



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

Published by Order of the Legislature by Hansard Reporting Services and printed by the Queen's Printer.

Available on INTERNET at <http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/proceedings/hansard/>

First Session

TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 1248, Admin. Professionals Wk. (04/20 - 04/26/14)/ Admin. Professionals Day (04/23/14) - Recognize, The Premier	2042
Vote - Affirmative.....	2043
Res. 1249, Earth Day (04/22/14): Action Categories - Encourage, Hon. R. Delorey	2043
Vote - Affirmative.....	2044
Res. 1250, PSC Long Serv. Awards (04/05/14): Recipients - Congrats., Hon. L. Kousoulis	2044
Vote - Affirmative.....	2044
Res. 1251, Educ. Wk. Award (2014): Recipients - Recognize, The Premier.....	2045
Vote - Affirmative.....	2045
Res. 1252, Natl. Organ & Tissue Donation Wk. (04/20 - 04/26/14) - Recognize, Hon. L. Glavine	2046
Vote - Affirmative.....	2046

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:

No. 60, Securities Act, Hon. D. Whalen	2046
No. 61, Next Generation Act, Hon. J. Baillie	2046

NOTICES OF MOTION:

Res. 1253, MacLeod, Alistair: Death of - Tribute, Hon. J. Baillie	2047
Vote - Affirmative.....	2047
Res. 1254, MacLeod, Alistair: Contributions - Recognize, Mr. G. Gosse (by Hon. F. Corbett)	2047
Vote - Affirmative.....	2048
Res. 1255, Minglewood, Matt: Talent/Music/Stage Presence - Recognize, Mr. E. Orrell	2048
Vote - Affirmative.....	2049
Res. 1256, Marriott, Ms. Hunter: Commun. Contribution - Congrats./Thank, Mr. B. Horne.....	2049
Vote - Affirmative.....	2050
Res. 1257, Stalker, Ida - Birthday (97 th), Mr. T. Houston.....	2050
Vote - Affirmative.....	2050
Res. 1258, Poole, Lee-Anne: Merritt Award - Congrats., Hon. M. MacDonald	2050
Vote - Affirmative.....	2051
Res. 1259, Commun. in Action for Kids: Success - Wish, Mr. L. Hines	2051
Vote - Affirmative.....	2052
Res. 1260, Warzee, Hayden - Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Mr. J. Lohr	2052
Vote - Affirmative.....	2053
Res. 1261, Earth Day: Events - Participants Thank, Ms. K. MacFarlane	2053
Vote - Affirmative.....	2053
Res. 1262, Ahmed, Mohey: Vol. Dedication - Commend, Ms. P. Arab	2054
Vote - Affirmative.....	2054
Res. 1263, Crowe, Gordon - Stewiacke Town Hist.: Chronicle - Congrats., Mr. L. Harrison	2054
Vote - Affirmative.....	2055
Res. 1264, Murray, Allan - Pictou Co. Residents: Income Tax Assistance - Congrats., Hon. P. Dunn	2055
Vote - Affirmative.....	2056

Res. 1265, St. Margarets Bay Commun. Sign: Vols. - Congrats., Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	2056
Vote - Affirmative.....	2056
Res. 1266, Connolly, Noah: Future Success - Wish, Hon. T. Ince	2057
Vote - Affirmative.....	2057
Res. 1267, Hall, Darlene: Death of - Tribute, Mr. E. Orrell.....	2057
Vote - Affirmative.....	2058
Res. 1268, Ryl. Cdn. Air Cadets Squadron 374 (Westville): Prov. Marksmanship Comp. - Congrats., Mr. T. Houston.....	2058
Vote - Affirmative.....	2059
Res. 1269, Great Haul-A-Day Challenge: Organizers/Vols. - Congrats., Hon. M. Furey.....	2059
Vote - Affirmative.....	2059
Res. 1270, Prest, Bob: Album Release - Congrats., Mr. L. Harrison	2060
Vote - Affirmative.....	2060
Res. 1271, Saulnier, Bob - Tideview Terrace: Fundraising - Congrats., Mr. Gordon Wilson.....	2060
Vote - Affirmative.....	2061
Res. 1272, MacLeod, Alistair: Death of - Tribute, Mr. I. Rankin.....	2061
Vote - Affirmative.....	2062
ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS:	
No. 243, Prem.: Boat Hbr. Cleanup - Update, Hon. J. Baillie	2062
No. 244, Prem.: Tuition Policy Review - Update, Hon. M. MacDonald	2064
No. 245, Prem.: Bracket Creep - Budget, Hon. J. Baillie	2066
No. 246, Mun. Affs.: CBRM - Budget Balancing, Mr. E. Orrell.....	2068
No. 247, Fin. - N.S. Grads.: Debt Loads - Min. Response, Hon. M. MacDonald	2069
No. 248, Mun. Affs. - Rural Transit Funding: Access - Guidelines, Mr. A. MacLeod	2071
No. 249, Health & Wellness - DHAs: Amalgamation - Terms of Reference, Hon. David Wilson	2072
No. 250, Environ. - CFLs: Recycling Prog. - Lack Explain, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	2073

No. 251, TIR - Five-Yr. Road Plan: Lack - Effects, Hon. S. Belliveau	2075
No. 252, ERDT: Melford Terminals Development - Update, Mr. L. Hines	2077
No. 253, CCH - Bluenose II: Operations - Donations, Ms. K. MacFarlane	2078
No. 254, Fin.: NSLC Agency Stores - Addition Confirm, Mr. T. Houston.....	2079
No. 255, TIR - Bridge Replacements: Delays - Notification Process, Hon. S. Belliveau	2081
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:	
GOVERNMENT MOTIONS:	
HOUSE RESOLVED INTO CW ON SUPPLY AT 1:39 P.M.	2082
HOUSE RECONVENED AT 5:59 P.M.	2082
ADJOURNMENT:	
MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5):	
Bluenose II - Lun. MLA: Colleagues - Answers Urge, Ms. K. MacFarlane	2083
Ms. S. Lohnes-Croft.....	2084
Mr. E. Orrell.....	2086
Hon. T. Ince	2086
HOUSE RECESSED AT 6:11 P.M.	2086
HOUSE RECONVENED AT 6:30 P.M.	2086
PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:	
No. 35, Property Valuation Services Corporation Act	
Hon. M. Furey.....	2087
Mr. A. MacLeod	2087
Hon. David Wilson	2088
Hon. M. Furey.....	2088
Vote - Affirmative.....	2088
No. 40, Maintenance and Custody Act	
Hon. L. Diab	2089
Mr. L. Harrison	2090
Hon. F. Corbett	2090
Hon. L. Diab	2091
Vote - Affirmative.....	2091
No. 43, Direct Sellers' Regulation Act	
Hon. M. Furey.....	2091
Mr. L. Harrison	2093
Hon. David Wilson	2094
Hon. M. Furey.....	2094
Vote - Affirmative.....	2094

No. 44, Public Trustee Act	
Hon. L. Diab	2095
Hon. F. Corbett	2096
Hon. L. Diab	2096
Vote - Affirmative.....	2096
No. 45, Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications System Reform (2014) Act	
Hon. K. Regan.....	2097
Hon. P. Dunn.....	2098
Hon. F. Corbett	2099
Hon. K. Regan.....	2100
Vote - Affirmative.....	2100
No. 49, Motor Vehicle Act	
Hon. G. MacLellan	2101
Vote - Affirmative.....	2103
No. 51, Municipal Government Act	
Hon. M. Furey.....	2103
Mr. J. Lohr	2104
Hon. M. Furey.....	2105
Vote - Affirmative.....	2105
No. 52, Liquor Control Act	
Hon. D. Whalen	2105
Mr. T. Houston.....	2109
Hon. M. MacDonald	2109
Hon. D. Whalen	2111
Vote - Affirmative.....	2112
No. 53, Police Act	
Hon. L. Diab	2112
Vote - Affirmative.....	2114
No. 55, Halifax Regional Municipality Charter	
Hon. M. Furey.....	2114
Vote - Affirmative.....	2115
No. 57, Cemetery and Funeral Services Act and the Emblamers and Funeral Directors Act	
Hon. M. Furey.....	2115
Vote - Affirmative.....	2116
No. 58, Oil Refineries and L.N.G. Plants Municipal Taxation Act	
Hon. M. Furey.....	2117
Vote - Affirmative.....	2117
HOUSE RESOLVED INTO CWH ON BILLS AT 8:11 P.M.	2117
HOUSE RECONVENED AT 8:18 P.M.	2118
CWH REPORTS.....	2118
ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Wed., Apr. 23 rd at 2:00 p.m.	2119

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):

Res. 1273, Blumenthal, Megan et al - Dart. Carousel: Launch - Congrats., Hon. A. Younger	2120
Res. 1274, Scotsburn Dairy Group/CEO: Bus. Focus - Congrats., Ms. K. MacFarlane.....	2120
Res. 1275, Mohle, Al - Yar. Vol. of Yr. (2013), Hon. Z. Churchill	2121
Res. 1276, Schwartz, Eamonn - Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Mr. J. Lohr	2121
Res. 1277, Eddy, Bradley - Stock Car Racing Accomplishments, Hon. David Wilson	2122
Res. 1278, MacIntosh, Anna: Sch. Project - Congrats., Mr. A. MacLeod	2122
Res. 1279, C.B. West Islanders Peewee A Girls Hockey Team/Coach/ Asst. Coaches - Prov. Championship - Mr. A. MacLeod	2123



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2014

Sixty-second General Assembly

First Session

12:00 NOON

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we start the daily routine, the topic for late debate this evening is:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly call on the member for Lunenburg to urge her Liberal Cabinet colleagues to be clear and produce answers surrounding the delayed and over-budget Bluenose II restoration project immediately.

It was submitted by the honourable member for Kings North.

We'll now begin with the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS****GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, before I read my resolution, may I do an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

THE PREMIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow, at the Atlantica Hotel, the Halifax-Dartmouth Chapter of the International Associations of Administrative Professionals will host the Administrative Professionals Day celebration. With us in the east gallery are Fiona Marshall and Lisa Young, two people who will help celebrate that. I would encourage all members of the House to give them a warm welcome here today. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 1248

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

Whereas administrative professionals play an essential role in coordinating the office operations of business, government, educational institutions, and other organizations, and the work of administrative professionals today requires advanced knowledge and expertise in vital office management responsibilities; and

Whereas Administrative Professionals Week is observed annually in workplaces around the world to recognize the important contribution of administrative support staff, and is sponsored by the International Association of Administrative Professionals; and

Whereas Administrative Professionals Week 2014 is focused on “Honouring the office professionals who make offices work,” reflecting the integral and central role office professionals play in modern businesses;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House recognize the week of April 20-26, 2014, as Administrative Professionals Week, and Wednesday, April 23rd, as Administrative Professionals Day, saluting the valuable contributions of administrative professionals in the workplace - and I call on all employers to support continued training

and development for administrative staff, recognizing that a well-trained workforce is essential for success in today's business 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 Minister of Environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 1249

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

Whereas April 22nd is Earth Day; and

Whereas the theme this year is Make it Count!, with a focus on four action categories - eat, grow, transform, and share; and

Whereas all Nova Scotians have a part to play in protecting and conserving our environment;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House commit to doing their share, to eat locally produced foods or grow gardens, transform their habits, and share information on protecting our environment - and that we encourage all Nova Scotians to do the same.

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 the Public Service Commission.

RESOLUTION NO. 1250

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

Whereas on Wednesday, March 5th, 412 Nova Scotia Government employees received Long Service Awards for 25, 30, 35, and 40 years of service to the province, a great achievement; and

Whereas there are more than 10,000 employees across the province committed to serving the citizens of Nova Scotia over many years; and

Whereas across the province government employees are providing families, businesses, and communities with the programs and services they rely on, day in and day out;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate these long-service employees and all civil servants across the province, who work tirelessly to serve the citizens of Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, may I do an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

THE PREMIER: I would like to draw the attention of the House to the east gallery, where we have with us Thom Gillis, who works for the Province of Nova Scotia, and with him today is his brother Tim.

Tim is a resident of Middleton, Nova Scotia, and he's a great friend of all the citizens there - a big hockey coach with the Middleton Mustangs. I don't know how many years he has been part of leading them to provincial championships, and he does a tremendous amount of work around the community, to the point where now we call him the "Mayor of Middleton." Tim and Thom, please stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 1251

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

Whereas Sunday, April 20th is the beginning of this year's Education Week, when we recognize the inspiring work of teachers, educators, and parents who are dedicated to educating Nova Scotia's young people; and

Whereas this year's theme is Active Citizenship: Get Involved, Take Action, Be the Difference - a celebration of community involvement and positive citizenship; and

Whereas we are celebrating the efforts of our teachers and education partners who help students recognize their influential role as prominent members of their community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize April 2014 Education Week Award recipients and all Nova Scotia educators who are empowering the next generation of Nova Scotians to make positive contributions to their province and community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1252

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

Whereas there are as many as 140 Nova Scotians waiting for an organ transplant to save their lives; and

Whereas over 465,000 Nova Scotians are registered organ and tissue donors; and

Whereas during April 20th to April 26th, which is National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week, our Legislature is lit green to spread awareness about organ and tissue donation;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize April 20th to April 26th as National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week in Nova Scotia, remember to thank the committed professionals in our province who work with donors, recipients, and their families, and finally, encourage all Nova Scotians to register as organ donors.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 60 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 418 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Securities Act. (Hon. Diana Whalen)

Bill No. 61 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2010. The Finance Act, Respecting Intergenerational Reporting. (Hon. Jamie Baillie)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1253

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

Whereas the gifted and world-renowned author Alistair MacLeod passed away on April 20th at the age of 77 years; and

Whereas Mr. MacLeod's book *No Great Mischief* was the winner of the 2001 IMPAC Dublin Literary Award and Mr. MacLeod received the Order of Canada in 2008; and

Whereas Mr. MacLeod was passionate about his emotional homeland, Cape Breton, and his works visibly conveyed the beauty and hardship of that island to the entire world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize Mr. MacLeod's significant contribution to literature and send our sincere condolences to his family and loved ones.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

RESOLUTION NO. 1254

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the honourable member for Sydney-Whitney Pier, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas all of Canada was saddened this past weekend by the news of Alistair MacLeod's passing; and

Whereas Alistair MacLeod won multiple awards for his collection of short stories, *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood* and *As Birds Bring Forth the Sun and Other Stories*; and

Whereas in 2008 Alistair MacLeod was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada for his commitment to Canadian literature and influence on Canadian authors;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature recognize the contributions made to Canada and the world by literary giant Alistair MacLeod.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

RESOLUTION NO. 1255

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

Whereas Matt Minglewood, originally from North Sydney, is marking five decades of "Rockin' the Blues" as an iconic blues musician; and

Whereas with 12 albums, many hits and awards, many have recognized the talent of Roy Batherson, also known as Matt Minglewood; and

Whereas Matt shows no signs of slowing down, with a busy schedule through 2014 and his countless fans in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and across Canada will continue to fill venues to hear his rocking blues music;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Matt Minglewood for his talent, his music, his stage presence and wish him many more years of success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank.

RESOLUTION NO. 1256

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

Whereas nominated youth ages 13 to 24 who made a significant contribution as a volunteer to our community were recognized at the 40th Annual Provincial Volunteer Awards held April 7th; and

Whereas Hunter Marriott of Windsor Junction was recognized for her leadership in numerous school and community programs, all while maintaining an academic standing on the Principal's List and holding down a part-time job; and

Whereas at Lockview High, Hunter has mentored the Lockview High international students, volunteered with the nutritional group, the Youth Health Centre and assisted the Kids Help Line, as well as promoting leadership with the N.S. Secondary Students' Association as a skill builder;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate and thank Hunter Marriott for her encouragement to others and her desire to help her community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

RESOLUTION NO. 1257

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

Whereas over 40 years ago, Ida Stalker and her friends hosted neighbours in the area to pancakes and maple syrup to bring the community together; and

Whereas this breakfast turned into an annual event featuring pancakes and local maple syrups served to hundreds; and

Whereas Ida Stalker still attends this event, where this year she celebrated her 97th Birthday with pancakes and maple syrup and the obligatory cake;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Ida on her significant birthday, and thank her for making the Maple Syrup Festival a forerunner to Spring and must-attend event.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 1258

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

Whereas the 2014 Robert Merritt Awards, recognizing excellence in theatre in Nova Scotia, were recently awarded in a ceremony held in Halifax on March 26th; and

Whereas Lee-Anne Poole received the Mayor's Award for Emerging Theatre Artist, which recognizes the outstanding talent of an emerging theatre artist who is a resident of HRM; and

Whereas Lee-Anne Poole is a writer, performer, and arts producer, living in the north end of Halifax, whose original and transgressive plays include *Splinters*, *The Obedients*, and *Short Skirt Butch*;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly express its appreciation for the support of theatre demonstrated by HRM's Mayor's Award for Emerging Theatre Artist, and congratulate Lee-Anne Poole on being chosen as the 2014 winner of the Mayor's Award for Emerging Theatre Artist, and look forward to new provocative work from Ms. Poole in years to come.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie.

RESOLUTION NO. 1259

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

Whereas Community in Action for Kids was founded in 2013 in Guysborough; and

Whereas the committee saw a need to help raise the needed funds to cover the cost of special events hosted throughout the summer months for children living in the Municipality of Guysborough, to ensure all children could participate without a financial barrier; and

Whereas last year they raised over \$6,000 and were able to cover the complete cost of three special events for over 150 participants, and this year intend to cover the complete cost of three or more events;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly wish the committee continued success with all future fundraising endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1260

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

Whereas the Duke of Edinburgh's Award was founded by His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, and was introduced to Canada in 1963 to encourage personal development and community involvement for young people; and

Whereas the basic structure of the award program encourages young people in four mandatory areas: service, adventurous journey, skills, and physical recreation; and

Whereas Hayden Warzee was recently awarded a bronze medal for his accomplishment in these requirements;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Hayden Warzee on his accomplishments in receiving this prestigious award, and wish him continued success in future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1261

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

Whereas today is the 44th annual anniversary of Earth Day and more than one billion people will celebrate this environmental event world-wide; and

Whereas communities across our province have taken part in cleanups, planting trees and holding mass celebrations to honour and remind us how beautiful and important our environment is, while focusing on a month-long cleanup challenge that will enable more Nova Scotians to take action in their communities; and

Whereas Earth Day is a time to reflect on the successes we have had in making our world a greener place and remind us that we still have a lot to accomplish for future generations;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank those who participated in Earth Day events across the province, and let today encourage us to do more to protect this beautiful province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 1262

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

Whereas Mohey Ahmed shows excellence in community involvement; and

Whereas Mr. Ahmed is one of the most dedicated volunteers in Fairview-Clayton Park; and

Whereas Mr. Ahmed puts the needs of his community above his own and makes every attempt to welcome new people to the neighbourhood;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mr. Ahmed for his dedication as a volunteer and commend him on all his contributions to our community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

RESOLUTION NO. 1263

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

Whereas the Colchester Historical Society's Heritage Award program honours a group or individual for preserving and promoting heritage within our country; and

Whereas Gordon Crowe was approached by town officials and a town librarian to chronicle Stewiacke's more than 100-year history on audio tape; and

Whereas Mr. Crowe's audio tape *Remembering Tomorrow* was honoured with one of the Colchester Historical Society's Heritage Awards at their ceremony on February 27, 2014, at the Colchester Historeum;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Gordon Crowe for being honoured for his work in assembling the history of the Town of Stewiacke with his audio tape, *Remembering Tomorrow*.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

RESOLUTION NO. 1264

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

Whereas Stellarton native Allan Murray has been volunteering to help residents file their annual income tax since 1997; and

Whereas the university graduate has been trained by Revenue Canada and is well-informed on current rules and regulations, so he can advise individuals on all claimable items, saving many people money; and

Whereas Allan is very involved and a community-minded individual and he can be found in community rooms and senior complexes every year, holding these tax clinics;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Allan Murray for the valuable service he provides to the residents of Pictou County each year at income tax time.

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. 1265

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 Fiona Ferguson is a St. Margarets Bay resident who had the creative suggestion to construct and install an artistic, brightly-coloured community sign; and

Whereas Ms. Ferguson had many volunteers help her with the project, such as artist Andrea Redmond, PBM Construction, Tantallon Veterinary Hospital, Tantallon Elementary School, as well as many others; and

Whereas the community of St. Margarets Bay now has a beautiful sign on the corner of St. Margarets Bay Road and Peggy's Cove Road that truly reflects the spirit of the community;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Fiona Ferguson and all those who donated their time and expertise, as well as the community of St. Margarets Bay, on the accomplishment of their new community sign.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 1266

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

Whereas 17-year-old Noah Connolly of Cole Harbour, Dartmouth, is a Grade 11 student at Dartmouth High School; and

Whereas he is an active member of the Association for Business in Cole Harbour and has already started a number of local businesses, hoping to save money for university; and

Whereas Noah successfully runs the Ol' School Donuts family business in Cole Harbour, with a solid plan to expand the business to Halifax and Sackville for the upcoming summer;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Noah and wish him 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.

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

RESOLUTION NO. 1267

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

Whereas Darlene Hall was the recipient of the David William Connors Award from the Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers, an annual award that is given to a social worker in the province who personifies dedication to the field; and

Whereas Darlene spent 12 years as a front-line social worker at the Northside General Hospital before her passing, and her daughter Melanie, who followed in her mother's footsteps with her career, accepted the award on her behalf; and

Whereas Darlene was the consummate social worker, and "caring," "calm," "dedicated," and "conscientious" are words that capture the type of social worker she was;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in remembering this deserving recipient, who left us too soon.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

RESOLUTION NO. 1268

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

Whereas four Royal Canadian Air Cadets from Squadron 374 F/L Chisholm in Westville were selected as staff cadets at the Provincial Marksmanship Competition; and

Whereas these busy cadets helped coaches and cadet competitors from across the province and assisted in the day-to-day running of the competition; and

Whereas this event was a huge success;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate and thank cadets Tessa Sherman, David Bishop, Christina Cardiff, and Ralieg Kerr for a job well done.

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 Municipal Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 1269

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

Whereas the Great Haul-A-Day food bank challenge was organized by the Bridgewater Superstore, the Bridgewater Town Police, the Cookeville detachment of the RCMP, and the local Lunenburg County paramedics, and was a great success; and

Whereas together this group organized a food drive to directly benefit the Bridgewater Interchurch Food Bank; and

Whereas the support from the community was outstanding, and a large amount of food and monetary support was collected for the food bank;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the organizers and volunteers of the Great Haul-A-Day challenge, and thank them for all their time and effort.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

RESOLUTION NO. 1270

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

Whereas the Stewiacke Valley is filled with tales and folklore that long-time residents have been passing down to their children for generations; and

Whereas for at least 20 years Bob Prest has been working on an album of original songs about the history of the community where he was born and raised; and

Whereas the release of Prest's album, *Legends and Lies*, took place at the Upper Stewiacke United Church on April 6th;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Bob Prest on the release of his album, which chronicles the folklore of the Stewiacke Valley.

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 Clare-Digby.

RESOLUTION NO. 1271

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

Whereas Bob Saulnier, a nurse for 29 years at Digby General Hospital, is known for his artistic hobbies; and

Whereas Bob Saulnier has Alzheimer's disease, resides at Tideview Terrace, and is interested in photography; and

Whereas Bob Saulnier has produced two calendars exposing his photos, selling them to donate to the recreation fund for Tideview Terrace residents;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Bob Saulnier for his success to raise money for Tideview Terrace.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

RESOLUTION NO. 1272

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

Whereas Alistair MacLeod, originally born in Saskatchewan but a lifelong resident of Cape Breton and a Canadian literary giant, has passed away at the age of 77; and

Whereas Alistair gained international fame and acclaim with his works: *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood*, *As Birds Bring Forth the Sun* and his magnum opus, the 1999 novel *No Great Mischief*, for which he won the Lannan Literary Award, Trillium Book Award and one of the world's most lucrative literary prizes, the 2001 Dublin Literary Award, on top of having it being named Atlantic Canada's greatest book of all time in 2009; and

Whereas Alistair was a recipient of the Order of Canada, a great ambassador of Gaelic culture, Cape Breton Island and the Province of Nova Scotia as a whole;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly honour and acknowledge the loss of one of our province's greatest writers and citizens, my cousin, Alistair MacLeod.

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 12:38 p.m., we will conclude at 1:38 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: BOAT HBR. CLEANUP - UPDATE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Today is Earth Day, an annual event celebrated world-wide, where events are held to demonstrate support for environmental protection. Two big areas where more work needs to be done in Nova Scotia relate to Boat Harbour and the emissions from the pulp mill that operates nearby.

During the last election, the Premier promised in writing that a Liberal Government will “insist on aggressive monitoring of the emissions from the plant” and that “. . . a system for reporting this information be put in place.” It is signed by the now-Premier, and I’ll table that for the benefit of the House.

I have a simple question. Can the Premier update the House on how he is doing at keeping this promise?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I can assure all members of this House, indeed all people of Nova Scotia, that this government takes its role in protecting the environment seriously, at the same time working with communities to ensure that we have job creation.

If you look at what has happened around Boat Harbour, in the first six months of being in power, we have now gone out to begin testing of what is actually in Boat Harbour, to update information that is as old as 1996, Mr. Speaker, I remind you that has gone through a number of successive governments, including a Premier who represented that area.

In six months we have moved forward on that file to update that information so that when we begin to roll out a plan to ensure that not only do we clean up Boat Harbour but

we find a solution that will allow the mill to continue to operate. If he looked at the extension that the Minister of Environment provided, it was for two reasons. One was that on the final day of consultation with Pictou Landing we received an 800-page document that not only our government has to review, but all partners are going to be reviewing in the coming days. At the same time, we want a technical report delivered to our government by the mill to ensure that it is not only going to find a solution to what is happening in Boat Harbour, but is dealing with the air emissions. We will continue to keep communities updated.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I can only point out that testing is not a cleanup. In fact, there have been 40 years of evidence that Boat Harbour is a toxic mess, an embarrassment and an offence to the environment of Nova Scotia. The time for more studies, for more testing - as good as testing is - is not going to change the fact that all Nova Scotians know, particularly those that live in the area, that this is an environmental mess that deserves to be cleaned up.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia is known for its pristine bays and harbours, but unfortunately that does not apply to Boat Harbour. The Premier references that all three Parties have been power during the accumulation of the mess at Boat Harbour, and that is true. In fact it was my predecessor in my seat, Murray Scott, who made the commitment in 2008, just before his government was defeated, to clean it up and began to explore different methods of effecting that cleanup. Four years have passed since then under an NDP Government. Now we have a new Premier and a new government that has made a promise to the people of Pictou, and in fact to the people of all Nova Scotia, to clean it up. So I will ask the Premier, when will Nova Scotians see action from his government on cleaning up Boat Harbour?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to hear that the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party brought up 2008. You want to talk about a political commitment, Mr. Speaker - there was no financial commitment made by that government, and quite frankly no plan to clean up Boat Harbour. As I just said to the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, the information associated with Boat Harbour dates back to 1996. In order for us to move forward on a cleanup, we need to know - the Department of Environment needs to know, actually, what is in Boat Harbour. I'm sure that the members of Pictou would also be telling their Leader that there are other issues associated with Boat Harbour that are unrelated to the mill.

We want to make sure that when we move forward to do a cleanup that we do it properly, we do it right, to ensure that the citizens of Pictou Landing, and indeed Pictou County, can return Boat Harbour back to the way it was, and at the same time ensuring that we try to protect jobs in Pictou County.

MR. BAILLIE: Well Mr. Speaker, I hate to say it, but we've just heard from the king of political promises, because that Premier signed his name on a document in the heat

of an election campaign to the people of Pictou County that he would monitor emissions from the mill and that he would report them publicly. It's six months later, and we're all still waiting. Now he says he wants to clean up Boat Harbour. I sure hope that's true, so that this isn't just another political promise. We want to see action on Boat Harbour.

We had one real test already in the life of this government: we had a budget come and go about a month ago. There was a chance to recognize the cleanup cost, the environmental liability that is in place for the Province of Nova Scotia, so that we know that that cleanup will happen. Mr. Speaker, in fact, the Auditor General of Nova Scotia recommended that environmental liabilities be recorded starting in this budget year, but there is nothing new from the government, from the Liberal Government, for Boat Harbour.

So I will ask the Premier, the king of political promises: can he assure us that Boat Harbour will not be just another broken Liberal promise?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party to listen, if he's going to ask a question, to listen to the answer. In the first six months of being in power, we've embarked on trying to find out exactly what is in that harbour. How can we put a plan out to the people of this province until we know what has actually been dumped into that harbour? The Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party is suggesting that the only challenge is around the mill. There are other issues associated with Boat Harbour.

This government is committed to cleaning up Boat Harbour, and we will do so by putting out a real plan for the people not only of Pictou County, but indeed all Nova Scotians.

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

PREM.: TUITION POLICY REVIEW - UPDATE

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Premier. In 2012, the provincial government entered into a memorandum of understanding with universities, which set out the funding for post-secondary institutions for a three-year period. This MOU mandated that university tuition would stay at or below the national average, not be increased by more than 3 per cent, and that a tuition policy review would take place before the end of the MOU.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is, considering this MOU expires in less than a year, can the Premier please advise the House what the outcome of the tuition policy review is and when it will be released?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. The Minister of Labour and Advanced Education is continuing to do great work on behalf of this government, working with post-secondary institutions, recognizing the valuable contribution they make not only in educating our young students, but as an immigration tool they use bringing 20,000 other young Canadian and foreign students into this province and also recognizing the economic driver they can be by ensuring that we do job creation through providing research into the marketplace.

As far as tuition goes, tuition will not be going up more than the 3 per cent that is committed. We have already embarked on starting to look at what the MOU will look like going forward and I've been excited at the way that not only our young university students who are graduating are excited about the possibility about doing research here in Nova Scotia, I've also been encouraged by the way that university presidents and faculty have recognized that they have an important role to play to drive the economy of this province. We are prepared to work with them to ensure that more of their young graduates get an opportunity to stay, work, and live in this province.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Premier for his response. After the MOU was announced in 2012, the Leader of the Liberal Party criticized it and told CBC he thought it "... lacked any long-term planning for university spending ..."

Mr. Speaker, my question is, can the Premier please explain how his approach is helping universities develop long-term plans and why doesn't he show the same concern for students that he did for universities, students who are waiting to find out what the tuition will be for next year?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, not only have we shown concern by our words, we've done it by our actions. We have created more research opportunities for students in this province. We are allowing more apprenticeship opportunities for NSCC graduates. We are working with small-business owners across this province to provide a graduate with opportunities, it's a job. We're working with employers to give jobs to graduates in this province. We not only have shown concern with our words, we've shown it with our actions.

Furthermore, we recognize the great economic drivers universities can be in this province and we are going to continue to work to ensure that we bring research to this province, research dollars from not only the public sector, but from the private sector, and research that we can commercialize into job creation.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the memorandum of understanding with universities ends soon and so will the commitment that tuition stay below the national average. With many students in the province looking forward to starting university in the Fall, and returning to university in the Fall, they have yet to know what the tuition increases

will be for next year. I want to ask the Premier, will he tell Nova Scotia students now how much his government will allow tuition to increase next year?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I actually said that in my first question. Tuition will not go up by more than 3 per cent. We have said that very clearly and we are in negotiations with universities around an MOU to provide long-term stability, at the same time recognizing the valuable contribution that they make to this province on so many fronts. From an immigration strategy, from job creation, finally universities and university graduates have a government that is actually paying attention to them.

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

PREM.: BRACKET CREEP - BUDGET

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia is one of three provinces in Canada that does not index its income tax brackets to inflation. When he was in Opposition, the Premier said very clearly that he believes bracket creep costs Nova Scotians millions of dollars a year in hidden tax increases. He correctly said that it takes more money out of their pockets every year and he went on to say “We need to fix this problem and return millions back to the hard-working Nova Scotians who earned the money.”

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't agree more so I will ask the Premier, why didn't he address bracket creep when he had the chance in this budget to save Nova Scotians millions of dollars of their hard-earned money?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, one thing Nova Scotians recognize is that \$1 billion in tax promises wasn't going to do anything but drive this province further into debt. It's why they didn't vote for that Party.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to remind the honourable member that the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board now has embarked on a tax review that will not only look at bracket creep, it will look at every tax that is being paid, and fees, in this province, to ensure that when we make changes and adjustments, it will be towards driving economic development and job creation.

MR. BAILLIE: Well, Mr. Speaker, what those Nova Scotians are seeing now is that they elected a Liberal Government, and what they got was higher taxes and more debt at the same time. That's hardly something to be proud of.

The basic personal exemption is the amount that benefits our lowest-income Nova Scotians the most. It has not been indexed in over four years. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that for a family living on \$40,000 a year, because their tax brackets are not

indexed, they pay almost \$4,000 a year more in tax today than they did 10 years ago. That is a sneaky and hidden tax increase.

The NDP cancelled the indexation to make sure that Nova Scotians paid more every year, so I'll ask the Premier, why does he now believe it is okay to charge our lowest-income Nova Scotians almost \$4,000 a year more in hidden tax increases?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to - I'm watching him go back and forth over there. I want to make sure there might be an answer for me in that question there. (Interruptions)

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

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that is being looked at by the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board in her tax review is really focused towards what changes we can make towards job creation and economic development in this province. Of course we're doing everything in our power to ensure the most vulnerable Nova Scotians are being looked after. I want to congratulate the Minister of Community Services and the work she is doing on behalf of all Nova Scotians.

I think it's important, as we look at that - and particularly, he's talking about the basic personal exemption - one of the things that we're asking to look at is to ensure that if we're going to make changes, is there a way that we can make those changes so that low-income Nova Scotians receive the real benefit of that change and not the people who sit in this House?

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I know that we're having a few light-hearted moments here in the House, but what's really funny is that when the Liberal Government wants to raise taxes, like they did on our graduates in the most recent budget, they don't need a study to do that. They just go ahead and do it at the first opportunity. But whenever anybody suggests a way we can actually lower the tax burden on Nova Scotians, they are promised further study. When they want to raise it, it's instant; when someone wants to lower it, it requires further study.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that when he was in Opposition, the Premier said, "An easy way for the government to ease the pressures caused by inflation is . . ." by doing away with bracket creep. That would have saved our most modest families over \$4,000 a year. They are still paying that today.

I will ask the Premier, why is the Premier keeping up with the NDP on hidden tax increases, instead of getting on with the job of providing a tax break to Nova Scotians who need it the most?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I've said in my previous answers, we are looking at the tax system in this province so that when we make changes, it will actually have a meaningful impact on low-income Nova Scotians, it will have an impact on job creation.

Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party is looking for a tax break, I don't think he should do it publicly, here on the floor of the House of Assembly.

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

MUN. AFFS.: CBRM - BUDGET BALANCING

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Municipalities are struggling to find ways to make difficult financial decisions. Some are choosing to amalgamate to ensure their services don't suffer. The CBRM has been downloaded with over \$5 million in additional costs for lost provincial support. That includes \$520,000 for education; \$568,000 for URB mandated fire hydrant costs; \$2.2 million less for housing; \$1.1 million less for corrections; \$500,000 solid waste costs; \$181,000 Nova Scotia grant in lieu of taxes; and \$317,000 less in equalization payments.

The minister indicated that CBRM should increase their municipal taxes, so my question to the minister is, do you still believe the only way for CBRM to balance their budget is to raise their taxes?

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I do want to clarify for the House that at no time have I said, or anyone in my department said, that the Cape Breton Regional Municipality should raise their taxes.

We recognize the financial challenges that the CBRM is facing, but we also recognize the financial challenges of 53 other municipalities across this province. Our staff continues to work with the staff in CBRM, we're working to find solutions, and we'll continue that dialogue in our efforts to find a solution for CBRM.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, in The Chronicle Herald opinion piece by Mayor Clarke, he says the most recent data available on the department's website shows CBRM makes a 40 per cent higher tax effort than HRM.

Extracting more taxes from CBRM residents is not an option. So my question is, does the minister believe the CBRM should increase their municipal taxes, which would push them even further away from the taxation level of those living in Halifax?

MR. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier the staff in Municipal Affairs will continue to work with the staff in Cape Breton Regional Municipality. Based on our recognition of the challenges they face, as well as 53 other municipalities, we will continue

those discussions and hopefully by working together we will find solutions not only to their challenges but to the challenges that each and every other municipality faces in this province.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada shows that Cape Breton's population has decreased by almost 6,000 over the last five years. The Island's lost almost 3,000 from their labour force. The current unemployment rate is 16.3 per cent - this is 7 per cent higher than the provincial average and 9.4 per cent higher than the national average.

My question to the minister is, will increasing municipal taxes help attract more people and businesses to this already struggling workforce?

MR. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, the challenges that Cape Breton Regional Municipality face, based on their population and increases that my colleague has referenced, are not uncommon right across this province. This government has a responsibility to work in consultation and dialogue with each and every one of those municipalities to address their challenges. We will continue to do that with CBRM.

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

FIN. - N.S. GRADS.: DEBT LOADS - MIN. RESPONSE

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Acting Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

When the Hamm Progressive Conservative Government axed the Nova Scotia Student Loan Remission Program, post-secondary students spoke out, as did the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. The minister who then was serving as the Liberal Education Critic said that students can't afford any more increases without the opportunity to have some of their debts reduced.

My question is, why is the minister now choosing to ignore the plight of Nova Scotia graduates who are saddled with the highest debt loads in Canada?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, our government takes very seriously the issue of student debt, which is why we were very proud when the Premier and our government announced that we would be taking off the interest on student loans to make it easier for students.

While it was a difficult decision in cutting back the Graduate Retention Rebate, it was very clear from the evidence that the program was not having the success that it was intended to have. In fact, quite ironic that this question would be asked, because just yesterday I met with a young graduate from my own riding who indicated while disappointed that the rebate was gone was very clear in saying that it certainly would not

impact her decision on whether to stay in the Province of Nova Scotia or look elsewhere for work.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, it never fails to amaze me, the explanations from the government on the evidence. They are looking at the wrong evidence. They're looking at the incidents of people who have left, rather than the incidents of people who have been retained, this is a retention rebate. The Ivany report is a stark reminder of how important it is convincing people to live in Nova Scotia. Approximately 50,000 post-secondary students attend universities and institutions in Nova Scotia every year, many who come from other provinces.

My question to the minister is, how will eliminating the Graduate Retention Rebate make Nova Scotia a more attractive place to post-secondary students who are interested in putting down roots and starting a life here?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I know this will come as a shock to the interim Leader of the NDP, but some people actually like to live and work in Nova Scotia and don't need to be convinced. I actually like this province and I think many Nova Scotians like this province. Many people come from outside of this province who want to work here, who want to live here, want to raise their families here. To suggest that it takes that rebate or no one wants to live here, I think there is a reason why the interim Leader is sitting on that side of the House right now.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, it comes as no shock that people would love to live in our beautiful province, but incentives for recent graduates is a reality in three other Canadian provinces, including our neighbouring Province of New Brunswick, where students can get \$20,000 through their retention rebate. I want to say to the minister, how will the minister convince those students that staying in Nova Scotia is better than returning to their home Provinces of New Brunswick, of Manitoba, of Saskatchewan, where they offer financial incentives like the Graduate Retention Rebate?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, one of the first things we are going to do as a government with the Graduate to Opportunities program is first of all we are going to help them find a job here in Nova Scotia. Secondly, our government is committed to working to address some of the challenges that are facing our province, challenges that were neglected over the past four years, by creating a positive economic environment, one where people can stay here, can work here, can raise their children. The last thing I would say to the Leader of the NDP is, what I would say to convince them to stay here in Nova Scotia is that we are not New Brunswick, we are not Manitoba, we are not Saskatchewan, we are one proud province here in Nova Scotia.

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

MUN. AFFS. - RURAL TRANSIT FUNDING: ACCESS - GUIDELINES

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The recent budget contains funding for rural transit systems. There are many areas of Nova Scotia that are concerned about the process and guidelines regarding how these funds will be disbursed. The towns and cities around the province have very different demographics and very different needs. My question for the minister is, what are the guidelines and application process to access this money?

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, the funding announced for transit in the budget captured three areas: Halifax Regional Municipality, those areas outside of HRM, as well as the Community Transportation Assistance Program, a total of \$3.5 million that will go to both HRM and rural communities. Staff are in the process of finalizing the disbursement of those monies and I'm quite confident that my colleague on the opposite side of the House will be encouraged once that information and that process is released.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal platform says, "A Liberal Government will implement a provincial transportation strategy by: Invest in public transit and community-based transit outside the capital region." I'll table that document. This document was drafted well before the election, which means that this promise was researched and documented well over six months ago. So my question to the minister is, with over six months to work on this project, what research has the minister done to forward this commitment on transportation?

MR. FUREY: The rural transportation program involves 14 existing programs that this money will fund. In addition to that, there are four studies on the go in the province to expand on our rural transit program. We've reached out and we've had discussions with stakeholders, and the feedback we've been provided is consistent with the direction we're taking. In the very near future we will be releasing the allotment and disbursement of money, as well as the process for application.

MR. MACLEOD: I want to thank the minister for that answer. Mr. Speaker, there are guidelines and an application process in place already, through another program called the Community Transportation Assistance Program. These guidelines specify that this specific grant, ". . . will only apply to a service in a county or region with a population density at or below 35 persons per square kilometer." I'll table that document. This means that communities like Kentville and Truro, along with municipalities like CBRM, may be excluded from the funding if these same guidelines are followed.

My final question to the minister is, can the minister reassure all rural communities that these funds will be available to them, and that the guidelines under the CTAP will not be used to exclude them from the funding?

MR. FUREY: As my colleague knows, the 14 programs I referenced are community-based initiatives. The four studies that are ongoing are community based-initiatives, and the opportunity for any community through the leadership, in consultation with their local governments, affords equal access to the funding that is available. That CTAP program funding that my colleague speaks to - an additional \$500,000 a year going forward will guarantee additional funds for municipalities that support and host public transit programs as we speak. We look forward to releasing that information in the very near future.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS - DHAs: AMALGAMATION - TERMS OF REFERENCE

HON. DAVID WILSON: My question today is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Last week the Liberal Government announced that Pat Lee will lead the transition team to oversee the amalgamation of Nova Scotia's 10 district health authorities. This is the first new piece of information Nova Scotians have received on this process since prior to the election, when the Liberals unveiled their plan to merge Nova Scotia's 10 district health authorities into two. It was also announced on Thursday that Mr. Lee, along with the new Deputy Minister of Health and Wellness, Peter Vaughan, will select the other members of the transition team over the coming weeks.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness, when will the transition team's terms of reference be made available to the public?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: To the member for Sackville-Cobequid, yes, as a government we're very pleased to have Pictou CEO Pat Lee provide the direction and guidance for the transition team. That team and the terms of reference should be available by the end of this week, possibly, and hopefully within the next 10 days.

MR. DAVID WILSON: In recent weeks, both in Public Accounts Committee and during estimates, our caucus has asked repeatedly what the budget will be for the district health authorities' amalgamation. When Alberta merged their district health authorities into a single body there was a one-time cost, which the government has admitted will be the case here in Nova Scotia. In Alberta, for example, that cost ballooned to about \$100 million, but in Nova Scotia, we still don't know that cost.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness, what is the total budget in terms of the one-time cost he has given his transition team lead for the amalgamation of Nova Scotia's district health authorities?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, to respond to that question really is to kind of make an early conclusion as to the work that committee will do. That committee in fact is tasked

with laying out what will be the best structure for both the provincial board as well as the four management zones.

Because of the demographics, because of the burden of illness, the number of facilities there are in each of the four management zones, each will look a little different from the other, so to nail down a cost at this time is indeed premature and we're going to leave that to the capable work and guidance of Pat Lee and his transition team.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd have to disagree with the Minister of Health and Wellness. The budget that we're going through right now, you should reflect what the department will be spending of taxpayers' money in the coming year. As we speak today, the minister has acknowledged that this time next year the amalgamation will have happened. Certainly if the minister doesn't know what the cost of the amalgamation of the district health authorities will be today, he will have a better idea when Mr. Lee's term, as transition lead, is complete in September.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness, when will Nova Scotians know the final cost of the district health authorities' amalgamation - will it be when the lead, Mr. Lee, his term is done in September?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Lee's work is to outline what may very well be the best structure for the province, as well as for each of the four management zones. At that time we will be getting closer to full implementation. During the present work that is ongoing, we in fact are getting the first glimpses that a CEO can cover off two or three of the districts, as we have currently Bruce Quigley, the CEO for Cumberland, carrying out oversight of Pictou. We'll have other examples of that as we go along, and Mr. Lee is really continuing with his current salary and we're going to find that the cost to Nova Scotians is going to be minimal over the course of the next couple of years.

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

ENVIRON. - CFLs: RECYCLING PROG. - LACK EXPLAIN

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Environment.

The province has aggressively promoted an Efficiency Nova Scotia program that urges Nova Scotians to have incandescent light bulbs in their homes replaced by energy efficient bulbs that are commonly known as CFLs. Recently media has reported on the fact that while the government is urging Nova Scotians to switch to these bulbs, the Halifax Regional Municipality, of course our largest waste stream, has no plans to dispose of them. In fact, the Department of Environment confirmed to media that the mercury vapour-containing bulbs can go into the regular waste stream - and I will table that document.

My question to the minister is, what does the minister have to say to customers who have purchased the new light bulbs on the urging of his department, or the Department of Energy, and are only now learning that the minister has no plan to recycle them?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question and the opportunity to respond.

I guess the first thing is, as the honourable member across the way indicated, it is Efficiency Nova Scotia that is doing the promotion, not my department, not the Department of Energy, not this government, so it is a separate group organization doing that promotion.

The second thing is that in my department, with respect to the concern about recycling opportunities and options, we're actually doing work around our waste management system, solid waste, and doing some consultations around that with strategies for these bulbs and the wide variety of other waste management options.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, today is Earth Day, an annual event where citizens across the globe promote environmental protection and collectively discuss how we can all make a difference. Despite their best efforts, many Nova Scotians who have made the switch to CFL light bulbs are learning that their work may be mitigated by the fact that this government - Efficiency Nova Scotia, the Department of Energy or the Department of Environment - has failed to ensure proper recycling programs were in place province-wide for the new bulbs.

My question to the minister is, when will the minister accept the responsibility for this oversight and work with local governments and municipalities to ensure proper recycling programs are put in place?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I guess it's been mentioned before, but reading scripted questions runs into the problem of not listening to the answers. In my first response, I indicated that we are currently in the process of updating our regulations concerning our waste management processes; that includes looking at the waste streams for these bulbs and other recycling options. We are in the process of doing that, we are engaged in consultation, working with our municipal partners and other waste management partners to move forward with this and come up with our updated regulations.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Boy, I wish I could take a shot at that one, because I'm trying to ask a relatively important question for Nova Scotians, one that's without political bias. You wouldn't believe how many times I crossed off the 'Liberal' on this to make sure I'm not picking on the Liberal Government specifically; not to pick on the minister, because he hasn't been there that long. Maybe his ears are a little wet right now and not listening to the questions. I can say that this is an important issue on CFL light bulbs.

I can say that even with the other ministers trying to help out - the Minister of Energy has been really dying to answer a question in this House of Assembly for a while. Maybe I wasn't listening to his last question because the Minister of Energy was talking, but there you go.

So, making matters worse, last week the Environment Department confirmed to the Chronicle Herald that it does not keep track of the areas in the province that do recycle light bulbs. That means the Minister of Environment has no idea of the potentially dangerous mercury vapour that's being disposed of in the province. What actions will the minister commit to today beyond just consulting - because consulting, we know, happens a lot with this government - what are the concrete actions that he will be doing to get a hold of the waste stream of the CFL light bulbs?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as indicated, the process we're going through is a comprehensive review of the solid waste regulations we have in this province, addressing not just this particular issue but a wide range of issues concerning solid waste and excluding certain waste from the streams to our municipal landfills and landfills across the province. We are taking it very, very seriously where we're addressing this and many other issues and concerns.

I want to highlight, since today is Earth Day, the success and the quality of the work being done by our municipal partners and other waste management partners across the province. Nova Scotia is a leader in diverting waste from our landfills, where we have most recently seen about 375 kilograms per person, which is significantly lower than any other region within the country. We are continuing on our EGSPA goal of reaching 300 kilograms of waste by 2015. That is the solid waste work that we're doing, which includes these bulbs and many other products.

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

TIR - FIVE-YR. ROAD PLAN: LACK - EFFECTS

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. The five-year plan introduced by the NDP in 2010 has become a reliable document which allows communities in Nova Scotia to know what work they will have coming in the current year and up to five years out for bridges, routes and highways. My question to the minister is, without the expanded transparency of a five-year local road plan, how will communities know when to expect upgrades of their badly damaged roads?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, the five-year capital plan, our highways and bridges plan - it is a good measure to ensure cost certainties, to have those all-important deals with the federal government with respect to major construction put together - it is a document that's living and breathing. We do update it

annually, but it does, as the member pointed out, give a five-year forecast on our major projects.

With respect to the local roads five-year plan that the member suggests, although his government didn't do it while they were in office for five years, for us - and this is the legitimate answer that the department subscribes to and I certainly believe and uphold - it's the fact that when you're talking about local roads, every member in this Legislature would agree there is a significant deficit on those local roads.

The reality is that we don't have enough money to do a good portion of those, let alone each and every road, so what we do every year is we update the list, based on the very significant and very specific group of metrics that the department applies to all local roads. When that list is formulated and generated, we use that list, and that becomes our annual local roads plan.

There's no sense in forecasting five years out on local roads when things change constantly. Things deteriorate quickly, and that becomes our priority. So, Mr. Speaker, we don't see the need for a local roads highway plan, a local roads five-year plan. We do it annually to ensure that the priorities for Nova Scotians are being addressed. Thank you.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, a local roads plans would be helpful to identify repair time frames, improve transparency, and enable - I repeat, enable - better community planning. My question to the minister is, since he has no intention of releasing a transparent local roads plan, how can he assure people that his government won't put politics back into paving?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the local roads, again, our government - and I, as the minister - put our faith entirely into the system that has been formulated and built over the years by our department. We have very capable engineers within our department, amongst the best in the industry and in Atlantic Canada with respect to our engineering and what they do. I have complete faith in their work.

When they do analyses of each and every local road in this province year over year, they establish a list of priorities. They look at what the urgencies are, and what the ones are that could possibly be held off for a number of months until we can get there.

We're doing our very best, Mr. Speaker. We're utilizing our budget, which is stretched very thin, to the best of our abilities, to keep Nova Scotians safe. We do agree that the local roads plan should be done on an annual basis. That way we can look at the priorities for the province. There are no politics. We're trying to keep people safe and look after the roads as best we can. Thank you.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, many roads in rural communities need to be repaired or resurfaced, like Labelle Road in Queens, Cornwallis Crescent in Kings, and the Bayview Road in Pictou, just to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, my final question to the minister is, can he clearly explain to the members of this House and rural communities what his plan of action is to address the timely repair of many damaged roads in rural Nova Scotia?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, again, it's a very important question. The reality is that there's a deficit in this province, and we do our very best to get to those local roads. I've heard from almost every MLA in the Legislature on which priorities there are in each respective riding.

This weather, particularly this year, has been very, very damaging and very impactful on gravel roads. We're seeing a lot of flooding, and we're seeing a lot of softening of the infrastructure that supports those roads. Mr. Speaker, we take it one road at a time, and we take it one request at a time.

I'd also like to tell the member in the House that there is a pothole hot line, 1-888-432-3233. We want to know where the potholes are in this province. We're going to do our very best to fix them in a timely manner. I'm going to put some cold mix and some hot mix in my truck on the way home, and I'll do a few in the Pictou area. I'm even playing my part, Mr. Speaker. What can I tell you? Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie.

ERDT: MELFORD TERMINALS DEVELOPMENT - UPDATE

MR. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, Maher Melford Terminal is developing a 315-acre container terminal on an 1,800-acre footprint at Melford on the Strait of Canso. This project is strategically located on the great circle route, making Maher Melford the closest east coast port to Europe and Asia via the Suez Canal. This project has the potential to create hundreds of jobs for the people of Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie and Nova Scotia as a whole. It will also generate a significant stimulus of revenue for all of Nova Scotia through provincial income tax.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism give the House an update on this important project to all of Nova Scotia?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question. In fact, one of the first things I did when appointed Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism was attend meetings in New York with the Maher Melford Group to give our clear indication of support of our government for this project.

It is important to remember that this is a private sector lead project. They have not asked for any government funding and this is being completely driven by the private sector, which is something that we can be proud of. It is a project that we continue to work with. I addressed the issue at a recent lunch with the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce and had the opportunity to be updated at the time by the company. They are still working on securing an operator for the facility and we remain very confident of seeing this.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to recognize the Municipal Council of Guysborough County for the efforts that they have done in making this project a success and a lot of that was guided by my good colleague the now member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie when he was Warden of Guysborough County, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

CCH - BLUENOSE II: OPERATIONS - DONATIONS

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage. When asked about Bluenose II fundraising in Thursday's Question Period, the minister claimed, ". . . there are no additional monies coming in to that foundation." I will table that statement for the benefit of the House.

Yet, still yesterday, on the provincially run Bluenose II website, donations for the operations of the Bluenose II are being accepted. I will table a confirmation document from the Bluenose II site confirming a donation made today. (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Pictou West has the floor.

MS. MACFARLANE: How much money has been collected for the operation of the Bluenose II since the boat was taken out of operation in 2010?

HON. TONY INCE: Thank you for that question from the member across the floor. I will share with you that, to the best of my knowledge, that money that comes in on that website is not for the Bluenose II; it's for that organization which was the foundry that built that money up for the Bluenose II. It doesn't come directly to the Bluenose II, to the best of my knowledge.

MS. MACFARLANE: I thank the minister for his answer. I believe to the best of my knowledge, it does, but we can discuss that later on.

Mr. Speaker, according to the Bluenose II site all donations are used for the ongoing operation of Bluenose II. Receipts for tax purposes will be issued for donations of

\$25 or more. My question to the minister is how many tax receipts have been issued for the Bluenose II donations since the boat was taken out of the water in 2010?

MR. INCE: To answer my colleague across the floor, I will say to you that I cannot give you a definite answer on the amount of those receipts that were collected but I can get that information and make sure that it's given to you.

MS. MACFARLANE: I look forward to the minister getting back to me on that. Mr. Speaker, Imagine Canada sets out the ethical fundraising and financial accountability code. The code lays out a set of standards for charitable organizations to manage and report their financial affairs responsibly; the number one code, be truthful. I will table that document for the benefit of the House.

We expect charities to adhere to these standards because donors are entitled to transparency. The people who have donated to the Bluenose II and the taxpayers of Nova Scotia who are shouldering the ever rising costs of this project deserve a code of ethics and transparency. My question to the minister is where exactly has the money gone that was collected by donations for the Bluenose II since 2010.

MR. INCE: Mr. Speaker, I will say to my colleague across the floor that as I've indicated earlier, I've asked the Auditor General to look at all aspects of the Bluenose II from cost delays to everything. Once the Auditor General, who completes an independent review of this file, looks at it and provides that information to Nova Scotians, I believe you will have your answers.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

FIN.: NSLC AGENCY STORES - ADDITION CONFIRM

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Acting Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. As the minister may know there are currently 51 NSLC agency stores across the province. There are over 1,100 convenience stores. The NSLC established its first eight agency stores back in 2001, and the last time any agency stores were added was in 2007, when 15 agency stores were added. As we look for ways to strengthen our rural communities, we need to look for ways to strengthen the local businesses that serve these communities. My question today for the minister is, is the minister planning on adding any new agency stores in under-serviced areas of the province?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, certainly the NSLC, with the support of the government over the years, has been adding agency stores to under-serviced areas. Certainly, it has been welcomed by many of those communities. If the member is aware of certain areas that are under serviced, I would strongly encourage him to bring that to the

attention of either NSLC or the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, and I'm sure that that will be given due consideration.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer. I just want to say that adding products to the product mix of convenience stores will make them stronger and give them an opportunity to provide jobs to more local and, in most cases, rural people. In June, Mac's Convenience Stores chain in Ottawa said that 1,600 full-time jobs would be created if its 547 stores were allowed to sell alcohol. That is three new jobs for every convenience store. A study by the Ontario Convenience Stores Association argued that the government would take in more revenue from this type of move. Does the minister have any information as to how many jobs might be created in rural Nova Scotia with the addition of more agency stores?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, the member seems to be mixing up two different messages there. There are agency stores, and then there's the whole question about putting alcohol in corner stores. Those are two completely separate issues. On the question of whether we should be putting alcohol in convenience stores, while we have not looked at the economic impact, what I can say is we certainly paid very close attention to the letter provided by MADD Canada to the Leader of this Party.

MR. HOUSTON: Maybe I should have quit when I was ahead, when he said to just talk to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board about it. I do want to state that I've been through the RFP that was issued back in 2006, the time the last agency stores were added. At that time, the RFP suggested they were looking for agency stores that were at least 15 kilometres driving distance from the closest NSLC, or at least 10 kilometres from any other agency store. People who live in substantial communities should have the opportunity to purchase alcohol from an agency store in their convenience stores, regardless if they are 15 kilometres from the nearest community that has a liquor store.

In fact, the NSLC itself looks at substantial communities when it establishes its stores. They don't look simply at distance. For example, there are two stores in New Glasgow that are only 2.96 kilometres apart and the New Glasgow George Street store is only 5.23 kilometres from the Stellarton store. So my question is, will this government advocate for stepping away from rigid criteria and bringing some common sense to the decision as to who should get an agency store and who should not?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure my colleague, the honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, would be more than open to any proposals that come forward from communities that feel they are under serviced and that would qualify for an agency store. I can tell you, when the review was done back in 2006, I know certain communities were identified as being eligible for agency stores, but unfortunately there was no update from those communities for that. At the end of the day, there needs to be a desire from the community itself that feels that it is under serviced, but let me make it very clear in case the

member wasn't sure, when it comes to the issue of providing alcohol in corner stores, our government has been very clear: it's not going to happen.

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

TIR - BRIDGE REPLACEMENTS: DELAYS - NOTIFICATION PROCESS

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Bridge replacements can be a timely process and residents would always inquire about when they could expect timely repairs in their community. That is why the former government introduced the five-year plan.

Mr. Speaker, many residents have come to rely on this plan and its transparency, as well as the ability to know when the work will be done. My question to the minister is, is there a process to inform residents if the work will be delayed or postponed?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Thank you to the member opposite. Obviously any time there is a bridge structure that has to be repaired, certainly those that have to be replaced as we're seeing currently with a number of spots across the province - Indian Sluice, of course Sydney River, there are many significant projects that are taking place. Of course these links are vital for transportation, they're vital for the economy, they're important to get school buses and people to and from work, and they're important for our economy and for our people, so any opportunity we take to make those repairs and changes, we have full disclosure and notification to the motoring public and, of course, the greater community.

Delays are part of this construction process. Obviously we'd like to mitigate those as best we can, and we do that whenever we have the opportunity. When there are interruptions or when there are delays, we certainly do our best to let the public know and we'll continue to do that, without question.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, residents in Queens County have had the Milton Bridge for over 113 years. Last year it was in the 2013-14 five-year plan slated for construction in 2014; in this year's five-year plan it is slated to begin in 2015.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is why, when this was identified for a safety concern, was the bridge taken off the list of work for this year?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, thank you for that opportunity, and thanks to the member opposite. Any time there are delays, and I'm not familiar with the specifics of the bridge that the honourable member is speaking of, but certainly there are delays, it becomes a fact of life in transportation, particularly with these large-scale projects, with the design, with the engineering, and obviously the environmental assessment portion of these projects is paramount to the successful completion of the projects.

I could certainly check to see what the details are and get back to the member on that. We do our due diligence, we make sure that road safety is number one and that people are protected when they are motoring and we would never allow people to travel across an unsafe structure. So we make sure people are safe, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I'll take my place. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers has expired.

The honourable member for Lunenburg on an introduction.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take your attention to the east gallery and introduce Grade 7 students from my home school, Bayview Community School in Mahone Bay. With them are teachers Susan Burgoyne, Jamie Renouf, and Elaine Jollimore. Would you stand up? (Applause)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Just before we move on to Committee of the Whole, I'd like to appoint the honourable member for Clare-Digby as the Acting Deputy Speaker to preside over the committee's work, in the absence of the Deputy Speaker.

[1:39 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CW on Supply with Acting Deputy Speaker Mr. Gordon Wilson in the Chair.]

[5:59 p.m. CW on Supply rose and the House reconvened with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

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

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

MADAM SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

We have reached the moment of interruption. The topic for tonight's late debate was submitted by the honourable member for Kings North and reads:

“Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly call on the member for Lunenburg to urge her Liberal Cabinet colleagues to be clear and produce answers surrounding the delayed and over-budget *Bluenose II* restoration project immediately.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

BLUENOSE II - LUN. MLA: COLLEAGUES - ANSWERS URGE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Madam Speaker, for half a century, the *Bluenose II* has been the sailing ambassador for our great province. Sailing out of Lunenburg, she has been a frequent presence for trade visits and international promotions. Countless tours have visited and had their photo taken beside our majestic *Bluenose II*. She is a source of pride for all of us and a living reminder of Nova Scotia's wonderful sailing heritage.

Unfortunately, the legacy of the *Bluenose II* and the pride we all feel is in jeopardy. A refit is endangering the vessel's wonderful legacy. Nova Scotia's 43-metre sailing ambassador was supposed to return to regular sailing in the summer of 2012 after an extensive two-year rebuild. Now two years overdue and well over budget, the Premier has called the process a boondoggle. After a Cabinet meeting the Premier told reporters the government's number one focus was getting the boat in the water, but that day seems a long way off.

The Auditor General has been called in, and that's a good thing, but it will be a long time before any of us see the results of his investigation. By then, lasting damage could be done. Rumours are swirling on the South Shore right now, rumours about the boat's steering, the rudder and whether the design is actually authentic. People in the region who are most connected to the *Bluenose II* and in the South Shore area have concerns about quality, safety and how taxpayer money is being spent on the refit.

Instead of acting to close those rumours and to give all Nova Scotians confidence that the *Bluenose II* will be back sailing soon safe and sound, the government has circled the wagons. They have done nothing to let people know that this important Nova Scotia icon is being protected and cherished. What's the secrecy? There is too much at stake. Nova Scotians feel a deep connection to the *Bluenose II*. They don't want to see her swamped in confusion or scandal or uncertainty. They also don't want to see their tax dollars spent unwisely.

That is why our caucus has asked 55 questions of this government. That is why we have studied the contract and spoken to stakeholders. That's why we are urging the Liberal Government to shine the light of transparency on this most important project. If there are problems, they should tell Nova Scotians what they are and how they plan to fix them. If things are going as well as they should, the Liberals should let Nova Scotians know that too.

The member for Lunenburg is in a better position than most to get the answers taxpayers and tourism operators deserve. To my knowledge, she has remained silent. The time is now for the member for Lunenburg to tell us whose interests she puts first - those of the taxpayers and tourism operators in her constituency, or the political interests of the Liberal Government. Why hasn't the member for Lunenburg stood up and demanded answers on behalf of the people who sent her here? Now is the time for government to produce answers about Nova Scotia's great sailing ambassador. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Madam Speaker, I rise in my place today to address the Official Opposition's concerns regarding the *Bluenose II* restoration project. Concerns that this government shares also.

This project has experienced significant delays and cost overruns, costing taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars. As a result of these overruns and delays, this government took a proactive step and asked the Auditor General to conduct a full audit of the restoration project. Bear in mind that this project was unique from the start. Almost 50 years has lapsed since such a huge scope of a project has taken place for a wooden boat. New materials and techniques had to be blended with traditional boat building, and high levels of public and media scrutiny were on this project at all times. The delays and cost overruns of this project have been well documented. In fact, a lot of these delays and cost overruns date back prior to this government being elected in October 2013.

In May 2009 the project was announced by the provincial and federal governments at a cost of \$14.4 million. In December 2009, contracts were signed with the project managing firm MHPM and the designer Lengkeek Vessel Engineering. In July 2010 a contract was signed with the builder, Lunenburg Shipyard Alliance. In September 2012 *Bluenose II* re-launched without a rudder. After that relaunch a significant amount of time

has been spent constructing the boat's rudder, which ABS required to be metal instead of the traditional wooden rudder. Currently the designers and the builders are addressing adjustments to the steering gear.

Madam Speaker, though the delays and cost overruns have been repeatedly highlighted in the media, the answers to why this has happened have not. That is why this government has asked for the Auditor General to conduct a full audit of this project. The audit will finally answer why this project has been frequently delayed and has gone so far over budget.

Madam Speaker, at this time I wish to address the Official Opposition's late debate motion. The Progressive Conservative's motion here today suggests that we are hiding the issue. They suggest this despite the facts to the contrary, including that this government has been in power for only six months.

The Auditor General's Office has been asked to review the project. The Auditor General's Office will present the report, which will be transmitted for public viewing. Then the report will be brought forward to the Public Accounts Committee where all Parties will have the opportunity to question the report's findings. So when the Official Opposition stands in this House and suggests that this government is hiding facts, well, Madam Speaker, I respond by rising here to unequivocally state that this caucus is the one fighting for the answers about the rebuild.

Madam Speaker, since being elected in October I have worked diligently on this file and I have spent a great deal of time collecting information on the rebuild delays and the cost overruns. It has taken a considerable amount of time and effort to compile this and it's an ongoing piece of my constituency work. I have ongoing dialogue with my caucus colleagues and staff and I have been assured that these matters are taken seriously and are being dealt with.

Madam Speaker, this side of the House understands its obligations to the taxpayers of the province. (Interruption)

MADAME SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Lunenburg has the floor.

MS. LOHNES-CROFT: Answers are needed to ensure future projects don't experience similar delays and expenditures.

Madam Speaker, I would like to conclude my remarks by stating that we share the concerns of the Opposition and we are committed to finding the answers for the delays in this project and, above all else, I look forward to seeing this issue being presented at the Public Accounts Committee where I, as the MLA for Lunenburg, will be able to ask questions.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I didn't plan on doing any speaking on this matter this evening but I couldn't help myself, sitting here listening to all that is being done and what they are not trying to hide, and what they are trying to hide. At a recent HR Committee meeting, our caucus brought up that we should bring in the people who are responsible for the *Bluenose II*, twice - not once but twice. Both times that government over there shot them down; they didn't want them to come in, they didn't want the people of Nova Scotia to know why there's a delay in the *Bluenose II*, why the cost overruns are there and everything else that goes on with it. So to stand over on that side and say they're over there doing their best and they're trying to do everything they can and they're not trying to hide anything? I have a hard time with that. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

HON. TONY INCE: As was mentioned earlier, as I mentioned back in December, as I mentioned on several occasions, this particular project had concerns for us as well, as mentioned by my colleague. We cannot express that any more. The fact that we've asked for an independent review and for the Auditor General to step up should quell and answer your questions. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: That concludes late debate for this evening. I wish to thank everybody for their input in the debate. We will now recess until 6:30 p.m.

[6:11 p.m. The House recessed.]

[6:30 p.m. The House reconvened.]

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 35.

Bill No. 35 - Property Valuation Services Corporation Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: Madam Speaker, I move that Bill No. 35 be now read for a second time. I am pleased to bring forward two changes to the Property Valuation Services Corporation Act.

First, I would like to speak briefly on the creation of the PVSC. The Property Valuation Services Corporation, or commonly referred to as the PVSC, is a municipally-funded organization that was established under legislation in 2007. Beginning in April 2008, the Property Valuation Services Corporation assumed responsibility for property assessment services independent of the provincial government. That is the Act I'm proposing amendments to this evening.

Madam Speaker, when the PVSC was created, a board of directors was formed at that time. The membership on the board included municipal representatives, independent members, as well as the Deputy Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. The deputy minister sits on the board as a non-voting member.

Madam Speaker, the intent of that decision was to provide continuity and regular communications about assessment responsibilities during the transition from government to a corporation. It has worked well, and staff within the PVSC and the provincial government have established regular ongoing communications since its creation. That communication will continue as we go forward. As a result, I believe it's no longer necessary for the province to have a member on the PVSC board.

We are also requesting an amendment to the Act giving the board the ability to appoint up to three independent members. Currently, the board is able to appoint two independent members. By increasing the representation from Nova Scotia property owners, the independence of the board should be improved. The recruitment of these members will be done through external advertising, followed by a screening process, an interview, and a recommendation to the board of directors.

Madam Speaker, these changes are housekeeping and will have no impact on the day-to-day operations of the PVSC. Thank you for the opportunity, and I look forward to comments by my colleagues.

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

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Madam Speaker, I just want to say that I think it's important that these changes are made. But I'd also like to just put it on the record that when we're looking at independent people who should be put on this board, I think it would be very important that they are actually taxpayers in the Province of Nova Scotia from rural parts of the province, so that they would have a real impact on the decisions made from the board and have an understanding of what most people in rural Nova Scotia

are going through. I look forward to seeing what people have to say when we move it to the Law Amendments Committee. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Madam Speaker, it's interesting, I've been in the Legislature for a number of years and often we hear, when a piece of legislation comes forward, especially from some of the members opposite, that the explanation of it is longer than the actual piece of legislation.

I don't know who said that - I think it was the member for Cape Breton-Richmond. The member for Cape Breton-Richmond, I think, would count the words of the pieces of legislation - I think there are 32 in this one, Madam Speaker. But I would think that the government may have looked at the opportunity to put all - I know there are a number of pieces of legislation from the minister on the docket here - I wonder if they looked at the opportunity of maybe putting them all into one so that we could address some of what the government would call housekeeping pieces of legislation.

Maybe the minister could indicate in the closing remarks if this was something that came from the committee itself because I believe the deputy minister was a non-voting member of that committee so I'm wondering if maybe in the closing, wrap-up remarks the minister could indicate if it was something that was generated from the department or from the committee members themselves, thinking that we would really want to be truly independent and not have representation, even non-voting representation from the deputy minister. As my colleague indicated we'll see how this goes through the process.

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

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: Just to further the comments of my colleague, although the UNSM and the PVSC board recognize the value of the deputy minister on that board, they also recognized the opportunity for greater independence and we're very supportive of the legislation going forward.

Madam Speaker, I rise at this time to close debate on Bill No. 35, the Property Valuation Services Corporation Act, and I want to thank my colleagues in the House for their comments. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 35. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 40.

Bill No. 40 - Maintenance and Custody Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: I move that Bill No. 40 now be read a second time. It is with great pleasure that I rise in my place here this afternoon to speak on this very important amendment. This legislation that we are discussing today is to support grandparents who are making access applications to the court. I've had the opportunity to speak to many grandparents from across Nova Scotia who have been looking forward to this legislation, as I understand it, for a number of years.

We had some of the grandparents here with us a couple of weeks ago on a Monday, Madam Speaker, when I first introduced the bill, and they were extremely pleased with this step. I wish everyone in the Legislature could have attended the bill briefing, many of my colleagues in the Legislature were not there but if you only were and you could only see and hear Ms. Pauline Glenn speak passionately about how much grandparents have to offer their grandchildren, you would feel the same passion that I do as I rise here this afternoon.

In every family court situation the best interest of the children involved are always adhered to by the judge in the courts but we all know that grandparents often play a key role in their children's lives and indeed their grandchildren's lives. In many cases grandparents provide love and guidance that is very much needed, especially in today's difficult environment that we live in, and especially in circumstances where moms and dads are going through separation and divorce. I've recently become a grandparent, Madam Speaker, and I can tell you and tell my colleagues that it's a great feeling and a great joy that it brings me.

Now sometimes grandparents do need, unfortunately, the court's approval to help them see their grandchildren, especially when parents separate or divorce. The grandparents I'm speaking about have lived a difficult and heartbreaking situation to lose their relationship, both as a grandparent and the children that go through major changes in their lives. The amendments we've introduced emphasize the importance of grandparents and provide them direct access to the court. Currently, grandparents have a two-step process, so this will eliminate the first step and give them standing. As well, it's worth noting that most areas in Canada have this provision in place, so we just want to ensure that grandparents in Nova Scotia have the same recognition and the same opportunities to maintain those connections.

We in the Justice Department believe this is a very important step, and the amendments also add various other factors to the list of the factors that a court considers in determining the best interest of the child. These factors are specifically designed to address the grandparents' access application. This is another step that Justice is making in order to make things more accessible for families.

In summary, the legislation will simplify the court process for grandparents seeking access, and ensure that they receive due consideration at an access hearing. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

MR. LARRY HARRISON: I'm pleased to rise on this Bill No. 40. Being a grandparent now, I know that if I were ever alienated from my grandkids, I'd go nuts. I've dealt with a good many families where grandparents were not allowed to go and see their grandchildren and they could have been an enormous benefit.

I know this has been a part of our caucus for a long time now, the rights of grandparents. I'm certainly glad to see this bill in place. Does it cover everything? It may not, I don't know, but certainly it will have my support and also the support of this caucus. It is such an important bill to get passed, because the grandchildren really need the grandparents to help in so many situations. With that, I will take my seat.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I'm just going to speak very briefly on this bill. It's interesting when bills like this come forward. It is an emotional issue, especially when we have an issue between parents and grandparents. (Interruptions) I'm getting heckled here, but I'm not going to go down that rabbit hole. What I'm going to say is, I think emotionally we believe in this bill, that grandparents are given rights. But what we have to make sure is that when given this - they say with great power comes great responsibility, and we hope that when the courts get this and they're deciding these issues as it relates to the grandparents, it sees the wholeness of the case in front of them, that the courts have the wisdom to carry this through as wished.

I don't think we want to see any parent or grandparent estranged from their children or grandchildren, but the reality is that the courts have to weigh that from time to time. With this piece of legislation, I would hope that they weigh this properly and that this can move forward, and it's used for the intent that it was going to be passed in this House for. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise to close the debate. I move second reading of Bill No. 40.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 40. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 43.

Bill No. 43 - Direct Sellers' Regulation Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: Madam Speaker, once again it's my pleasure to rise to speak. I move that Bill No. 43, the Direct Sellers' Regulation Act, be now read a second time.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House again to speak to the importance of the Direct Sellers' Regulation Act to all Nova Scotians. The changes we are proposing provide more protection for consumers, particularly seniors, from misleading or aggressive door-to-door sales. These changes address long-standing issues and recent complaints, and enhance consumer confidence in both product and service.

Madam Speaker, I learned very quickly upon coming into the office and the department that government needs more flexibility to respond to emerging issues so we are able to act quickly to protect consumers; these changes allow us to do just that. Our ability to act quickly and publicize non-compliance is important to protect consumers.

Madam Speaker, Service Nova Scotia has received dozens of complaints and inquiries from seniors, advocates, and police agencies, about direct sellers of alarm systems and alarm monitoring. The complaints range from unfair and excessively long contracts to systems not functioning properly. Some seniors have paid as much as \$2,000 up front for the service, believing a friend or a relative sent the salesperson to the door - this was not the case. The seniors felt targeted, they felt misled and, in some cases, very vulnerable. I can speak to my experience in policing to the challenges this presented law enforcement but, more particularly, the anxiety that it created for our seniors' population.

Earlier this year, Madam Speaker, we obtained convictions under the existing Act against a direct seller of those alarm systems and alarm monitoring services. The

owner/operator of the company was convicted of six counts of selling door-to-door without a licence in the Truro, Valley, and South Shore areas.

Madam Speaker, police agencies have told us that the existing penalties under the Act, a minimum of \$100 to a maximum of \$1,000, are not high enough to be a deterrent. Clearly the Act needs to be updated to provide appropriate protection for vulnerable consumers, appropriate penalties for violating the Act, and to ensure that government has the ability to quickly respond to issues.

I want to highlight the main amendments, Madam Speaker. The amendments will increase penalties to a minimum of \$500 and a maximum of \$25,000 for individuals, and the maximum for corporations at \$300,000; it will limit continuous service contracts to two years; allow government to disclose those breaking the rules to quickly address emerging and unforeseen issues; allow consumers to cancel continuing service contracts at any time; and modernize and align the Act with legislation in other provinces.

Madam Speaker, the Act was originally introduced in 1975 to provide rights to consumers who make direct sale purchases. One of those rights included the 10-day cooling-off period which allows consumers to cancel a contract for a refund within 10 days; contracts for ongoing services were not contemplated at the time the Act was passed and the Act has not been updated since 1999.

Under existing legislation, Madam Speaker, a consumer is only entitled to cancel a multi-year contract within the first 10 days. A typical five-year alarm monitoring contract could have a value of more than \$5,000 and consumers have no way to get out of the contract. We know of situations where consumers may not be aware they are signing high-cost contracts for terms of up to five years. We need to have protections in the Act to address these types of circumstances.

Madam Speaker, under the proposed changes long-term service contracts are limited to two years and allow cancellation at any time. We are also aware of individuals who are violating the Direct Sellers' Regulation Act, but have not been deterred by the existing requirements or penalties. These changes provide clarity for consumers as to their rights, and new tools and penalties to address non-compliance and disclosure.

Madam Speaker, at this time I want to reinforce that the changes to the legislation actually enhance consumer confidence in both the product and the service, and that is an underlying concern to the industry itself. Our authority to issue compliance orders is particularly important for our ability to disclose non-compliance to quickly address emerging issues. That took place this last Fall where we were aware of an individual travelling the province demonstrating aggressive sales tactics and our inability to advise the public at large.

Previously it was difficult for us to publicize non-compliance in the absence of a conviction. The compliance orders provide us with the ability to make that information public, going forward, and Madam Speaker, knowledge and awareness are important tools in assisting consumers to make smart decisions. Regulations are being drafted to accompany these legislative changes. The increased fines and penalties will be in effect July 1st of this year and the remainder will be proclaimed once the regulations are finalized and the necessary changes to the system are made.

Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to remind members of the House, and people who are listening across the province, to always ask for proof that direct sales persons have permits, or in the absence or doubt, to contact the Better Business Bureau. Information on how to avoid scams or deal with aggressive sales practices is available on our website.

I will conclude my remarks for now, Madam Speaker, and I look forward to the comments of my colleagues on this very important issue.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Again, it is a pleasure to stand up here and speak to this bill. I guess because I am of an advanced age now, I am able to cover both these bills easily. These amendments certainly are good to see to the Direct Sellers' Regulation Act because the proposed amendments are going to be good for all Nova Scotians and in particular folks like me who are senior now.

We all have horror stories and I even have one of my own. A number of years ago I was taken in by a company and I drove away and I wasn't comfortable at all with what happened. I contacted a lawyer friend of mine the next day and of course I had time to get out of it, thank goodness, because a lot of people of my generation just automatically trust people, number one, and don't really look into the fine print and ask all the questions, so I certainly know where these amendments are coming from.

Complex sales tactics have certainly developed over the past 15 years now and this bill does properly address these - folks who are vulnerable, folks who are senior. Ultimately this bill, hopefully, will modernize the alignment with other provinces and their legislation as well.

Now, does it cover everything? Probably not, nothing ever does, but certainly the government does have a role to play in setting out very clear, concise, and fair rules that protect the customer as well as the small businesses that are out there.

Awareness of issues, a willingness to ask questions about products before purchasing, taking a step to ask for second opinions, follow-up with some research are all

very important steps to take. We believe that this legislation is a good step in supporting Nova Scotians and will help keep them safe in a world where scamming is pretty rampant. With those few words I am going to express my support for this bill.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HON. DAVID WILSON: This is a good bill. You can read - there are more than two lines and there is substance in this bill and I'm glad that the new Liberal Government is following the good work of the former government around consumer protection because it is important. It's important to the residents we represent to ensure that they have the ability, if something goes wrong or if something isn't what it was meant to be, to have recourse to try to get out of contracts. One of the things I know we worked on for some time was around cellphone contracts.

I think this is an important piece of legislation. It protects all Nova Scotians, but I know the minister mentioned especially seniors, who I think - and I think the previous speaker mentioned this - they're very trustworthy, and often the salespeople are very aggressive now. Everybody is competing, of course, and often I think seniors can make a decision that maybe once they think about it after a while would have made a different choice when it comes to maybe purchasing something from a door-to-door salesman.

One thing I have recognized even in my own community is an increase in the number of door-to-door salespeople. I know when I was growing up there were a lot of them, then they kind of disappeared for a number of years, but there is a lot that has been happening over the last number of years. Whatever the government can do to ensure that people have the ability to question or go after those individuals or groups or organizations or companies that take advantage of people is a positive thing. That's why our caucus will support this piece of legislation, and I hope the government continues to look at expanding consumer protection as much as possible here in the province.

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

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: Madam Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 43.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 43. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 44.

Bill No. 44 - Public Trustee Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Madam Speaker, I move that Bill No. 44 be read for a second time. I'm just going to take a few moments to explain to the members what this is all about, what the amendments are about. I'm sure everybody has read through them, but I'll just take a few minutes to explain what these amendments cover.

I would like to remind everybody of the valuable service that is done by the Public Trustee. Some of the most vulnerable Nova Scotians, including children and adults who cannot make decisions for themselves, rely on the Office of the Public Trustee to manage and protect their estates. This office is responsible for the proper administration of estates of deceased persons, incompetent persons, children, and missing persons. It's also committed to providing informed consent for health care, placement to a continuing care home, or home care services. All of this is done with the client's best interests in mind if prior wishes, values, and beliefs are not known. I think it's clear that the Public Trustee provides a very important service to Nova Scotia families.

The changes being proposed today are twofold. The first amendment deals with the process of administering certain estates, and requires changes to the Public Trustee Act specifically. The remaining amendments deal with living estates and require changes to the Public Trustee Act, the Adult Protection Act, and the Hospitals Act.

I'll explain the amendments dealing with the administration of estates first. These amendments will make it easier for families who have lost a loved one and are trying to handle their estate. I think we all agree that the death of a loved one is hard enough. We want the process of administering the estate to be quick and as simple as possible. The amendments to the Public Trustee Act will allow the Public Trustee to use a simpler process to administer estates valued under \$25,000. This process is already used in some cases, but will be expanded to include cases where heirs cannot agree on who should administer the estate. It will also include cases where the Public Trustee was looking after the deceased person's property while that individual was still alive. Heirs of these estates valued under \$25,000 will benefit from a simpler and less expensive process.

Madam Speaker, let me then take a moment to explain the other proposed amendments to the three Acts respectively. These are procedural changes that will clarify the role of the Public Trustee as a statutory guardian of an incompetent person's estate. Currently, if the Public Trustee gets a referral from a hospital or Adult Protection, for example, she has limited authority to administer the estate. She can hold it and take steps to protect it, but she needs to make a Supreme Court application and get an order from a judge to sell the client's land. This takes time and costs money to prepare these applications.

Another example would be if the Public Trustee gets a referral and part of the estate includes a house that has been neglected and is in need of significant repairs. The client may not have the money to maintain the property to pay for insurance. With these amendments, the Public Trustee can sell the property, use the proceeds to pay the debts and any mortgage and manage the proceeds for the benefit of the client's estate.

These changes will bring Nova Scotia in line with seven other Canadian jurisdictions that give the Public Trustee the authority to be the statutory guardian with the power to sell, mortgage or encumber a property without the court's approval. This saves time and money for the estates of the incompetent clients and that is a benefit.

In short, Madam Speaker, the changes to these three Acts will allow the Public Trustee to administer a wider range of estates more quickly and efficiently, something that many other jurisdictions already have. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, I'll say a few words on this bill also. The Public Trustee is someone whom most Nova Scotians don't have any dealings with. But I've got to tell you, when you do, it's great to have someone like Madam Theriault there.

This legislation is a very positive piece of legislation that we will be supporting. The idea of protecting estates is important for a deceased family member as it transfers over. The reality is we cannot deny or get away from that this is an aging population in this province and some of these issues, as we relate to long-term care and so on and how people move on from that system and how they are protected is really very important.

With those few words, I would like to thank the minister for bringing this bill forward and the Public Trustee for the fine work that she does for Nova Scotia. Our caucus will be supporting this bill.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Madam Speaker, I rise to close the debate on Bill No. 44. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 44. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 45.

Bill No. 45 - Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications System Reform (2014) Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Madam Speaker, I move that Bill No. 45 - an Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 2003, the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act, and Chapter 4 of the Acts of 1995-96, the Community Colleges Act, to Facilitate the Reform of the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications System - be now read a second time.

Madam Speaker, there's no question that we need skilled workers in Nova Scotia. There are opportunities in the skilled trades here and we want our daughters and our sons to take advantage of them. Over the past year government asked what Nova Scotians thought of our province's apprenticeship system and we heard, loud and clear, that it needed some improvement. One of the things we learned was that not enough employers are involved in apprenticeship; in fact, what we do know is that it's probably, at the very maximum, only 25 per cent.

A group of industry experts recommended changes to our apprenticeship system, including a new industry-led apprenticeship agency. Madam Speaker, apprenticeship is incredibly important to the growth of our industries, our economy, and our province, and that's why we're making changes to the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications System Reform (2014) Act.

These amendments will lay the groundwork to establish this agency, making it easier for apprentices to have out-of-province experience recognized and ensure that apprentices are getting the training they need. They will strengthen the apprenticeship system and make it more responsive to the very people it is intended to serve - employers and apprentices.

The new agency will be a partnership between government, industry, employers and the Nova Scotia Community College and it will give industry more authority, leadership, and decision-making power across the apprenticeship system, from pre-employment to post-journey training.

Madam Speaker, greater employer participation will provide more opportunities for apprentices and improve the number of apprentices completing their certification. The agency will also attract more people into the system by introducing Nova Scotia P-12 students to careers in the skilled trades. It will also work to improve participation of under-represented groups, and \$2.6 million was included in this year's budget to support this work, expanded apprenticeship technical training, and to create new supports for employers.

Madam Speaker, further amendments are being made to improve the current system. The ability to assign apprenticeship agreements to employers in other jurisdictions will make it easier for apprentices to have out-of-province training recognized and complete their program without interruption. Currently apprentices must register in the province they are training in, and these changes will eliminate this unnecessary burden and the cost for apprentices.

The province will be able to issue cease and desist orders in cases where someone is working in a trade without the required certification or as a non-registered apprentice. It's important that we ensure a fair playing field for employers, and this tool is a good step in this direction.

Changes to the Community Colleges Act will encourage more industry influence in trades training and ensure pre-apprentices are getting the skills and the training they need. Additional changes will encourage more collaboration between government, industry, and the college in developing and amending programs. This will allow us to ensure students are getting the training they need to prepare for the jobs available in skilled trades across the province.

This bill will enable us to better prepare our youth for opportunities here at home and will allow industry to have more influence over the entire apprenticeship system. We want industry and employers to be directing the future of apprenticeship in this province, Madam Speaker, and we want the apprenticeship system to be more responsive to our trades and our workforce so Nova Scotian businesses will flourish. A successful apprenticeship system means more business involvement and more training opportunities. It means more jobs for our daughters and sons, and it means bringing our young workers home and making home the best place to work. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Madam Speaker, I certainly have to agree with the minister when she started off with her initial remarks that we do need skilled tradespeople across our province. All we have to do is look in our own communities and see that many skilled tradespeople are reaching the end of their career and there are not a lot of skilled workers coming behind to take their place.

Madam Speaker, this bill will promote greater communication between industry and the community colleges. This bill will allow for the training programs throughout the province to better reflect the skills that are required by our region's industries. We expect that there will be a more engaged level of communication between those in industry and the educators, as a result of the changes proposed in this particular bill.

Madam Speaker, we are pleased to see that the industry will take a leading role in this new Nova Scotia apprenticeship agency. The bill details that the board of this new agency will establish a program advisory committee for any program of study offered in relation to a trade within the mandate of the agency.

Madam Speaker, while this bill does not create jobs it does enable those who have received apprenticeship training or experience in other provinces to receive credit here in Nova Scotia. We are encouraged to see that the apprenticeship and trades qualification system will include an equity program. We also await further information on the agency's operating charter that will clarify, among other things, the criteria for appointing board members to the agency's board of directors.

In closing comments, Madam Speaker, this is a positive step in the right direction, and our caucus supports Bill No. 45.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, we'll kill the mystery here. We support this bill but that is not going to stop me from saying a few things. I have spoken off the record in private to the minister and we agree with the essence of this bill. I know for a fact that we would like to have more Red Seals that could provide more training, but hopefully in the slight changes in economy some of these Red Seals will come back and be able to do some of the training.

I know through the hard work of the department - and this has been a phenomenal group of people to get together. We are talking about people who didn't really see eye to eye on many issues but they have come together in support of all aspects of industry right across this province, Madam Speaker. They have tackled the thorny issue - and I know there are still some out there as it relates to ratios, but they are working forward on stuff. It's not going to be simple; it's not going to be easy. They are always going to disagree but it has been my experience that they do see a commonality of purpose and they will work forward to that.

I will say this - not criticizing government, I would criticize our government for this too - is that government is basically non-existent in the apprenticeship program with such things as TIR and some of the other industry-related groups. We should be bringing in apprentices. We talk a good game but we don't do it. This is not a criticism of government. I would say that is something that could be put with our government and governments

before us that we really do not participate in the apprenticeship program. I think we all shoulder some responsibility there and I would hope that we would look at that.

I look forward to harmonizing more blocks where we do training within Atlantic Canada, where block one, we'll say, is the same in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick, as in the Atlantic region, so they all have a commonality and one could flow through very easily. I know some of these issues I brought up are issues that the minister would agree with and I think that this is something that, going forward - you know there is no perfect bill that ever comes through this House, Madam Speaker, but what I will say about this bill here is there is not one member who does not see the commonality of what this will do for Nova Scotia.

When we train our workers, whether they are young or old, they can work anywhere in Canada. We would love to have them all working here in Nova Scotia, but we see that what they are doing for the economy, we'll say, of Alberta right now, there are many Red Seal people who are out there and many of our apprentices as such.

Our workforce is second to none and we all should work together to make sure that they have the best apprenticeship program, both from the perspective of having the right tools and the right working environment, a safe working environment, and an ability to get through it at the easiest and speediest possible way.

With those few words, I'll take my place and say our Party supports this bill going to the Law Amendments Committee.

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

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank both the members for their positive comments about this bill. I would in particular like to note the member for Cape Breton Centre and his work on this particular issue when he was Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, so thank you very much. I move second reading of Bill No. 45.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 45. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 49.

Bill No. 49 - Motor Vehicle Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. (Applause)

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Madam Speaker - wow, thank you to my colleagues for that very warm welcome this evening. I move that Bill No. 49, the Motor Vehicle Act, be now read a second time.

This is a very important bill. It strengthens the laws around vehicles responding to emergencies. Bill No. 49 will allow three important public safety groups - the Nova Scotia sheriffs, bridge patrol, and mobile communications vehicles - to be regarded as true emergency responders. It will allow them to use sirens, flashing lights, and revolving lights when responding to emergencies. Also, this bill will clarify that ambulances can proceed through stop signs in emergency situations - of course, only when it's safe to do so.

Just to note, we worked very closely with the three particular stakeholders on this bill. They have been very supportive. This has been something that, collectively, they've been looking forward to for a number of years, and they've been working closely with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to get the components nailed down and the details specified for Bill No. 49.

I've had conversations with each stakeholder. I talked to Todd Brown from the Public Safety Communications vehicles, and he used a very important example of how this helps - and I know that the previous government was involved with the Meat Cove - a very urgent situation with respect to the bridge being knocked out through weather.

What the mobile communications service is: it's three vehicles and four staff, and ultimately what they are is a mobile network that can show up in remote places where there isn't a lot of radio coverage, and they can provide very important services. Obviously, with that being the case for their vehicles, their location is important. Having the opportunity to use sirens and lights and those modes to get to the closest spot that they have to be to provide that service is very important. Again, these vehicles have special equipment, so it's all about connectivity; obviously their position is key. Communications and the mobile communications division is very supportive.

I also talked to Fred Hildebrand, the director of Sheriff Services here in Nova Scotia. He provided a few interesting statistics. They respond and they carry between 26,000 and 29,000 prisoners per year in this province. That's a pretty remarkable number. He said while the level of urgency and emergencies is rare, they do happen, and when they happen, Fred felt as though they weren't always prepared. He said many times they would look in the back of their vehicles and they would see somebody that would have some kind of collapse. Obviously there is a high incidence - it's not a great thing to talk about, but there is a high incidence - of prisoners transporting drugs, they ingest the drugs to take

them to their next stop and it's a very tragic thing that happens. But a lot of times Fred said that this will result in a very urgent health situation when they're transporting prisoners from point A to point B, so it's important to have that kind of support.

Also, other examples, when there are fights amongst prisoners, when there are other kinds of irate prisoners who are looking to do damage and possibly assault each other or assault the Sheriff's Department, then obviously this becomes an urgent situation and they have to respond quickly. They didn't have these capabilities before.

Another example that Fred used was that a lot of times when it's a very high-profile situation, police vehicles will be used to almost escort sheriffs' vehicles, and at that time the sheriffs' vehicles themselves didn't have the capabilities to have the sirens and have the lights, so it put them at a disadvantage when moving in a convoy. So even the police association and the police services recommended for a long time that sheriffs be provided with this, so it's a very important service.

Finally, one that we can all attest to, being in metro, I talked to Dennis Kelly, who is the operations manager for Halifax Harbour Bridges. Dennis said that - I mean, obviously, with what they see on the bridges, what we don't realize probably a lot of the time is that the bridge services and the bridge patrol act basically as police so they can ticket with speed, and obviously they're watching for impaired driving, and they deal with many instances of that.

A sad reality of the bridge patrol is that they see a lot of attempted suicides, so you can imagine the need for urgency and to have that ability to respond quickly to those things, to some of the crisis intervention that has to take place on the bridges. This service provides just that. So the fact that they can have lights and sirens and have the opportunity to get to these people in distress quickly is important.

Again, it's almost assumed by the public that these three particular groups would have this right and have this ability, but they don't, so today this is a very good one. I'm looking forward to hearing from my colleagues, but I think this is one that brings us in line with other provinces. Certainly New Brunswick has a similar system, as does British Columbia.

These changes are important. They'll also make administration of the law more efficient and eliminate the need for future regulatory amendments. This is just a good thing, and it's one that we probably won't see in our everyday lives, but for the people, the stakeholders that I mentioned that this affects, this is very important to them. With that, I'll take my place, and I look forward to the comments from my colleagues. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Madam Speaker, it's amazing what co-operation can accomplish here. I urge the members opposite to keep on with this trend for the entire session.

Madam Speaker, I rise to close debate on Bill No. 49.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 49. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 51.

Bill No. 51 - Municipal Government Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: Madam Speaker, I move that Bill No. 51, an Act to Amend Chapter 18 of the Acts of 1998, the Municipal Government Act, be now read a second time.

Madam Speaker, I rise in the House this evening to speak to the importance of this bill to villages across the province. The amendments allow villages to discuss confidential and personal matters in private, the same as municipal councils.

I want to be clear that the amendments do not provide villages with any additional authorities that don't already exist for municipalities. The change is to give villages the ability to have the same confidentiality around staff relations and other sensitive matters that municipal councils have - nothing more or nothing less.

The Association of Nova Scotia Villages raised this as an issue for their members. It's very simple. Villages will have the same rights as municipal councils to go in camera when discussing certain issues. Allowing village commissions to go in camera addresses a gap in the Act for villages and their responsibilities under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, as well as protection of privacy rules in the Municipal Government Act.

The changes do not mean a village commission can go in camera to discuss just any issue. As all honourable members in this House know, some situations and circumstances, such as negotiations or personnel and legal issues, require private discussions.

The instances in which a village can close a meeting are listed under Section 22 of the Municipal Government Act and reinforced in an information directive to councils. They include acquisition, sale, lease and security of village property, setting a minimum price to be accepted by the village at a tax sale, personnel matters, labour relations, contract negotiations, litigation or potential litigation, legal advice eligible for solicitor/client privilege and public security.

Madam Speaker, it's important to note that this amendment does not provide authority to make a decision in a closed meeting that would bind the commission. Binding decisions must be made in an open meeting. That is extremely important for members and village residents to know.

Other amendments in the bill allow village commissions to have standing and special committees, which would have similar closed sessions under the same circumstances. The amendments are straightforward and reflect a practice already in place for all other municipal level governments.

The department will ensure that village commissions know the responsibilities that come with holding closed sessions. We will inform village commissions of the types of discussions that are appropriate for in camera sessions, as outlined in the Municipal Government Act. Village commissions will be held to the same standard as municipal councils and will be expected to fully understand when to hold in camera meetings. Issues that have been discussed in closed-door sessions will be noted to have occurred in private. Residents will know the type of matter discussed and when, although no other information would be made public.

We are simply ensuring that the existing municipal structures in place have the appropriate tools and authority to operate efficiently and without contravening legislation and policy. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity, and I look forward to listening to the comments of my colleagues.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Madam Speaker, I would like to commend the minister on this legislation. I know I have heard some say that this is housekeeping, but I would like to suggest that housekeeping is important and it is important that villages have the same tools to operate as towns and municipalities do, so I would like to commend the minister on bringing forward this legislation.

I know that this is an important tool for village commissions to have. There are many villages that have employees, staff and many reasons why they might want to hold an in camera meeting. I think this is long overdue that this be in place for villages. As you know, Kings County has a number of villages. It's an important issue for us in Kings County that villages have these tools.

Again, I would like to speak in favour of this and commend the minister on this bill. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: Madam Speaker, I rise to close debate on Bill No. 51, amendments to the Municipal Government Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 51. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 52.

Bill No. 52 - Liquor Control Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister responsible for the Liquor Control Act.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Madam Speaker, I move that Bill No. 52 now be read for a second time.

I am pleased to rise today to talk to Bill No. 52, which is actually a bill that will allow and set in place all of the correct parameters to make legal the on-site brewing of beer and wine in this province, which is a long-standing issue that I have had.

I have actually introduced Private Members' Bills on six occasions prior to today being in government and having a proper bill. The debate over whether or not we should have on-site brewing of wine and beer on the u-vint premises has been ongoing for quite a number of years and has actually spanned three governments now.

I'm very pleased to say that we are bringing in these rules, and it's an example where the public and the public demand was way ahead of where government was and where our thinking was as government. I would like to say that I was, I think, more in sync with the public opinion of the time, but there was a strong move on the public side. I know other ministers who may have been in the same position in the past, may have been surprised by the vehemence of the public. I think nowadays people are moving more

between provinces. We have a lot of people who move with the military and have lived in other provinces as well who come to Nova Scotia and they were frustrated that it was not a service available here. They could access the service where they lived before and then they come to Nova Scotia and it's not available here.

The retailers who were selling the wine kits were really responding to their customers' request and demand saying that this was something they've been allowed to do in other places. For many people it is a hobby; it's something they enjoy. They like to try different wines and just experiment with that, making their own. It's a little bit of an art and a hobby, and it's something that they missed when they came here and weren't able to do it in the store.

There are a lot of reasons why you would prefer to leave it in the store to ferment and I've raised them often here in the past. Primarily, as people get older, they may not have the physical strength, or even for other people, they may not have the strength; they may have a reason they can't carry them. I'm not sure I could carry those big carboys. When they're full, they're heavy. At the same time a lot of people live in apartments and condominiums and didn't have the space that they once had in a home. I represent an area where two-thirds of my households are in apartments and condominiums and for that reason I heard from many people who just wanted to participate in this hobby but didn't have any space in their home to do it and therefore they had a strong demand.

Really the retailers heard this demand, wanted to respond, and yet the rules and the laws in Nova Scotia did not permit it. One retailer in particular who lives in the Clayton Park riding, his name is Ross Harrington, and he has been very vocal. He is known to many people in the House for being very vocal and being almost, I would say, the voice of this movement, if you like, in the province. Ross's success in ultimately having this bill brought forward and making this practice legal here will be followed up, of course, with the regulations that go along with it. He has been a very big supporter on having those regulations.

Nobody who is active in this industry has been anything but supportive in ensuring that we have the right details and the right rules for health and safety and controls that are needed in allowing this to become a practice that is widespread in Nova Scotia. It is a good news story from the point of view of business as well, Madam Speaker, because this has been a new opportunity for the small businesses that previously were selling just the kits and the supplies to now be able to offer this as a service, which provides a new source of revenue for the business.

For us as a government it provides a new source of HST revenue, which we didn't have before. For every kit that is mixed, there is HST on that service. We have seen the existing businesses expand. We've seen construction activity around the renovations of their stores to allow for the on-site brewing and we've seen an additional number of people working in the stores that were already there. For that I think we can all be pleased.

I know, as well, in many communities where there were no stores before, they've now opened, and in fact in several, a number of these businesses have opened. I think of Bridgewater, in particular, where the first time I visited there was one store, I think it was last June; there are now three in operation in the Bridgewater area. That is a good news story for the small business community and for providing a service to the people who live there.

Madam Speaker, we are very pleased about Bill No. 52 being before the House now. It is really going to set the parameters, set the rules for those businesses and take away the uncertainty that they have operated under in the last number of years. Really, I felt that this was something that was long overdue and I'm sure that there will be others in the House who will just be glad to put it to bed and get her passed and make sure that we can move on to other issues because this is one that I think is a benefit in every community in Nova Scotia.

Madam Speaker, if you look at the bill itself, basically we are setting out all the parameters on the operations. A lot of the detail will come in the regulations as well. I wanted to let everyone know that we've done a lot of consultation around the bill itself, 21 submissions were received from members of the public. Some were people who are customers of these stores, others were - in fact we heard from wineries themselves. There was a little bit of an issue around wineries having that name and that they didn't want wineries to be confused with on-site brewing. I don't think there are any real similarities but they were concerned about that.

We heard from health proponents who did raise some issues around the pricing of alcohol, which we do understand and appreciate. We also heard from the store owners themselves and their concerns. They were responding in the consultations to P.E.I.'s regulations. We chose to send out the regulations and the bill from Prince Edward Island because it was the most recent province to adopt these rules and make it legal. We felt that they had done a lot of conferring with other provinces before they brought their rules in. We followed that as just a starting point for the discussions.

Madam Speaker, many people in the House will be aware that in P.E.I. they charge a cost per vat - that carboy, which is the big box that you do - so for each vat that you mix up, there was a set extra levy or tax that was added on. We heard from many people, both customers and store owners, who objected to the idea of an extra levy on each vat. They said, in fact, most provinces in Canada do not have that. I think P.E.I. was alone in doing so. It was something that was not my intention when we first brought out the regulations and we very quickly responded to that, to let people know that was not our intention, we're not going to do it.

In this bill you'll see no levy or - we haven't even left the door open to add one later, to do it later on. We just felt that we get a lot of benefit, as a province, from the HST, from the added employment and from the activity in the community, so we weren't looking

for that, Madam Speaker. P.E.I.'s rules were just used as a starting point for the discussion. When it comes to writing the regulations, we actually will be rewriting them for Nova Scotia. We won't be using P.E.I.'s as a basis for that, for a number of reasons.

Madam Speaker, one of the clauses in this bill, I think, is important. It removes the injunction powers that the NSLC was given in a previous bill here, I believe it was in 2011. We took great exception to that when the powers were given to the NSLC. It was essentially a power to close any business or almost have policing powers if they felt that anybody was contravening the Liquor Control Act, so we gave them sort of extraordinary powers. They are already the retailer and they set a lot of policy and do other things, as our main liquor sales agent in the province. But in addition to that, the previous government gave them a power of injunction to shut down businesses or anybody that they felt was breaking the law.

When that was brought in, it was pretty clear that it was aimed at u-vints and that it was going to be put into play and it actually ultimately was used by the government - well, not by the government, it was set in place and used by NSLC - to do an investigation and shut down some of the u-vint operators in the province. That was really what led to quite an outcry from the public, at which point the previous government did withdraw that, I guess withdrew the injunction and allowed the stores to continue operating.

Even under the previous government, it's important to note, there was a commitment to consult and to bring in this bill and to move forward. Really, the response from the public and the way it was portrayed and so on in the media really led to a lot of grassroots support or on-the-ground support for the u-vint operators. We definitely felt that now that there will be a licence for these operations and they'll be operating legally, there is no reason in the world to leave the injunction powers with the NSLC. So we've taken that away, and I think everybody will be happier for it.

Madam Speaker, that, in fact, is Clause 8, which says - the description is, ". . . removes a provision authorizing the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation to seek an injunction to enjoin a person from violating the Act or regulations or from continuing a violation." So that's gone now. I think we'll all breathe easier, won't we? I can see members of the Opposition agree with me entirely on that.

I think it is better this way, and I know that the NSLC is quite happy to see that gone. They don't need this power and they don't need to continue that.

Madam Speaker, the other points in the bill, I think, are very clear. Really, what we're doing is setting the ground rules to completely legalize this process and this business here in Nova Scotia as it is in many other provinces in Canada. I think that many of us may have enjoyed this in the past, and we'll be able to do so now with the convenience of being able to use the on-site brewing as well.

With that, Madam Speaker, I look forward to hearing any comments from the Opposition. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of this bill. The PC caucus supports modernizing our liquor laws and giving consumers more choice. This bill is just one way we can do that. These changes will make things that much easier for small businesses in this province. The Ivany report calls for exactly this kind of change, and we as a Party stand for anything that helps small business and creates jobs. This is also why we are calling for the goals and recommendations of the Ivany report to be put into law.

I am pleased that this bill will ensure that the situation we saw a year ago doesn't happen again, and I'm talking about NSLC's move to shut down u-vint and u-brew businesses. The former government introduced regulatory changes in 2001, giving the NSLC the authority to seek a court order to prevent businesses from allowing customers to use brew kits on their premises. The liquor agency launched legal actions against the two firms arguing the in-store brewing and winemaking process was unregulated and unsafe. Obviously when government causes hardship to small business and treats them and their customers like criminals, there is a problem. We are pleased that this bill fixes that problem and we are pleased that these small businesses will soon have a legal environment in which to work.

With those few words, I would say that we support this bill and thank the minister for bringing it forward.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Madam Speaker, I guess there are two lessons in this piece of legislation. The first is, if at first you don't succeed, try, try again. I would say to the honourable minister, her tenacity has certainly paid off and it probably won't be the last time it pays off.

I think the other lesson is the politics of liquor. It's got a fascinating history throughout all of our society really, going back to the days of prohibition and even beyond that, the early formation I suppose of our province in some ways with rum and the high seas and what have you. Certainly, as somebody who has had some responsibility for the regulation of liquor, I know that there's a lesson to be learned in terms of standing between people who are consumers of these products and the regulatory obligations, I suppose, that one may have from time to time.

Madam Speaker, our caucus will be supporting this legislation, but there are a few cautions and points I would like to make. One of the things that I want to say - and there is

a bit of a debate we've heard publicly today with the associate or the deputy medical officer for public health in our province. I know Dr. Bob Strang as well has been in the Red Room on this matter in the past.

We always do need to have concern for the public policy that we have and the way we implement public policy with respect to the harms that can occur for some people in our province and in our community. Responsible drinking has to be something that every member of this House takes very seriously as we discharge our duties here in this Chamber. There is a significant body of evidence - and I know the minister talks about evidence and believes in evidence - with respect to pricing and the practice of pricing in alcohol sales and responsible drinking.

The chief medical officer of our province and other health care providers who have expertise in public health have long argued for the importance of an alcohol strategy in our province that will set minimum prices with respect to alcohol sales. They argue for that because the evidence demonstrates that minimum prices do, in fact, have a correlation and an impact with respect to drinking and irresponsible drinking and helping people learn to drink responsibly.

In fact, the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation has a mandate with a number of components and one of the components they have in their mandate - and the minister would know this - is the promotion of responsible drinking, and they attempt to do pricing within the Liquor Corporation's retail services that set minimum prices on the products they sell and they take these things into consideration. With this piece of legislation we have made a decision not to apply those standards, so I think we need to spend some time reflecting on that, and maybe that is something we need to evaluate in the future as this legislation goes into effect.

The minister indicated that while Prince Edward Island has a levy and have taken minimum pricing into consideration, other provinces haven't done that. It's my understanding that other provinces didn't do that because they were early adopters of the practice and that in retrospect they might do things differently. We are, in fact, not building on the knowledge and the experience that is available to us from those other provinces with this legislation. We are barrelling ahead and just ignoring some of the lessons perhaps that are there to be learned, and that also causes me some concern.

The final point I would make about this legislation - and I know there has been a great deal of discussion about how this legislation will contribute to a blossoming of small business in the province, and the minister has indicated that there are some examples in places where operations have been expanded, new employees have been added and what have you, and that may very well be the case, but it's also the case that the kind of expansion we'll tend to see in this province, if other provinces are any example of what will occur, is that independent ma and pa operators of the wine and beer kit kinds of stores will eventually be forced out of business by franchisees that are much more connected to a

more integrated industry, where the concentrates for these products are manufactured and sold from very large suppliers such as Peller Estates - there are some really big ones that are the main suppliers of Wine Kitz, Noble Grape, or something like that.

Although, yes, those local retail outlets are smallish, they are part of a much larger integrated system and the independence - and we've seen this in the grocery business, the fact that the independent grocery store operators increasingly are disappearing and they're giving way to kind of the Needs franchise, which really is an extension of the Sobeys empire or whatever.

It's not as uncomplicated and simple as just a case of consumers have the desire to have choice so let's provide them with choice. I think we're all for responsible drinking and access to people who do this as a hobby and enjoy beer and wine making; gosh knows we all know lots of people who do this. I'm reminded of the former House Leader of the NDP, the member for Sackville, John Holm, who for many years sat in this Chamber and was quite the winemaker and thoroughly enjoyed that kind of hobby and activity. There are many people out there who we all know do this. Let's not take off our kind of analytical glasses that we're sent here to put on the legislation that comes in front of us so that we truly understand what it is that we are debating and what it is that we are passing and what the implications of that truly are.

Sometimes there are features of these bills that go undiscussed because it's just a very popular thing to do. But at the same time I feel that we have a responsibility to our fellow citizens, to the children, the families, the people of our province to pull back the curtain and throw real light on our legislation. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Madam Speaker, I rise to close debate on Bill No. 52. I just wanted to make note that I have written some notes down from the Opposition members' comments and would like to address a little bit, the comments around the concerns on health promotion. I just want to assure the members of the House that responsible consumption of alcohol is a concern of ours, that other members of our caucus and Cabinet have had some discussions and are working collaboratively between departments to make sure that this is on our minds.

When the regulations are put in place, they will include some restrictions on how the service is advertised and some controls, particularly on the advertising. It will not be done on a per bottle basis, for example, which I think would be irresponsible. We'll be looking at just better ways to ensure that it is properly controlled and that the operations within the area are controlled. It's worth noting that the inspectors from Service Nova Scotia will be in charge of that, from the Alcohol and Gaming division - they will also be

responsible for ensuring that regulations are all upheld. We expect that will be very well done.

There will also be a licensing fee for each of these premises. I didn't mention that but each of them will pay a licence similar to either licensed establishments or restaurants but we'll have an annual fee - perhaps we will get a fee for several years at a time. We'll make sure there is also that in place and that there will be good restrictions on each of them following the rules that are put in place.

With that, Madam Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 52.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 52. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 53.

Bill No. 53 - Police Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Madam Speaker, I move Bill No. 53 - amendments to the Police Act and the Fatality Investigations Act - be read a second time.

Madam Speaker, the Serious Incident Response Team, which I will refer to from here on in as SIRT, was created by amendments to the Police Act in 2010 and became operational in April 2012. This team investigates serious incidents involving police and is independent from government and police.

This independence is very important. Nova Scotians need to have confidence in the police and know that police are accountable for their actions. To ensure that Nova Scotians have this confidence, SIRT is very open about its investigations. In fact, one of its overarching principles is transparency to the public. For example, every time SIRT takes a case, a press release is issued so that Nova Scotians are aware of its investigations and findings.

Madam Speaker, the amendments proposed today will not change the operation of the unit or its transparency. They simply clarify the legislation that governs SIRT. SIRT

has been operational for two years now, and it has become obvious that some minor changes are needed to allow for smoother operations.

There are four amendments that are being proposed. The first amendment is to the Police Act. It is to allow for the designation of an acting director. During short-term absences, such as vacations or illness, we propose that the director appoint a Crown Attorney as acting director. This appointment will only cover periods of up to one month. In the event of a longer absence, Madam Speaker, the Governor in Council can appoint an acting director for a period of up to one year. This amendment provides consistent leadership for SIRT during the director's absence as well as ensuring the team's continued independence.

The second amendment to the Police Act relates to SIRT entering into agreements with other provinces. There have been various occasions where SIRT has been asked to conduct independent investigations in other provinces. This amendment allows the minister, on the recommendation of the SIRT director, to enter into such agreements to perform extra-provincial work on a case-by-case basis.

The third amendment modifies the Police Act to make it clear that the director can launch an investigation if it's in the public's interest. This amendment is important as it clarifies the types of cases SIRT is able to investigate.

Madam Speaker, we'd like to broaden the legislation to ensure the director is able to make an independent decision regarding investigations which are of significant public interest, even if the matter is not referred by a police agency or the Justice Minister's office. For example, if there was an incident where police fired their gun and no one was hurt, it would not meet the definition of serious injury or death. It would, however, be a matter of significant public interest.

This amendment allows SIRT to initiate its own investigation without a referral from the police or the Justice Department. Any time Nova Scotians can have their questions answered about an incident related to policing in our province, it's a good thing. Broadening the scope of SIRT's investigations will do just that.

Finally, the fourth amendment, Madam Speaker, we're proposing is to the Fatality Investigations Act. This amendment designates members of SIRT as medical examiners' investigators. When necessary, they would act under the medical examiner's direction, similar to all police officers in Nova Scotia.

Those are the four amendments, Madam Speaker. Nova Scotians made it clear that they do not want police investigating police. SIRT was created to address this concern, and it's important that their investigations run smoothly. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. LENA DIAB: Madam Speaker, I rise to close the debate on Bill No. 53. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 53. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 55.

Bill No. 55 - Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: I move that Bill No. 55, Halifax Regional Municipality Charter be now read a second time. Madam Speaker, I rise in the House this evening to speak to these amendments to the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter. The changes provide enabling authority for the Halifax Regional Municipality to enter into a tax agreement with the Halifax International Airport Authority. The changes will create a more transparent and clear process for the taxation of property for the airport authority.

Madam Speaker, the municipality requested this authority, and our government was pleased to support it. Since the airport authority took over management of the Halifax Stanfield International Airport in 2000, the municipality has provided tax relief to the airport in the form of a development grant agreement. This grant represents the difference between taxing the airport at a full commercial property tax rate and tax according to a formula agreed to at the time that the airport authority was created and amended in 2004.

Through the development grant, the airport has received about \$10 million in tax relief from the Halifax Regional Municipality since 2009. As this House knows, the grant is intended to support economic development by ensuring that the airport has a stable and predictable taxation model. The grant has supported the airport authority's investment of more than \$175 million in new infrastructure at the airport over the past four years. That is significant development that benefits the airport authority, the municipality and the province. The airport authority tenants will be unaffected by this change.

These amendments, Madam Speaker, will enable the municipality to enter into a taxing agreement with the Halifax International Airport Authority that is more transparent

and does away with the former tax and rebate process. We're going from a two-step process that is inefficient to a one-step process that is open and transparent. This allows HRM to be an international city attracting business, private investment and competitiveness for the entire province's economy. Providing this property tax relief to international airports is a common practice across the country. These changes simplify the process for HRM and the airport authority as well.

Instead of the current process of the airport authority making a tax payment and then receiving a rebate through two separate processes, the municipality will collect the appropriate level of taxes as per their agreement and the need for a rebate is eliminated. The formula for determining the level of taxation, which includes measure of passenger volumes, will remain the same. This change simply makes the process more transparent and easier to comprehend.

With that, Madam Speaker, I conclude my remarks and look forward to comments from my colleagues.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 55. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, we're going to skip Bill No. 56. Would you please call Bill No. 57.

Bill No. 57 - Cemetery and Funeral Services Act and the Embalmers and Funeral Directors Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: I move that Bill No. 57, amendments to the Cemetery and Funeral Services Act and Embalmers and Funeral Directors Act be read for a second time.

The Cemetery and Funeral Services Act and the Embalmers and Funeral Directors Act - Madam Speaker, these changes are intended to accomplish three things: provide consumers with more choice; strengthen the rules that protect consumers; and make businesses operating in the funeral service sector more competitive.

Madam Speaker, the most significant innovation in these amendments is a provision to allow funeral service providers to sell funeral insurance products to their

customers from the funeral home itself. Before now, our legislation has prevented funeral homes from selling funeral service insurance, as their counterparts are able to do in most other provinces. Like other kinds of insurance, these policies are underwritten and sold by licensed agents and mean much less risk for both operators and consumers.

Many funeral homes today allow their customers to buy funeral services in advance - so-called "pre-need plans" - but to do so they must deposit funds in trust. By providing the option of funeral insurance, consumers will have more choice and more security. I understand that worrying about how to pay for a funeral after losing a loved one can be very difficult for families. These changes will help bring a measure of comfort to many Nova Scotians at a very difficult time. The new rules will make funeral insurance more transferable than a trust fund when a client moves or wishes to change providers. We also expect that with these changes industry will be able to offer contracts with smaller payments over longer periods of time.

For the funeral home, the sale of funeral insurance allows choice and flexibility in the products they offer customers. It also means that operators do not bear the risks and costs associated with maintaining prepaid trust accounts.

These amendments offer a number of other changes that will protect consumers. The industry will be required to adopt and observe a code of ethics, and funeral homes that hold trust funds to maintain their pre-need funeral and cemetery arrangements will have to continue their licence even if they stop selling. If a funeral home is sold, moves, or closes, they must give notification to their customers, and other provisions will address what happens when funeral plans are assigned from one licensee to another, and the handling of unclaimed trust funds.

These measures are consistent with practices in other provinces, and they follow extensive consultation by our department with both the funeral home services and the insurance industry providers. I look forward to comments from my colleagues.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 57. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 58.

Bill No. 58 - Oil Refineries and L.N.G. Plants Municipal Taxation Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: Madam Speaker, I move that Bill No. 58 be now read for a second time.

Amendments to the Oil Refineries and L.N.G. Plants Municipal Taxation Act are intended to reflect changes at the Dartmouth Imperial Oil Refinery. The property no longer operates as an oil refinery. Instead, Imperial Oil is converting it into a storage facility, and they expect to complete this process during this fiscal year.

Since 2003, Imperial Oil has been paying property tax on its facility in Dartmouth to the Halifax Regional Municipality based on a tax agreement through regulations under this Act. Since the property is no longer functioning as a refinery, this amendment is required to revert taxation to the standard approach of property assessment times tax rate.

As of April 1st, the property will be assessed under the Assessment Act and taxed the same as other commercial property. Based on the estimated market value of the property or the storage facility, taxes are expected to be \$2.6 million. This is a drop of approximately \$1 million from the previous fiscal year. We know the importance of having such a competitive business environment in Nova Scotia, and that includes a fair level of taxation.

These intended changes provide a fair level of property taxation, recognizing that the facility is no longer refining and producing fuels. Both HRM and Imperial Oil agree, and they support the taxation change to reflect the facility's updated status as a commercial property. This proposed change will offer certainty in terms of future taxation levels. I look forward to comments from my colleagues.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 58. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

[8:11 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

[8:18 pm. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

MADAM CHAIRMAN: The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole House on Bills has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 27 - “St. Andrew’s Society of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia.”, An Act to Incorporate.

Bill No. 32 - Forestry Agreement Statutes Repeal (2014) Act.

Bill No. 33 - Fair Registration Practices Act.

Bill No. 34 - Notaries and Commissioners Act.

Bill No. 41 - Electricity Efficiency and Conservation Restructuring (2014) Act.

and the chairman has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, without amendments.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ordered that these bills be read a third time on a future day.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: That, Madam Speaker, concludes the government’s business for today. Tomorrow being Opposition Day, I would now ask the House Leader for the New Democratic Party to give us the hours and the business for tomorrow.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader for the New Democratic Party.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hours, per usual, will be 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. After the daily routine and Question Period we will be calling Bill No. 26, Affordable Hearing Aids for Seniors Act, and Bill No. 47, the Wills Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again tomorrow between 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

[The House rose at 8:22 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1273**

By: Hon. Andrew Younger (Energy)

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

Whereas Sarah Douglas, Megan Blumenthal, and Kate Hamilton, fresh visionaries who are also passionate residents of Dartmouth, launched an inter-active art project, Dartmouth Carousel; and

Whereas Dartmouth Carousel will be located at Ferry Terminal Park next to Alderney landing, and will encourage local businesses to sponsor a seat and be paired up with a local artist who will design the seat based on Dartmouth culture; and

Whereas Kate Hamilton, Sarah Douglas, and Megan Blumenthal have spurred public interest and passion with their project;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in thanking Megan Blumenthal, Kate Hamilton, and Sarah Douglas for their passion and vision for the conception of the Dartmouth Carousel, and wish them every success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1274

By: Ms. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas Scotsburn Dairy Group has closed a business deal that will allow them to focus on only one product, Scotsburn Ice Cream; and

Whereas Scotsburn Dairy Group has a long and valued history in Pictou West, originally founded in 1900 by a small group of local farmers and growing to be the largest Atlantic Canadian owned dairy processor and distributor in the Atlantic Region, and has now shifted its focus to become the largest manufacturer of ice cream and frozen novelties in Atlantic Canada; and

Whereas Scotsburn Dairy Group has been a great employer and dedicated community supporter to many groups and organizations within Pictou West over its more than 100 years;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Scotsburn Dairy Group and President and CEO Doug Ettinger on the business deal and thank them for their continuing role as an important employer and dedicated community supporter in Pictou West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1275

By: Hon. Zach Churchill (Natural Resources)

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

Whereas Al Mohle of the Town of Yarmouth has been named Yarmouth's Volunteer of the Year for 2013; and

Whereas Al Mohle, a retired teacher and administrator with the Tri-Counties Regional School Board, has coached school curling teams on a volunteer basis for many years; and

Whereas he has been instrumental in the continued success of the Yarmouth Food Bank and has been an active member and executive of the Lions Club;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Al Mohle on his selection as Yarmouth Volunteer of the Year 2013 and thank him for his continuing work on behalf of the community.

RESOLUTION NO. 1276

By: Mr. John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Duke of Edinburgh's Award was founded by His Royal Highness Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, and was introduced to Canada in 1963 to encourage personal development and community involvement for young people; and

Whereas the basic structure of the award program encourages young people in four mandatory areas: service, adventurous journey, skills, and physical recreation; and

Whereas Eamonn Schwartz of Canning was recently awarded a bronze medal for his accomplishments of these requirements;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Eamonn Schwartz on his accomplishments in receiving this prestigious award and wish him continued success in future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1277

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 Bradley Eddy from Lower Sackville is a 19-year-old past graduate of Sackville High School; and

Whereas Brad started driving go-karts at age five and has followed in the footsteps of his father, Daniel, to have a passion for stock car driving, with a championship in NASCAR's Whelen All American Series in 2011 and participating in last season's Maritime Pro Stock Tour; and

Whereas Brad has been invited to race in the 7th Annual Denny Hamlin Short Track Showdown being held in South Boston, Virginia, on April 24th, an event that also raises awareness and funding for cystic fibrosis research;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Lower Sackville's Bradley Eddy on his accomplishments with stock car racing to date, and extend best wishes both as he competes in the Denny Hamlin Short Track Showdown and for a successful future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1278

By: Mr. Alfie MacLeod (Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg)

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

Whereas Anna MacIntosh, a Grade 1 student at Gowrie Elementary School in Donkin, celebrated her 100th day of school by completing a caring project; and

Whereas Anna and her fellow students were asked to create a project with 100 as its theme; and

Whereas Anna decided to collect 100 cans of soup from family, friends, and the Nova Scotia Community College Marconi Campus and present them to the Glace Bay Food Bank;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Anna MacIntosh on creating her project and thinking of others in need.

RESOLUTION NO. 1279

By: Mr. Alfie MacLeod (Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg)

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

Whereas the Cape Breton West Islanders defeated the Glace Bay Miners number two team by a score of 5 to 3 to win the Nova Scotia Pee wee A Girls Provincial Hockey Championship this weekend at the Bayplex; and

Whereas Katie Beaton was named player of the game for Cape Breton West as she scored three goals and added an assist; and

Whereas Cape Breton West went undefeated in the tournament, posting a record of 2-0-2;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend congratulations to Head Coach Paul MacNeil and his assistants Basil Graham and Jamie Smith on an excellent hockey season and for bringing home a provincial championship trophy.