I know for myself and other members of this Legislature, that is unacceptable. It is time for the government to tell Nova Scotians they understand how hard they work for their money and, because of that, let the government take politics out of their investments. We would like to see these investments given to people in the business world and know that it is a sound business investment and not just a political investment in value.

We know there is no room for political games when it comes to growing our economy. Mr. Speaker, as the Ivany report points out, we are at a crossroads. Government should heed the advice of the experts and leave politically-motivated investments behind. Allow for people who know business to make decisions about business.

Mr. Speaker, people in Nova Scotia Business Inc. have been making sound investments for a long time and we hope they are the ones who will get this new money. Unfortunately, governments have had an on-again, off-again agenda. While in Opposition, we heard a number of different times that this slush fund should be taken out of Cabinet. Our bill supports that stance. Once the Liberals had been elected, they say they are going to bring a bill forward and we hope that's the case.

Four years ago the Auditor General issued a report on the Industrial Expansion Fund, the then so-called Industrial Expansion Fund, and recommended that it be taken

away from Cabinet. Mr. Speaker, I remember Liberals standing in their place in this Legislature being very supportive of this move.

Last Fall, again, the Auditor General issued a report about the gaping holes in the newly-named Jobs Fund. He again recommended control be taken away from Cabinet. Today, we hear the minister is going to make this happen, or they are going to introduce a bill about the Jobs Fund. We hope that they read our bill and take heed to it. Let's hope they don't change their mind and keep it a Cabinet-controlled fund.

Most recently, Dr. Tom Traves echoed the Auditor General and said that control should be removed from Cabinet. To this date, we have not seen any action, although we're told there will be a bill introduced this session. I hope they come up with a plan, and what they say would be in the control of Nova Scotia Business Inc. and not necessarily Cabinet-controlled.

Mr. Speaker, when the Industrial Expansion Fund was rebranded as the Jobs Fund, the Premier, while in Opposition, said, "This is nothing more than a sham. Government should be embarrassed to stand up and suggest that this is rebranding . . ." We hope this is not the case again.

We have a bill here that will put that money into the hands of Nova Scotia Business Inc. We don't want to see this as just another rebranding. The now-Premier said at the time, "This is nothing more than keeping the old fund available to this Cabinet. If they really wanted to try something different, maybe they would have moved the investment arm out of government . . ." I have an article here that says that from Hansard, back in November 2011.

Since the government has given no indication of how they would restructure this fund and have yet to introduce the legislation to that effect, we're left wondering if it will be more of the same. We hope it's not. They campaigned an open and transparent government, and we figure this Industrial Expansion Fund or the Jobs Fund should follow the same manner.

The Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism told allnovascotia.com last week, and again here today, that he would introduce legislation in this session to fix the so-called Jobs Fund. We hope that that legislation would give this fund to someone like Nova Scotia Business Inc., so that that arm's length would be able to spend the money on what they see as good, sound business investments, and not investments because of political patronage and/or political connections.

Luckily the government has the opportunity with this bill, our bill, to once and for all take the politics out of this Jobs Fund, or the so-called Cabinet slush fund. It's a simple solution the Auditor General has called for on more than one occasion: take the fund out, give it to an arm's length, take it away from government. I hope the Liberal Government

sees this as a responsible decision that they can make on behalf of hard-working Nova Scotians.

Nova Scotians await this legislation and hope that it does eliminate the control from the Cabinet and allow people who know business, people who run business and people who can use this money to expand business here in Nova Scotia and employ good, honest, hard-working Nova Scotians, using government money to allow this to happen, to help people get a leg up and to better our economy. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Whitney Pier.

MR. GORDIE GOSSE: Madam Speaker, it is my honour to rise today and speak on Bill No. 8, An Act to Transfer the Assets of the Nova Scotia Jobs Fund from the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism to Nova Scotia Business Incorporated.

After weeks of hearing the Progressive Conservatives talk about Liberal shell games, I am rising in my place to speak on a Progressive Conservative bill that amounts to nothing more than a shell game. The changes proposed in this bill do little more than shuffle papers around a desk. That's all they do, shuffle papers around a desk. To really move our economy forward our province needs a government that's willing to make a bold move to make a real difference in the lives of Nova Scotians, a government willing to attract jobs for future generations of Nova Scotians.

The honourable minister said today in this House that he was going to introduce a bill to just do that, so we'll look forward to the minister bringing the bill forward to make sure that the bill comes in to deal with the transfer from ERDT to NSBI.

We're all challenged as MLAs to be able to look at growing our economy. Things that really move our economy forward are initiatives such as the small business credit union loan program, which were started by the previous government and enhanced by today's government, so those are good things - game changers in Nova Scotia. The ships contract, the Halifax Library, the Maritime Link - those are things that move things forward.

Madam Speaker, this legislation comes up short and will not result in any changes in the Province of Nova Scotia. I will speak very shortly on this. I'd just like to say before I sit down that our caucus will be interested to see just how far this bill really goes through the process here in the Legislature. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Ray Ivany told us it's now or never. His report is sobering, but there is a reason for optimism if we are prepared to act together. We have an

opportunity to turn things around in our future. Ray Ivany says that we must create a new economy to maintain and improve our standards of living and quality of public services, like health care, schools, roads, and buildings, but first we must believe in the potential of Nova Scotia - in our people, in our communities, and in our natural assets.

Government can't solve every problem. The private sector must lead the way on driving the economy forward. That's what will create jobs. That is what will keep young people here. I'm here to say that the government is here for Nova Scotians - not as a banker, not the lead, but as a supportive and enthusiastic partner. Government can help set the conditions so that individuals and companies see Nova Scotia as a place to do business, to invest, and to grow. As a start, the Finance and Treasury Board Minister launched a tax review, and across government we are looking out for it and getting rid of regulations that don't make sense. The comprehensive tax review is looking at taxes, regulations, and fees with an eye to support businesses' growth and economic activity. Trade, research, and sector development are also key.

Together with businesses across the province, we need to look for the next innovation, the next opportunity for growth. We are supporting entrepreneurship and start-ups; workforce development, including our youths; and the ways to give businesses better access to capital. The Ivany report reminds us about the untapped potential in our fundamental industries - agriculture, fishery, forestry, mining, and manufacturing - because every fish fillet that leaves our province unprocessed is an opportunity lost. Improving productivity, innovating, and adding value to our great natural resources will multiply our efforts. That means making more fish sticks from our fish, more furniture from our trees, more pies from our blueberries, and looking more broadly to sell them. Providing incentives and other small business supports is another way government can help.

Every province offers financial assistance to business, but Nova Scotians told us that they expect government to do so differently, with greater transparency and greater accountability for results. To help get us there we asked for a full independent review. Tom Traves just released his report a few weeks ago. In it he echoed Ray Ivany: we don't need to throw more money at our problems. His recommendations align well with where we want to take economic development.

We want qualified, independent boards making investment decisions based on clear criteria and economic development objectives. We want to streamline programs to make it easier for businesses, whether they are start-ups, companies, or those ready to export. We can better design programs to minimize local competition and focus more on sector support and individual companies with solid business cases for investment. Government can leverage private sector investment in equipment upgrades and other capital projects, and lead to improved productivity and innovation, and we can do a better job at evaluating and reporting results.

With streamlined programs, clear objectives, and arm's-length decision-making, businesses will know how to access support and taxpayers will better understand how their money is being spent.

The Premier has proposed a more open government. He's willing to be upfront with Nova Scotians about what decisions are made and why. Advancing many of the Traves recommendations will help us do just that. On April 1st, the Accountability in Economic Development Assistance Act came into effect. We launched a new website that provides more information than ever before about the financial assistance that government is providing, setting the bar higher for the rest of the country.

Nova Scotians should be proud. Young, innovative technology companies are vital to grow the Nova Scotia economy. They're developing compelling products and services for the global marketplace. They are targeting high-growth industry sectors, including information and communications technologies, life sciences, clean technologies and ocean technologies. These sectors will play an increasingly important role in the future and will employ more and more Nova Scotians.

The I-3 Competition gives start-ups an important kick-start to their success. This competition aims to find and support early-stage technology companies from across the province. By their very nature, these ventures are small businesses. Since the pilot in 2006, the competition has received a remarkable 642 start-up company submissions, reflecting the high level of entrepreneurship across Nova Scotia.

We are so impressed by the innovations that came forward this year. A plant-based technology that kills oral bacteria that lead to cavities; a real-time electronic marketplace for the seafood industry; a technology that detects air drafts associated with heat loss and recommends energy efficiency solutions; a smartphone app for firefighters' response verification and fire department management - remarkable stuff, I'm sure you'll all agree.

Heimdall Networks, a Sydney-based company that develops technology that protects companies and governments against website and network attacks, is the provincial winner of the I-3 Technology Start-Up Competition. Congratulations to Heimdall Networks and to all the companies entered in the competition for coming forward with some very exciting business plans.

The province is always looking for new and innovative ways to create jobs and grow our economy - companies like Billdidit in Cape Breton. When I look at the work that Joe and Bill have done at Billdidit, it's clear these are two of the most innovative businessmen around. Together, they are making sure drummers around the world never miss a beat. Plus, they are making plenty of sales in the process. Billdidit is a great example of how some of the best innovation is taking place in small businesses around Nova Scotia.

Or how Caledonia's Van Dyk's Health Juice Products, a company that is selling its award-winning wild blueberry health drink all over the world. Then there's Mindful Scientific in Halifax. The company says it can deliver brain first aid, developing medical devices to keep our brains healthy. Or Louisbourg Seafoods, a family-owned business with the tastiest fish that has won international awards year after year. In my own riding of Halifax Chebucto, 4Deep Inwater Imaging - the company is really cool, with innovative and revolutionary holographic underwater microscopes. We got a tour of this company the other day, and the technology that is being done there is phenomenal.

All of these companies make very different products, but for all of these differences, they have a lot in common. These businesses, their owners, managers, and employers are all about innovation. They have courage. They take risks. They invest in themselves first before coming to government. In short, they are small businesses in a small province making a big impression on the rest of the world.

These are the kinds of businesses that our government is proud to help out. These are the businesses that understand the importance of trade and expansion into new markets. These companies are taking steps to become more competitive and are ready to take their businesses to the next level. Nova Scotia has the essentials, the strengths, and the advantages to succeed and prosper in this global marketplace. But to reach that potential we know we have to do things differently. Our government will be the champion for the kind of change that will get this province back on its feet as one of the best places to live, work, and do business. Thank you.

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

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to get up today and talk a little bit about Bill No. 8 and about the economic future of the Province of Nova Scotia, and where we need to go and what we need to do. The bill we introduced in this House is part of the solution, but I'm sure we all realize that it's not the whole solution.

I do recall, Madam Speaker, as you do and I'm sure many others in the House do, that for months prior to the election we would turn on our televisions and we'd hear the now Premier, then the Leader of the Official Opposition, saying we have to do away with big government bailouts to private industry. Many times in this House my colleague, the member for Glace Bay stood in here and talked about the fact that money was given to big companies that weren't doing anything and weren't creating jobs.

People in the Province of Nova Scotia are worried, they are scared, they are wondering what is going to happen with their future, and how we are going to create an environment so that the people of this province can stay here, live here, and raise a family. Bill No. 8 is part of that solution, we hope, and that's why we have brought it forward.

There are other things that this province could be doing as a group, as a whole, things like the development of the Donkin Mine. Madam Speaker, the Donkin Mine has one of the largest coal reserves in this country - and probably in North America. It would have this ability to supply fuel stock to Nova Scotia Power. Right now we know that the Department of Energy and Nova Scotia Power would tell you that indeed, for the province to grow and keep on meeting its electrical needs, we're going to need coal and we're going to need coal for the next number of years.

Recently Nova Scotia Power, at the Lingan generating site, at a meeting held there, talking to the employees, the executive of Nova Scotia Power said that coal-fired generation produced in Trenton was being produced per kilowatt hour for about \$35 using local coal. They said that Lingan was generating that same type of power for about \$50, because they were bringing coal in from Columbia and American coal.

Wind energy, again according to the Nova Scotia Power sources, was costing \$100 a kilowatt hour to produce, plus it needed backup because there was no guarantee that they would have that wind energy all the time. So we talk about what we can do to help generate economic development and growth in the Province of Nova Scotia. As I mentioned earlier, the Donkin Mine, reserves of coal that could last for 25 years and provide fuel to Nova Scotia Power.

You know, Madam Speaker, that is really quite important and I'll tell you why I believe it is important. First, it creates jobs, good-paying jobs right here in the Province of Nova Scotia. Those people would be contributing to the economy because of their wage, going to the grocery stores, buying vehicles, doing renovations to their homes. But, secondly, the advantage it has for all ratepayers, right across the Province of Nova Scotia, is the very fact that the company would be dealing with the company that deals in Canadian dollars, versus right now buying coal for American dollars. So you'd have a company that was buying in Canadian funds and so there wouldn't be a discrepancy in the amount.

The Colombian coal that is coming into the Province of Nova Scotia doesn't have the BTU value that the coal in the Donkin Mine has, so actually you could burn less coal and get more BTUs, which would give you more steam, which would create more power. So in that respect it's a bonus for the ratepayers of the Province of Nova Scotia and it creates an economic driver which creates jobs.

The other thing that this would do, you could see coal then transferred by rail from the Donkin Mine to the Port of Sydney where we've just seen a recent development where there was a big dredge done there to allow bigger ships to come in. That was done to bring coal in, but there's nothing to say that we can't ship coal out, because our coal is in demand right across the North American continent and beyond.

The other thing it would do is help strengthen the local railway. It would strengthen the railroad to the point where coal could be taken from the Sydney coal fields to Point

Tupper, to Trenton, to Belledune, and onward. Right now, under the current government and past governments, we've been paying a subsidy to the railroads, but if we increased the traffic on that railroad with coal movements, then indeed, Madam Speaker, we wouldn't have to be paying that subsidy, so then it's another economic benefit for the communities.

What would also happen with this single - just this one development, one spot, we would see the rail being used to bring raw materials in. There are several companies in the Sydney area and surrounding area that use raw materials, and the only way it's feasible for them to be an actual producing operation is for their raw materials to come in by rail. So those are some of the advantages that could be made by one strategic investment, and it's about doing what's right, and not putting government money into it but letting the private sector move forward.

I know the Minister of Energy is aware of the challenges that are there, but he and the Minister of Natural Resources are also aware of the ability to move this project forward, and we're looking forward to maybe seeing that happen in the very near future. I know that the member for Glace Bay is very passionate about this type of operation going forward as well. His history, his family were involved in the coal industry; I had some involvement in the coal industry.

The other thing that's important is that it would help stabilize ratepayers' costs for electricity in the Province of Nova Scotia, which in turn would then make it easier for some of the manufacturing firms to come in here and start producing more goods. They need a rate base that is constant and is levelled off so they can actually make investments. It would be the same with lowering taxes.

So there are many things that need to be done, and this bill is only one part of that. We heard a cry just recently when the committee that was chaired by Ray Ivany did their report. *Shaping Our New Economy Together* was the name that they put on that. They talked about how they need to work together, and they talked about what the province needs to do. I heard my colleague, the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island talk about the report and talk about the things that it would generate, and he's right. We need to look at that report, we need to build on that report, and we need to build on the economy of the Province of Nova Scotia.

If we're going to sit around and wait as separate entities and separate Parties for someone to find a fix for the Province of Nova Scotia, we're going to be waiting a long time. Part of what we need to do and part of what we talked about doing was the three Parties sitting down and working together, and moving forward and building a stronger economy for the Province of Nova Scotia, so that your children and my children and our grandchildren and the people who are here and the people from all across this province don't have to see their families moving out West, don't have to see the dissolution of families so that they can make some kind of a living and not be here in the province and adding to the province.

We've got the greatest province in all of Canada. We've got all the things that we need here for a good life. Each one of us that are in this House of Assembly have been able to speak about the benefits of being born here, being brought up here, getting educated here, and making a living here. One of my goals is that our constituents get those same abilities and are able to do the same type of thing.

There are all kinds of things that are happening around, and we talk about what's going to happen next as we move forward as a province. We heard, as I've said many times, that we have to stop using this fund for bailing out large companies with taxpayers' money. I think anybody who is being realistic would look back and say, yup, that's what we really have to do.

We want our government to be responsible for the decisions that are being made when we're managing our economy. We don't need more of what we've had in the past. We need leadership, and I believe that leadership comes from everybody working together. Using the ideas that others use, that are good ideas, because nobody has a monopoly on good ideas.

Madam Speaker, originally I felt that the Liberals believed this. In fact, an economic overhaul, which included the elimination of this fund being controlled by Cabinet, was one of the key promises made by the Liberals when they were looking for their chance to form government. The people of the Province of Nova Scotia gave them that chance so this is one of the items that we would like to see them move forward on. They said they would eliminate it but we haven't seen that. My hope is that they weren't just selling an idea to form a government, they were actually selling an idea that they believed would work and that the province could move forward.

Well, they've gotten their votes, Madam Speaker, and it seems, right now, that it is more convenient to keep a grip on this than to let it go. We have seen, time and time again in our history, how this has worked out for the taxpayers. They are the ones left footing the bill. They are the ones who are paying the price and now they are the ones, the taxpayers of this province, who are seeing their families moving away because there is nothing we can do.

The former government brought in some legislation like first contract arbitration, and in Law Amendments Committee we saw person after person, company after company come in and make presentations about how it was going to make it harder for them to keep their businesses alive and thrive here in the Province of Nova Scotia. They talked about the high power rates - and we talked a little bit about that earlier. They talked about the high cost of doing business in the Province of Nova Scotia.

Business decisions, Madam Speaker, have to be made on real cases that actually allow them to do the business that needs to be done. NSBI was put in place where business case decisions are made. It is the duty of the government to set strict guidelines about the

use of taxpayers' money. As you know, and as members of this House know, the board of NSPI is made up of people who have been successful in business, who actually operate businesses across this province, who are employers across this province, and that's what this bill will do. This bill will allow that to take place.

Madam Speaker, earlier today we heard the Minister of ERDT say that indeed, legislation was going to be coming forward to deal with this issue. Well in the spirit of co-operation and in the spirit of working together in this House, I would suggest to the minister that he take this bill, rather than spend time writing a new bill, take this bill and call it tomorrow when we're doing business of the House, have this bill passed so that indeed, we can move forward in a positive way, to help the people of the Province of Nova Scotia. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Deputy House Leader for the Official Opposition.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 46.

Bill No. 46 - Lyme Disease Strategy Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to stand in the House and talk about Lyme disease. The majority of members in this House have probably talked to someone they know in Nova Scotia in recent years who has been affected by a tick bite. I certainly know a few residents who have. My young cousin is one example and a friend, Brenda Sterling-Goodwin from New Glasgow, certainly is another person who has become a great advocate for people suffering from Lyme disease.

Madam Speaker, it is disturbing to talk to some residents and hear them tell stories about entering the woods or high grass in our communities throughout Nova Scotia and being covered immediately by hundreds of blacklegged ticks.

It seems every decade we seem to be faced with a new health concern. Years ago, if you mentioned we would be concerned about a tick or a tick bite carried around by a deer, I would have dismissed it. However, that certainly is very different today with regard to the information that we know now. A number of years ago, the sighting of a deer in town was very rare. Today, it is as common to see a deer in town as it is to see someone driving through Tim Hortons in the morning. For whatever reason, I haven't seen any deer go through Tim Hortons yet, but that's probably the next thing. But anyway, for whatever reason, deer have migrated from the woods and seem to be spending a lot of time in the towns around the province. I know in Pictou County, talking to people throughout the five towns, it's a very common sight.

I live in the Town of New Glasgow, and there's not a day that goes by without seeing a deer right in the town at any hour of the day. It's just something that occurs daily now, and they are present during any hour. It doesn't have to be during the night when you're sleeping when they're sneaking up on your bushes and flowers and trimming them so you don't have to trim them the next day when you get up. It's very common, I know, at home, to walk out of the house in the early evening and see five or six on my lawn. Again, this is not near a wooded area.

I mention this because if deer carry the tick, and the blacklegged tick or some carry the Lyme disease, they're in our neighbourhoods, they're on our lawns, they're eating our bushes and flowers, but on the other side of that, we have people living in these communities, we have young children playing in these communities, and for the most part they are unaware of this particular health concern. Because of this, it's very important for us in the Legislature to educate the people in Nova Scotia that they have to be very careful and be very aware of this particular problem. I think the quicker we do that, educate people, have the schools educate students and parents, perhaps we can decrease the number of people being affected by Lyme disease.

In the past 10 years, there have been 150 confirmed cases where Lyme disease was contracted in the Province of Nova Scotia. In 2012 alone, there were 50 cases reported. Doctors Nova Scotia indicates that number of cases is expected to grow over time. Too many Nova Scotians are unaware of the dangers associated with tick bites, and it is not well communicated when spikes occur in the blacklegged tick population in our province.

People can start experiencing neurological symptoms, memory problems, digestive issues, migraines and other forms of chronic pain are sometimes infected by the blacklegged tick. Lyme disease will cause a host of different symptoms and it is important that patients receive the proper treatment.

Chronic Lyme disease complex is known as the great imitator. I think herein lies the problem. It can mimic numerous chronic diseases because its symptoms often involve multiple body systems at the same time. That's why this legislation is so important. It will bring together experts - experts in education and awareness, experts in treatment and experts in prevention. It will provide a forum for frank dialogue about Lyme disease in our province, and it provides a timeline for a comprehensive strategy. It will provide hope for Nova Scotians who have struggled to get accurate diagnosis or effective treatment. It will teach Nova Scotians how to prevent Lyme disease, when to suspect it and seek medical attention, and it will provide certainty and support to medical professions or professionals.

Madam Speaker, we cannot ignore Lyme disease. Increasingly Nova Scotians are finding ticks on their children and on their pets. It is definitely time to take a proactive approach and this legislation is a roadmap to effectively preventing, diagnosing, treating, and raising awareness about Lyme disease in our province, thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HON. DAVID WILSON: We all know Lyme disease has become more of a concern for the public here in Nova Scotia, over the last decade or so. We know, I think, partly due to some of the public awareness campaign that has been ongoing in Nova Scotia. I know for example, Madam Speaker, on the government website there is a map of areas of the province that have a higher percentage of ticks with Lyme disease and notices are given out throughout the municipality of the province, when there is a higher percentage of those ticks that are found that are carrying Lyme disease.

The public awareness campaign is a good thing because with any disease the more talk about it the more you educate yourself about it, hopefully you can prevent that. Lyme disease is just that, it's very preventable, but if Nova Scotians don't recognize some of the areas or don't recognize the importance of, for example, checking yourself after being out in the woods or in tall grass, then it goes to potentially seeing an increase of Lyme disease here in our province.

As some of us may be aware, Lyme disease takes about 24 to 36 hours to be transmitted so one of the one most important things, as I said earlier, is to be aware of ticks. Even if your hometown or one you are visiting is not designated as a high risk area, as I mentioned earlier, it is still important to be vigilant. It's important, I think, that the government continues to bring awareness around this, that it continues to educate not only the general population but more importantly our youth because we see, I think in other campaigns in the province, that if you educate the youth, and they know that there is a potential risk out there, then hopefully they will be part of ensuring that people don't get Lyme disease here in Nova Scotia.

There are things we can all do to deter blacklegged ticks. These include simple things like tucking your pants into your socks when you're out for a walk, avoiding areas with long grass, and of course checking yourself and your children for ticks, on a regular basis, if you spend any time in the woods. We know that many Nova Scotians get out into these forested areas, into these trails that we have in and around Nova Scotia, and I think the government needs to ensure that they continue on with the awareness campaign that has been ongoing for a number of years. I know that the Department of Health and Wellness works in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources, for example, to identify those areas in the province where ticks are present. As I said earlier, Nova Scotians could just go to the government website and on the website it shows a map of Nova Scotia and it identifies those high risk areas.

Perhaps the intent - or sorry, Madam Speaker, I don't see any mention of the relationship between departments in this bill and perhaps the intent is that they would participate in the conference that's mentioned in the bill with stakeholders. I believe that's on line No. 3 in the bill. That's the key, making sure that partners within the community are aware and are engaged in the fight against Lyme disease.

I know, for example, that the role of the College of Physicians and Surgeons and Doctors Nova Scotia should be part of that consultation. I didn't see it in the piece of legislation, but I would think if government chose to pass this, that could be something that was identified more clearly. Guidelines regarding the prevention, identification, treatment and management of Lyme disease should be at the forefront and those guidelines should be at the forefront with stakeholders if the legislation moves forward.

Lyme disease can also be treated, Madam Speaker, especially if it's caught early. That's the most important part of the educational component of what the Department of Health and Wellness, Public Health, and the Department of Natural Resources have been trying to advocate, that if you do find yourself with a tick that may have Lyme disease and you are bitten or someone you know is bitten, that the bull's eye rash that can develop around the tick's bite is a sign of potential Lyme disease. Those individuals who find ticks on themselves should monitor themselves or their loved ones, and if they see that kind of bull's eye rash they seek the advice of a physician immediately.

We know that undiagnosed or left untreated, Lyme disease can have a devastating effect on individuals. I know that over the course of my career as a MLA, there has been identified an area close to Lower Sackville, in Bedford. Over the years I know that advocates for increasing the awareness of Lyme disease have talked to me over the years and I know it's so important that we continue on and that the government continues on.

We know that just recently the CTV story earlier this month that discovered there was, I think, 17 young children at the IWK who had developed arthritis and it was later traced, Madam Speaker, back to Lyme disease. Luckily most of those children have been responding well to antibiotics and other treatments, so their arthritic symptoms are no longer there, but like most diseases it's better to get the treatment early - but Lyme disease can be treated at different stages throughout that disease.

Creating awareness around Lyme disease is certainly the responsibility of the Department of Health and Wellness, but it also falls under the purview of the Public Health Officer, which I mentioned earlier, at the district level. I know that's the key, so that when there might be a spike in Lyme disease in the province that information gets back to Public Health - and there are Public Health Offices throughout Nova Scotia - that they take the initiative to make sure their members, so, for example, the Public Health Office may send out an alert to the local physicians who might be treating people because as was mentioned by the speaker earlier, there are a number of signs and symptoms of Lyme disease. Having that avenue, hopefully, allows for early detection and catching that disease earlier so that physicians can be aware.

I think for the most part most physicians in the province recognize that we have been seeing an increase here in Nova Scotia. It started in the Eastern Seaboard of the U.S., and if you look at maps over the last 10 or so years you see that increase coming up the Eastern Seaboard right into Maine and now into New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. As we

may see when you go to the government Web site that has the map of Nova Scotia, there are certain areas with a high risk.

The unfortunate thing is, and it's in all likelihood that this will happen, pretty much all of Nova Scotia will be covered and the warnings of blacklegged ticks should be at the forefront of everyone. I don't want anybody by any means looking at the government website - seeing different regions in the province that have a red circle around the communities - to think that where they aren't encompassed by those indicators on the website, that they shouldn't be as mindful and as preventative. Anywhere in Nova Scotia, as you enter the woods or you hike on the trails, you should take those precautions, Madam Speaker.

I know that there has been some controversy about the accuracy of testing for Lyme disease. Most of the testing that is done here in Nova Scotia is done in a national laboratory in Winnipeg and the laboratory in Winnipeg confirms the diagnosis that we have. I know that there have been some examples in 2010 where some people have had a negative diagnosis and it turned out that they were actually positive and that's the last thing that we want to hear.

I know the federal government has been advised and is encouraging and making sure that the laboratories that we have in Canada that do these important tests meet a strict guideline and meet the highest standards possible so that we don't have people out there thinking that they are fine and then maybe months or even years later, as we've heard, we find out that they're not, they actually had a positive test and now are seeking treatment.

This is certainly something that we need to avoid, those tests, and so perhaps this bill should or could also include a review outside of our jurisdictions to some of the national procedures in place for diagnosing and treating of Lyme disease. If government chooses to support his piece of legislation, I understand the merit of it, but I feel there are certain things that need to be in there and I would hope that with the comments over the last few minutes that if the government chooses to bring that forward that they make sure that the stakeholders I mentioned are contacted and are involved with the conference, and also that an external review of the national procedure of laboratory testing is also looked at.

I'll be taking my seat, Madam Speaker. I hope government continues to push Nova Scotians around awareness of Lyme disease and the importance of Nova Scotians to be informed, and most importantly I think of the education of our young people, because if you set that into them at an early age, as they grow older and becomes adults, it is enshrined in them. They know atomically that if they are out in the woods they need to check themselves for ticks and use the precaution that every Nova Scotian should.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: I am pleased to have the opportunity to inform the members of the House of the government actions to address Lyme disease in Nova Scotia. I certainly appreciate the member's concern about Lyme disease. There is a reason to be concerned, not to panic but to be concerned. The tick population in Nova Scotia has grown significantly from zero endemic areas in the province to six in the past 11 years. Because of the concern, government began taking action long ago. I want to reassure members of this House and all Nova Scotians that there is a great deal of attention being devoted to Lyme disease both in the province and at a national level.

In fact, Madam Speaker, just about everything proposed in this bill is already being done. The actions proposed in this bill have been part of the ongoing operations in the Department of Health and Wellness for the past dozen years. Let me go through those actions one by one.

The bill calls for Lyme disease strategy to be developed by stakeholders; that was done 12 years ago. In response to the emerging potential for Lyme disease in Nova Scotia, the Department of Health and Wellness developed the Vector Borne Diseases Working Group with representation from the provincial Departments of Health and Wellness, Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment; the Public Health Agency of Canada and the National Microbiology Lab; public health staff and district health authorities; the Provincial Public Health Network Anchor Laboratory; the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History; and the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch.

This group developed the Nova Scotia Tick Borne Diseases Response Plan and updates it regularly to keep it current. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to table the most recent version of that plan. The plan includes human surveillance for Lyme disease, tick surveillance, a public awareness education campaign, information for health professionals, diagnostic testing for human illness, and vector control measures.

Mr. Speaker, you will note that these actions in government's plan reflect just about all the actions proposed in the Private Member's Bill: a surveillance program, guidelines for diagnosis and treatment, and education materials for Nova Scotians.

I'd like to provide a bit more detail about government's work on each of these areas. In terms of surveillance, Nova Scotia has added Lyme disease to this Legislative list of notifiable diseases, and works with the health professions across the province to track instances of the disease. We also work with our colleagues at the Department of Natural Resources and the Public Health Agency of Canada to monitor the tick population which, as I noted, has grown significantly in the last 10 years.

The knowledge gained through surveillance is compiled by the Department of Health and Wellness in an annual report, *Lyme Disease Epidemiology and Surveillance in Nova Scotia*. I will be happy to table the most recent report.

Mr. Speaker, the members of the House and all Nova Scotians can find this very thorough report on the Department of Health and Wellness website. We also distribute it to the health professionals in Nova Scotia and the Public Health Agency of Canada. Nova Scotia also has an infectious disease expert group in Nova Scotia that has produced *Statement for Managing Lyme Disease in Nova Scotia*. This statement has been distributed to physicians and other professionals throughout the health system, and is posted on our website. I have that statement here and will table it also.

We continue to work with infectious disease specialists to hold webinars and other forms of medical education for physicians. We also submit an annual article about Lyme disease for the Spring edition of *Doctors Nova Scotia Magazine* to ensure the province's health professionals are keeping Lyme disease at the top of their minds when patients present with the symptoms.

I want to be very clear that doctors in Nova Scotia are capable of diagnosing and treating Lyme disease. Our laboratory at the QE II hospital works with the national lab in Winnipeg, using the accepted two-step testing protocol. Any diagnosis not using this method - as is being done by private labs in the U.S., unfortunately - is questionable.

In addition to information for health professionals, we also put a strong focus on public education, because Lyme disease is entirely preventable with some simple precautions. As the weather warms up every year, we issue a news release, distribute posters and pamphlets, and share information with all MLAs' constituency offices to remind Nova Scotians of these preventive measures: be mindful of ticks when working or playing in grassy shrubbery or wooded areas; wear light-coloured long-sleeved shirts and pants so ticks are more visible, and wear light-coloured socks and enclosed shoes; pull socks up over pant legs and tuck in shirts; spray clothing and exposed skin with an insect repellent containing DEET; check clothing and exposed skin for ticks after working or playing outside in the bushes or tall grass, and remove any ticks attached to the skin; and keep grass cut to minimize the suitable habitat for ticks on properties.

We advise anyone who has been exploring the outdoors and develops symptoms of Lyme disease to seek medical attention. One early symptom is a bull's eye-shaped rash around the tick bite, and that can be accompanied by other symptoms, like fever, fatigue, muscle aches, joint pain, and headaches.

I have copies of the pamphlets and posters here to table, and last year's advertising and information is posted on our websites.

This year, Mr. Speaker, we are working more closely with our federal and provincial colleagues in coordinated efforts to educate the public and continue providing information to health professionals.

Nova Scotia participated in a national Vector Borne Diseases Working Group that developed a national communications plan reflecting Lyme disease activities across the country and sowing the seeds for more collaboration among the partners. In fact, Nova Scotia co-chaired the group, along with the Public Health Agency of Canada, and I have a copy of that national communications plan to table. Also new this year is that we will be proclaiming May as Lyme Disease Awareness Month in Nova Scotia, as an added measure to raise awareness among Nova Scotians of the simple precautions they can take to avoid this disease. I look forward to bringing that resolution to the floor of the Legislature, but that won't be me, though.

I've noted information on our website several times, and at this point I would like to stress that all the information is available to Nova Scotia health professionals and members of the House to see on our website. I also have packages containing all the information that I have already tabled today for both Opposition Parties. If, after reviewing all of the information, any members would like to gain a better understanding of the work on Lyme disease, our doors are wide open. I welcome any of the honourable members to contact the minister's office and he will arrange a briefing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise today and speak to this bill about Lyme disease. I do thank the members opposite, from both Parties, for their comments.

I just want to respond to a couple of things that I've heard here today. We heard a lot from the government member about different studies that can be found online and referenced and stuff like that, and I certainly don't want to try to discredit any of these studies that the member has referenced and I certainly don't want to try to offer professional advice to the people who prepared them. I know they were prepared with good intentions and I know a lot of work went into them. But the fact of the matter is, we do have Lyme disease in this province and we do have a number of people with it who aren't being properly diagnosed, and we do have people who have it who could be getting better treatment. Referring to studies and asking people to go to websites and look at studies is not particularly helpful. We need to start addressing the issue.

I also want to respond to - I know we have very good doctors in this province, we have a very capable medical community, but they also need support. They need consistent support and they need some education. I just want to read a little excerpt from something that the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education read in the House just a month ago in her discussion about Lyme disease. The minister said that she gets emails from people who say, "I was in at emergency, I saw a doctor and they said, oh, Lyme disease, you get that from mosquitoes . . .", or you get that some other way.

The point the minister was trying to make is also the point that I'm trying to make. I'm not convinced that all the doctors in this province, all the general practitioners or emergency room physicians, are getting a consistent message on Lyme disease and I'm concerned about that. I also do want to thank the member for listing some of the preventive measures that people can take to try to avoid getting bitten by a tick. That's good and people should take every action that they can to protect themselves, but we are still getting Lyme disease, people are still getting bitten by ticks, so it's a little condescending to say to people, maybe you could have worn higher socks or something - I don't know.

We have to address the issue that is here and certainly people are responsible for their own safety in every situation they're in, but you can't eradicate this disease just by taking preventive measures. Since we can't eradicate it, we had better know what we're going to do to treat it.

Mr. Speaker, governing is more than just saying nice things about something, it's about taking leadership; it's about establishing a leadership role and getting things done. I know I've heard the members opposite say quite a few times that good ideas can come from many places. I am hopeful that the words of this government, the words that they said about working together to get things done were sincere, because Bill No. 46 is a good idea and government has a chance today to show leadership and support a good idea. After all, what could be more important than putting differences aside to help a population of Nova Scotians who are ill? And, as we know, Lyme disease is becoming more and more prevalent in our province.

I remember myself being somewhat conscious of ticks and Lyme disease, but maybe somewhat not conscious of it. Ticks used to come in on our dog quite frequently, but it wasn't until 2007 when my young son came running into the House and said, Daddy, I've got a bug on me or something. I lifted up his hairline and there was a tick that was just starting to burrow into the back of his skin there - and I have to tell you that was quite a scary feeling. It was a little bit more than I could handle and I had to call my wife who came and dealt with it, but that certainly increased my awareness of ticks. It was just around that time that I met a young lady, Chelsey Livingstone - who was in this House on Thursday - I met her through 4-H, our kids were in 4-H together, Chelsey was with my son. So it's out there and we need to have a way to treat it.

We often hear about people in this province having difficulty getting a diagnosis, and which in turn hampers their ability to get appropriate treatment. Again, as the Labour and Advanced Education Minister said in the House, "I do think that when you have people who come to you and say I had to go out of province to be diagnosed, or I had to go out of province to be treated, that causes me concern." And certainly I can see why that caused the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education concern because it causes me concern. In that same speech that day the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education also described another too-frequent complaint and she said that they might have treatment outside the province, but then they come back and their specialist says I can't see you because you're

doing this unauthorized treatment - it's bad enough that they're sick and then they have to turn around and deal with this.

If the members will just allow themselves to think about that for one second - imagine themselves being sick, not being able to find a doctor to treat them, spending money to go to the States to seek treatment, and then returning home to have a doctor say, well, we can't help you because you went and got treatment there. That's just wrong on so many levels.

The government member can reference as many studies and websites as he wants, but I'd love to see that member talk to one of these people and say, well, you should have done this, you should have worn some additional clothing, or you should have read our website. It's just silly. This is the time to start dealing with this and as a province we are simply not treating people with Lyme disease properly. We're not treating them fairly, and we have to do better - and we have the opportunity to do better, so I certainly hope we take it.

I want to talk a little bit about my friend Brenda Sterling-Goodwin. Brenda is a wonderful lady, but she suffers from Lyme disease and her story is that back in 1997 she was working at a vet clinic and she did a lot of cat grooming. Now doing this type of work in a rural setting you can imagine she was removing a lot of ticks off animals and, due to her profession as a cat groomer, she always had cuts and scrapes. It turns out that you don't have to be bitten by a tick to be exposed to the bacteria that can cause Lyme disease; it's believed you can contract Lyme disease simply by coming into contact with the mucus from a ruptured tick.

These are scary things, I mean we talk about seeing more ticks and more instances of Lyme disease, and now we're talking about more ways you can possibly contract it. That's a concern to me, and that's a concern to me that our health system is not ready to deal with that.

The members of this House may also remember my friend Chelsey Livingstone, whom I referenced earlier. She was here - she did visit the House last Thursday when I introduced this bill. Chelsey was bitten by a tick at age 2, so she has suffered from Lyme disease for her entire life. Every day she suffers with it. This is a complete shame, because as the member for Sackville-Cobequid mentioned, if it had been properly diagnosed, it could have been treated. Instead, we have this young lady suffering from Lyme disease her entire life.

I talk a little bit about how you contract Lyme disease and it's - how you contract the disease is really just a matter of fact. How you get it doesn't really matter. The issue I want to address with this bill is I want to ensure that however you contract it, the immediate medical care that you receive is sufficient. The sad thing is what happens to your quality of life if you are not properly diagnosed and not properly treated. It's completely devastating.

If we diagnose and treat Lyme disease, we can save people. In Brenda's case, she went from a healthy, fun-loving, karate-training woman to a person that requires help to perform the most ordinary tasks of life. In Chelsey's case, she's suffered her entire life. She's never known what it's like to have a 'normal' life.

Every member of this House would not have to go far to hear about a constituent or even actually find somebody that they know that suffers from Lyme disease. This is not a Pictou County issue; this is a Nova Scotia issue. We can't leave Nova Scotians suffering in silence. We need to fix this.

The objective of Bill No. 46 is to ensure that Nova Scotians do not have to feel the pain and frustration that Brenda and Chelsey and the people we all know have felt. This bill will bring together members of the medical community and patients' groups for the purpose of developing a comprehensive provincial Lyme disease strategy, because despite what the member for the government side might have said, we don't have it yet.

We do have a Department of Health and Wellness report, *Tick Borne Diseases Response Plan*. This is a nice document. I'm sure there's lots of stuff in it. But when I looked at it, right away, I looked at the symptoms of Lyme disease, and the first thing I saw was the early localized symptoms. "A distinctive rash occurs at the site of a recent tick bite," is what it says.

I also heard one of the members refer to that, and many times that is a symptom. But it is not a symptom every time, so we have to do better. This is a good start, but we can do better, and I hope the members of this House will do better.

This bill will establish guidelines regarding the prevention, identification, treatment, and management of Lyme disease, including a recommended provincial standard of care that reflects current best practices for the treatment of Lyme disease. We need to get these current best practices into the hands of all practising physicians. The bill will also create and distribute standardized educational materials related to Lyme disease that will be used by public health care providers in Nova Scotia, and it will be designed to increase the awareness of both the disease and enhance its prevention, identification, treatment and management.

Education is key, not just in Lyme disease but in many things in life, and it's lacking here. We have a chance to fix that. We can build on the foundation the Department of Health and Wellness has established through its report, but we need to build on that. That's not a final, complete document. In Nova Scotia, we need better awareness about Lyme disease - what it is, how it's contracted, how to prevent it, how to treat it, and how to diagnose it.

We need to engage stakeholders in this process of diagnosis and treatment, and we need to do it now. We have many dedicated health professionals, researchers, and

universities, and I know they're willing to get educated on this and they want to get going on this. I urge the members of this House to do it.

Nova Scotia has an opportunity to be a leader in the country and to provide Nova Scotians suffering from Lyme disease with the treatment they expect and deserve. I urge the government to put politics aside on this important initiative and get going with it now. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader. (Interruption) Oh, my apologies, the honourable Deputy House Leader for the Official Opposition.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That concludes the Official Opposition's business for today. I would ask that you recognize the honourable Government House Leader and call business for tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleague for closing off Opposition business. Tomorrow the House will meet from the hours of 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Following the daily routine, we will return to consideration of the estimates. Should time permit after that, we will look to call second reading of Bill Nos. 35, 40, 43, 44, 45, 49, 51, 52, 53, and 55.

Mr. Speaker, with that I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise to meet again tomorrow, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow.

We have now reached the moment of interruption. The Adjournment motion was submitted by the member for Kings South:

“Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly celebrate the return of the ferry service between Yarmouth and the United States and acknowledge the economic benefit the ferry brings to our province.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

YARMOUTH FERRY SERV.: RETURN - CELEBRATE

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, what an incredible week for Yarmouth and for the Province of Nova Scotia. We have all been part of something special. Yesterday the Nova Star sailed into harbour for the first time, and she is truly impressive. Our government promised we'd do all we could to get a ferry service back to Yarmouth, and we made that promise because we saw the impact of the loss of the ferry in 2009. We know a ferry service will help spur the economy, and we know it is a gateway for tourists.

I can't imagine that anyone is more excited than my colleague the Minister of Natural Resources, from Yarmouth. For the past four and a half years he has worked so hard for the people of southwestern Nova Scotia to get a new ferry in place. I also know that Mayor Mood is excited to see ferry passengers walking down Main Street again. She has done an incredible job leading the efforts to get Yarmouth ready.

I have heard residents in Yarmouth are rolling up their sleeves and pitching in. This is truly a tremendous effort. That is the kind of leadership and community engagement that will move a community and a province forward and provide the foundation for a successful ferry service for many years to come. Many thanks also go out to the members of the International Ferry Partnership, who were faithfully committed to this cause from the beginning.

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to speak on this, because my roots go back to Yarmouth. My great-great-grandfather sailed between Yarmouth and ports throughout the world, including the New England States. In fact, my grandparents sailed from Yarmouth on their honeymoon in 1929 and settled in the New England States for 50 years before returning to Truro. The links between New England and Nova Scotia run deep. It began with our trading days by sail, the Marblehead to Halifax sailboat race, our connections through the Halifax Explosion, and of course, because of the many Red Sox fans in Nova Scotia.

With the ship in the water, we must make the most of this opportunity. The northeastern United States is home to millions of people. We intend to bring many of them here because we all know that Nova Scotia has so much to offer. Tourism operators

throughout the province are getting ready to deliver some of the most unique travel experiences you will find anywhere. They will showcase Nova Scotia's cuisine, culture, and outdoor events.

There will be guided kayak trips following ancient caribou migration routes and candlelight walking tours of Port Royal. Oyster lovers will be able to spend the afternoon at Eel Lake Oyster Farm, and these are just a few examples of the exceptional experiences we will offer. Of course, one of the best features of the southwestern region of Nova Scotia is our rich Acadian heritage. There are many opportunities for visitors to experience and celebrate the music, the history, and the warm hospitality of the Acadian people in southwestern Nova Scotia and throughout the province.

Once visitors take in the local food, natural beauty and hospitality there, they will be encouraged to explore the rest of Nova Scotia: the Annapolis Valley wines, the Bay of Fundy tides, Peggy's Cove, the Halifax night life, and of course the Cabot Trail. The Nova Scotia Tourism Agency and its partners are hard at work promoting Nova Scotia's many attractions and experiences in the northeastern U.S. and other strategic markets.

I was happy to hear in the recent press release - I think it was yesterday - that we are marketing in Boston right now. In the near future there will be a lighthouse near Faneuil Hall pointing folks north to Nova Scotia. There will, of course, as well be advertising in Fenway Park and a Nova Scotia Day in Fenway Park in May. I think, Mr. Speaker, we should arrange for 51 tickets. These efforts will help grow our tourism economy, which is a key economic driver in rural Nova Scotia.

We have started a new chapter in the history of southwest Nova Scotia, a new ferry service promises to revitalize our economy and tourism sector and have significant ripples through Nova Scotia. I know others will agree when I say, we can't wait to welcome new visitors to Nova Scotia. Mr. Speaker, the maiden voyage is a month away. We are in the final stretch. Local businesses are working hard to make the most of this opportunity and put their best foot forward. Residents from across the region are asking what they can do to help. Tourism operators are creating great new experiences for more visitors. They will be ready to welcome visitors and connect them with the most memorable experiences around and this includes our secret weapon, the friendliness and hospitality of our people.

Tourism is something we do well here in Nova Scotia and with a new ferry service it's all hands on deck to show passengers that they made the right choice. I am sure that our guests will love their time here in Nova Scotia and we will send them home with warm memories, great stories, and plans to come back. Let us all spread the word - Yarmouth is ready and Nova Scotia is ready, thank you. (Applause)

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

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: It is a pleasure for me to stand here too and to greet the new ferry, the Nova Star, and I want to thank the member opposite for his speech but I want to clarify to him that it was not the Liberal Government who brought Nova Star to Nova Scotia. They know, in fact, what we did (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's has the floor.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, if they would let me have the opportunity to speak as we gave them the opportunity, I'm on the list. The fact is that it was the NDP Government that did negotiate this new deal to bring the Nova Star to our province, and I am going to explain to you, Mr. Speaker, what happened.

We have been very truthful in the fact that we said as a government, we could have done better in terms of transitioning from the CAT to a new ferry. We have said that that was something we could have done a better job on, but the members in this House and the new members of government will also be sitting at their Cabinet Table with very difficult decisions to make and utilizing the information that is being provided to them at that time to make a decision.

We were looking at, when we came in in 2009, it was the beginning of a recession. We looked at the situation that was given to us at the 11th hour to make a decision on the CAT ferry. The information that we looked at, at that time, was the fact that there was an increase in the subsidy that was being requested over and over, and it was going up quite a bit over the years in a short period of time, to support the CAT ferry.

Nova Scotians do know that the CAT ferry was not actually the appropriate type of ferry system to provide that service because it was very expensive, the hours that it was running and, in fact, when that ferry first came to Nova Scotia, there were a lot of complaints and issues with the local fishers about what was happening in the ocean from the speed of the CAT ferry. But what we looked at was the fact that there was data (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, I am saying here that this is my opportunity. Nobody said anything to the members opposite, so they should give us the same consideration. We are explaining a situation. They don't want Nova Scotians to know about it because they're trying to take credit for something that they didn't do, which takes place every day in this House. So, Mr. Speaker (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's has the floor, and we will give her consideration please.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, they can think whatever they want; I'm talking about facts. The fact was that, at the time, when you looked at the hotel rates for

overnight vacancy, they started going down way before 2009. So there was a decline, and there were reasons behind that. The reasons were the fact that the Canadian dollar was very strong, we were running into an economic downturn and the CAT ferry, I believe that (Interruptions) no, there were travellers on it, but the number of travellers also was going down. We know that that ferry system was not the appropriate ferry system.

The system that we have now that just started the big celebrations yesterday is the appropriate type of ferry to have for our province. It's a cruise-type ferry and the cost is less, and so it's more of a family atmosphere and I do believe we will see an increase in travellers.

There are some other very important points as a government that we had to deal with at that time. Number one, there was no interest at all from the New England states to contribute to the Province of Nova Scotia's subsidy at that time. Another factor is, if you look at who is actually responsible for ferry systems in Canada, it is our federal government. At that time, they were not willing to give one red cent toward the project. We had looked at that, and as I said, we regret the fact that we, at that time, did not do a transition plan like we did with some other projects.

But the fact is, we did work very hard to renegotiate a new ferry, looked for a ferry that is more appropriate for the province, and I think it's very insulting that the Liberals try to take credit for something that they had no or little involvement in. They might have argued in this House for the benefit of the ferry, and I will give them credit for that because we'll give them credit where credit is due, but credit is not due for standing in this House and saying they brought this ferry to the Province of Nova Scotia.

We did make a mistake, but we corrected our mistake and I hope that government over there . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's has the floor, and once again I'll ask that we just let her have her time.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: I hope that this government thinks - if they think they're going to have a free ride for four years, they're going to have very difficult decisions to make too. If they think they're 100 per cent perfect, well then good luck to them, because we are human beings, we make decisions on the information that's provided at that time and at least the fact is the NDP has the ability to tell people in Nova Scotia that they could have done a better job on that. We did say that, that it was something where we should have had a better transitional plan.

But saying that, we are the Party that went back to the negotiation table. We listened, we knew that Nova Scotians were upset and it's really insulting to us and others that the Liberals feel they have to take credit for things that they have not done. I would like to say that we are very happy that this ferry, we were able to negotiate the deal. I do hope

that the words won't come back to bite them because they're a new government and they will find . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. On both sides of the House, there are too many conversations going on here. Please let the honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's finish her time.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: I find that for those members to - I know they're happy, and I'm glad that they're happy for the new ferry. I am glad that the member for Yarmouth is able to celebrate with his community. Of course I'm glad and happy for Nova Scotians. I know it's something that Nova Scotians felt very strongly about. That is why we went back to the table to try to resolve something that we feel that we could have done a better job on. But I think Nova Scotians appreciate any politician that gets up in this House and says, yes, we did make a mistake in terms of the transition, not a mistake on the type of ferry. (Applause)

You can clap because that's what I've been saying. But at the same time it is insulting that they want to try to take credit for something that we did try to take something and make it better, and I think the NDP can stand proudly and say, yes, we have brought this new ferry system to Yarmouth and it will help Nova Scotia. We're very proud that we were able to negotiate that deal. We do have a better ferry system. I wonder if we didn't do that, if we would still continue the same ferry system and the numbers would have been still going down.

The other thing is that the members opposite have to realize they stand in this House and they talk about subsidies going to corporations. Well, this is the same - \$21 million in seven years. It's a good project. But how they say on one hand that they're against having these subsidies, and on the other hand they're celebrating this subsidy. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate the member for Kings South for bringing forward this resolution about, not the Yarmouth ferry, but the Nova Scotian ferry, the ferry that does for all of us. (Applause) I sat here and I listened to our colleague from the far left say her piece about how there was a depression. That is a fact. Of course, by cancelling the ferry, it only helped the depression to get worse in that community. This same government brought in higher power rates that helped the depression. That same government, the NDP Government, brought in higher taxes that helped the depression, and that's a fact. This is what the member likes to talk about. (Interruption) Now, that's not a fact.

These members want to talk about what they did. Well, you know what? They're telling us that what they did was the right thing. But if you look at the results of the last

election, the people of the Province of Nova Scotia told them that it was the wrong thing to do. (Applause)

There is no question in my mind that the duty of the Official Opposition is to talk about what's bad and what's good. In this case I'm going to stand here and I'm going to say that I think this was a good thing that was done by the government. Mr. Speaker, it is our job as Opposition to hold the government's feet to the fire when they make a bad decision but it is also part of our job to congratulate them when they do a good job. I also want to say that, at the end of the day, when they were trying to get re-elected, the NDP decided they had made a bad decision and they tried and they started this process and the process worked.

But this process is for all Nova Scotians. If you are coming across on that ferry, it has an impact because of the devastation that was caused by the original decision, when they were governing by the seat of their pants on the fly and never knew exactly what they were doing about anything, except closing down things, putting taxes up, putting up power rates. Mr. Speaker, it was an impact on this province that will take years for us to recover from, thanks to that former government in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the impact of the decision to shut down the Yarmouth ferry was felt as far away as Cape Breton Island, where over 40 per cent of the bus traffic that came in there for tourism was affected because the ferry was shut down. We saw businesses in Sydney and surrounding areas actually close and decline because of the decision. We saw businesses in Yarmouth close, and will probably never reopen, because of the decisions made by the NDP Government.

Mr. Speaker, now that that has been changed, it is still a long road before any of those businesses will be able to recover, but people in Pictou County, people in all parts of Nova Scotia, suffer from this. Today we stand here and talk about rebuilding the economy. We talked about that during our debates and we are talking about it now with the reopening of this ferry. It is a small step but it is the right step; it is a step in the right direction, not just for the people of Yarmouth County, although we are very happy for the people at that end of the province, but it is the right step for everybody because the Nova Scotia ferry is back on track and we will all benefit from having that there. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't going to get involved in this debate but listening to the fantasy that the NDP was discussing over here - in disbelief, I sat here and listened to it.

I want to thank the honourable member from the PC Party for pointing out some of the things that happened that were so devastating to our province when the ferry was cancelled in Yarmouth. I want to remind the NDP, again, about the poor decision they

made. The honourable member who spoke for the NDP said that the decline in bookings was down already, before the ferry went. Well in my area we had a few bed and breakfasts and I don't think even one of them is open anymore. The bookings dropped by 65 per cent immediately upon the announcement, so it basically put them out of business.

The HST that went up devastated the businesses further. We checked the books after we got in government and we found we are officially in a recession and they were going to balance the books. The books were balanced going into the election, so when you get in a minus growth, which we are in, and were in when they were in government, it's a recession. So for the member over there, the former minister, to sit here, and she was on the front benches - to say that they handled the Province of Nova Scotia very well, well I question that very seriously and I questioned it when I was in Opposition. So if you sit here and listen to the fantasy that they put out there, I just want to make sure that people who are listening to this debate tonight understand that it's a fantasy. Indeed, this province was almost absolutely destroyed. We're going to be probably 25 to 30 years before we recover from the regime of the NDP that was here for four years.

I used to speak in Opposition, and I remember one day they did five resolutions on me to try to get me to shut up about what was going on. Once I knew that was happening, I said, good, I've got their attention at last. I remember some of the Progressive Conservative members, and some of the members who were here with me before remember that day, and I don't think there was ever in all the years I've been here - there was never any Party that put five resolutions, never mind two or three, against one member that they were so concerned about what I was saying. The problem was, it was the truth. It was the truth, I was telling the truth and they were worried about it. On October 8th, sure enough, the people of Nova Scotia agreed with me.

I can say, by sitting here on this side of the House, I have an incredible group of new MLAs who have the right idea, the right approach. We need to grow the economy of Nova Scotia and we're going to grow the economy of Nova Scotia. If we don't do that - our province is in a disaster situation now, and if we don't grow the economy, we're not going to be able to employ the young people who are leaving the province and have been leaving the province for quite a while, and more so in the previous four years when the NDP was here. It was just unbelievable to see the financial mess they made in such a very short time. It's just unbelievable.

Some of the contracts that they gave to the unions that, again, are unbelievable. When you see the effect as we move forward of some of these contracts and some of the things that have happened, it's going to make the people of Nova Scotia realize that they were wise to change the government on October 8th last year. Hopefully, we can turn it around in a short period of time so we can stop the exodus of the young people, we can get businesses to again have enough customers and enough revenue in the province, so that people can keep jobs here and employ Nova Scotians here so that they don't have to move out West. We've got a long way to go. We've inherited an awful mess.

When they say that the ferry didn't make any difference at all, well, they did make a difference when they cut the ferry. It was probably the most regressive thing, besides the 2 per cent increase in the HST - that was regressive for the whole province, as well - so you add the 2 per cent, cut the ferry in Yarmouth and you see a ripple effect. You saw Yarmouth almost completely shut down, and they have the gall to say that it made no difference, it was fine, it worked well. It worked well all right if you wanted to destroy the economy of Nova Scotia and the people who work in Nova Scotia.

So when you look back in history and see what has happened and how difficult it's going to be for us in government, even though we have an extremely talented group of people here, which I'm very pleased to sit with in this Legislature. I've been here a long time - I'm the longest sitting member presently in the Legislature - so I've seen a lot of things happen here. But I've never seen anything like the reign of the NDP. That is the worst I have ever seen in all my life. Sometimes I disagreed with the Progressive Conservative Party when they were in power, sometimes I disagreed with my own Party when we were in power, but I can tell you I have never seen anything that devastating.

Everything that was important to Nova Scotians was taken away, everything. By the time they put all of the things in place that "helped" our economy - closing down Yarmouth, closing down most of the facilities in the province that did create jobs and see the positive growth that could have happened if they would have kept those facilities in place for a small investment. But yet, they invested \$50-plus million in a pulp mill that closed down and took the money to pay their mortgage off in Quebec. I remember that, that was pretty neat. I'd say the pulp company got the best of the government on that one, 50 million bucks gone.

They bought forest land that was clear cut, paid \$1,000 an acre if I remember my numbers right - and I think I'm pretty correct on that - in a remote area of Nova Scotia. I've used this story before, I've got some prime real estate in Porter's Lake I'd sell tomorrow for \$1,000 an acre, which I can't get out of it, and it's prime real estate with water frontage on it. I can't get \$1,000 an acre, but they bought up all this woodland, and the big company, again, took all the money and disappeared to Quebec with it.

Then they turned around and bought the mill for \$8 million, the same exact technology that was used in Newfoundland and Labrador, that Newfoundland and Labrador expropriated it, and it cost Newfoundland and Labrador - the last tally I heard was \$150 million in environmental cleanup, so what kind of mess did we leave with there?

I mean, we do look at all these things that these guys have done in the past to "help" Nova Scotia's economy, and was a better deal for today's families? Well, sorry, the families all left. They're gone. The only time in history that there's a decline in population in the province was under the past government, the NDP. So can you imagine how they had the gall to say here that they helped Nova Scotia's economy grow when they are in a deficit situation, they are in an official recession, and the population is reducing and businesses

are closing? It's unbelievable that they can sit there and say that things aren't going so well, and they did such a great job. So when you go, and as they do all that stuff, away we go.

Anyway, thank you very much. I want to thank you very much for the opportunity to speak today. I had to get this off my mind, because most Nova Scotians feel the same way I do.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

HON. STERLING BELLIEAU: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member opposite, the Liberal Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, suggested that no NDP member was re-elected on October 8th in proximity to Yarmouth, concerning the ferry. I want to reassure you that I've been elected three times. I am the closest NDP member to Yarmouth, from Shelburne. I remain seated. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: I wish to thank all the members who participated in this spirited Adjournment debate this evening.

The House now stands adjourned until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow.

[The House rose at 5:47 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1206**

By: Hon. Andrew Younger (Energy)

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

Whereas Nika Hamilton, a member of the Main Street Business Improvement Association and small business owner, has opened a beauty salon, Clique Beauty Studio; and

Whereas Clique Beauty Studio offers a wide range of safe and effective FDA-approved treatments, including laser and aesthetic services; and

Whereas Clique Beauty Studio has been providing exceptional customer service since 2010 and their licensed practitioners provide customized treatments for their clients;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in welcoming Nika Hamilton and the staff at Clique Beauty Studio to Dartmouth East and wish them every success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1207

By: Hon. Andrew Younger (Energy)

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

Whereas École du Carrefour, a Canadian francophone public school for students in Grades 7 to 12 located in the riding of Dartmouth East, participated in a city-wide school competition hosted by The Bounce radio station; and

Whereas 101.3 The Bounce challenged schools in the HRM to collect the most foodstuffs to donate to the Feed Nova Scotia Christmas drive held in December 2013; and

Whereas École du Carrefour won the competition by collecting 1,750 pounds of food, which were then donated to Feed Nova Scotia, an organization that assists over 22,000 Nova Scotians annually;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the students and faculty of École du Carrefour for their generosity and

commitment to the community and wish them continued success in their future charitable endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1208

By: Hon. Stephen McNeil (The Premier)

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

Whereas Calista Hills has been an active member of the Girl Guides of Canada in Middleton, Nova Scotia, for the past five years, and has recently completed the Pathfinder Program, which consisted of 18 modules or badges, and who chose the camping option as her goal; and

Whereas in addition to completing these 18 modules Calista also successfully received the Community Service Award, in which she participated in a variety of community service projects to earn the Supporting Your Community component, a tree-planting project with the Clean Annapolis River Project (CARP) for the Environmental Awareness component, and was also involved in four fundraising projects for the Going Global component; and

Whereas since coming to Middleton and joining the Guiding movement, Calista has proven to be a very active member of her community and is always there to lend a helping hand;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Calista Hills on achieving the highest award in the Girl Guide of Canada movement, the Canada Cord, and wish her continued success in her future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1209

By: Hon. David Wilson (Sackville-Cobequid)

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

Whereas the Sackville Kingfishers visited Bluefield High School in Prince Edward Island for the 16th Annual Subway Hoop Classic AAA Basketball Tournament in November 2013; and

Whereas the Kingfishers defeated the East Antigonish Mustangs 85 to 67, with Alex Carson scoring 39 points and Chris Roberts scoring 13 points, taking them to the championship game; and

Whereas the Kingfishers won against the Colonel Grey Colonels 93 to 76 to take first place in the tournament, with Alex Carson scoring 36 points;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate the Sackville High School Kingfishers boys' basketball team on their win a the November Subway Hoop Classic AAA Basketball Tournament in Prince Edward Island and wish the team future success.

RESOLUTION NO. 1210

By: Ms. Margaret Miller (Hants East)

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

Whereas the East Hants and District Chamber of Commerce has recently provided nine business people in East Hants with the Essential Business Skills: Marketing Online course; and

Whereas this course equips business owners and employees alike to better market their businesses to potential customers through analyzing audiences, targeting messaging, and constantly assessing best practices and opportunities; and

Whereas Beth McNeill of McNeill's Shell and Service Station in Elmsdale successfully completed this course in March 2014;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Beth McNeill for the successful completion of this course and wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 1211

By: Ms. Margaret Miller (Hants East)

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

Whereas the East Hants and District Chamber of Commerce has recently provided nine business people in East Hants with the Essential Business Skills: Marketing Online course; and

Whereas this course equips business owners and employees alike to better market their businesses to potential customers through analyzing audiences, targeting messaging and constantly assessing best practices and opportunities; and

Whereas Carla Ashley of Strides Health and Fitness Club in Enfield successfully completed this course in March 2014;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Carla Ashley for the successful completion of this course and wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 1212

By: Ms. Margaret Miller (Hants East)

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

Whereas the East Hants and District Chamber of Commerce has recently provided nine business people in East Hants with the Essential Business Skills: Marketing Online course; and

Whereas this course equips business owners and employees alike to better market their businesses to potential customers through analyzing audiences, targeting messaging and constantly assessing best practices and opportunities; and

Whereas Emily Isenor of East Coast Kitchen in Elmsdale successfully completed this course in March 2014;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Emily Isenor for the successful completion of this course and wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 1213

By: Ms. Margaret Miller (Hants East)

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

Whereas the East Hants and District Chamber of Commerce has recently provided nine business people in East Hants with the Essential Business Skills: Marketing Online course; and

Whereas this course equips business owners and employees alike to better market their businesses to potential customers through analyzing audiences, targeting messaging and constantly assessing best practices and opportunities; and

Whereas Kirk Saint of Tobias Portraiture in Elmsdale successfully completed this course in March 2014;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Kirk Saint for the successful completion of this course and wish him continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 1214

By: Ms. Margaret Miller (Hants East)

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

Whereas the East Hants and District Chamber of Commerce has recently provided nine business people in East Hants with the Essential Business Skills: Marketing Online course; and

Whereas this course equips business owners and employees alike to better market their businesses to potential customers through analyzing audiences, targeting messaging and constantly assessing best practices and opportunities; and

Whereas Pam McNeill, owner of Cup of Soul Café in Elmsdale successfully completed this course in March 2014;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Pam McNeill for the successful completion of this course and wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 1215

By: Ms. Margaret Miller (Hants East)

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

Whereas the East Hants and District Chamber of Commerce has recently provided nine business people in East Hants with the Essential Business Skills: Marketing Online course; and

Whereas this course equips business owners and employees alike to better market their businesses to potential customers through analyzing audiences, targeting messaging and constantly assessing best practices and opportunities; and

Whereas Sarah Stewart of Gateway Facilities at Halifax Stanfield International Airport successfully completed this course in March 2014;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Sarah Stewart for the successful completion of this course and wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 1216

By: Ms. Margaret Miller (Hants East)

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

Whereas the East Hants and District Chamber of Commerce has recently provided nine business people in East Hants with the Essential Business Skills: Marketing Online course; and

Whereas this course equips business owners and employees alike to better market their businesses to potential customers through analyzing audiences, targeting messaging and constantly assessing best practices and opportunities; and

Whereas Sharon Prest of Mariposa Reading Centre in Elmsdale successfully completed this course in March 2014;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Sharon Prest for the successful completion of this course and wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 1217

By: Ms. Margaret Miller (Hants East)

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

Whereas the East Hants and District Chamber of Commerce has recently provided nine business people in East Hants with the Essential Business Skills: Marketing Online course; and

Whereas this course equips business owners and employees alike to better market their businesses to potential customers through analyzing audiences, targeting messaging and constantly assessing best practices and opportunities; and

Whereas Shelley Balish-Bailey, a local artist, successfully completed this course in March 2014;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Shelley Balish-Bailey for the successful completion of this course and wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 1218

By: Ms. Margaret Miller (Hants East)

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

Whereas the East Hants and District Chamber of Commerce has recently provided nine business people in East Hants with the Essential Business Skills: Marketing Online course; and

Whereas this course equips business owners and employees alike to better market their businesses to potential customers through analyzing audiences, targeting messaging and constantly assessing best practices and opportunities; and

Whereas Wayne Tucker of East Coast Custom Kitchens in Elmsdale successfully completed this course in March 2014;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Wayne Tucker for the successful completion of this course and wish him continued success.