



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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First Session

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2014

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2014

Sixty-second General Assembly

First Session

12:00 NOON

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We'll begin the daily routine.

The topic for late debate, as submitted by the honourable member for Pictou East, is:

Therefore be it resolved that the Environment Minister call on his Liberal Cabinet colleagues to commit to a plan for fixing the deplorable condition of the Old Ferry Road in Bayfield before business owners and operators suffer.

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, before tabling a petition, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. HARRISON: In the west gallery a number of folks have come today for a petition, and I'll ask them to stand as their name is called. Maura Hunter, Deborah Smith, Ida Kuhn, Joe Hunter, Christine Crowe, Randy Crowe, Bill Smith, George Thomas, Nadine Thomas, Claudia Leclerc, Lloyd Gibbs, Valerie Hollingsworth, Nancy Samson; and from Kings County, Chris Conn, Warren Peck, and Dick Killam. (Applause)

I was just going to ask the House to give you a warm welcome - and they just did. Welcome.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

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

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause is:

“We the undersigned, are therefore opposed to this industrial wind turbine construction, and respectfully request the authority vested with your office to deny approval to this project under COMFIT or any other program.”

I'd like to table this petition. There are over 700 names, and I have affixed my signature as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

Bill No. 35 - Property Valuation Services Corporation Act.

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

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

Bill No. 43 - Direct Sellers' Regulation Act.

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

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

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

The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism on an introduction.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw the members' attention to the east gallery, where we are joined today by Mr. Thomas Eaton. Mr. Eaton successfully completed three co-op terms with T4G Limited and gained valuable career experience in the process. He is joined today by Mike MacPhail and Brett O'Donnell from T4G, the company that designs, develops, and implements technology solutions for businesses.

Mr. Speaker I would ask all members of the House to give them a very warm welcome here today. (Applause)

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 1313

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

Whereas crime does not happen in isolation, it's a community issue that impacts every citizen in this province, either directly or indirectly; and

Whereas finding solutions to reduce crime and violence cannot happen in isolation, it will take those in the justice system, in the health system, in the education system, in our social and economic systems, and in our neighbourhoods working together; and

Whereas the CeaseFire project is a perfect example of this philosophy, an action that starts with neighbours and community members leading the way to offer young people an alternative to violence;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House show their support for this innovative program in the hope that fewer families will have to go through the pain of losing a son, a daughter, a brother, or a sister to gun violence.

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 Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 1314

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

Whereas Dan MacRury, Q.C., Chief Crown Attorney of Cape Breton for the Nova Scotia Public Prosecution Service and former counsel for the Hyde fatality inquiry, has been elected National Second Vice-President of the Canadian Bar Association; and

Whereas Mr. MacRury's election will see him assume the post of National President of the Canadian Bar Association in 2016, the first public sector lawyer to do so; and

Whereas Mr. MacRury is a past winner of several prestigious Canadian Bar Association awards including the John Tate Award of Excellence and the Louis St-Laurent Award of Excellence;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Mr. MacRury for his outstanding work as a public servant and exemplary dedication to the legal profession.

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.

Just before we move on to Notices of Motion, I want to take a couple of minutes, if I could have all members' attention, to go over the expectations about the form of notices of motion. I have been listening carefully to the resolutions over the past couple of weeks and have noticed a number of them have been quite long. I know from the body language of some of the members, and a few of the comments that have been thrown out, that I'm not alone in my observations in this.

The notices of motion are supposed to be short and to the point. Notices of motion are supposed to have a maximum of three recitals, what we would all recognize as "Whereases" and a single proposed resolution for the House to adopt, which we would recognize as the part starting "Therefore be it resolved that."

This standard has been followed by this House for the last 30 years, and it was expressed in both 1985 and 1988 by former Speaker Donahoe when he said, "An honourable member who has done his or her homework properly should not need more than two, or at most three, brief introductory clauses followed by a succinct statement to which the House's assent is sought."

The practice in this House is that the three "Whereas" clauses should each be no more than one sentence in length. The concluding resolution itself should be one single proposition for the House to adopt and should only be one sentence long.

What I have noticed recently is that members have been proposing "Whereases" that contain more than one sentence, sometimes setting out lengthy narratives. Also, members have been proposing resolutions that contain more than one sentence, which are not acceptable.

As an example, in a recent notice of motion that was made during this sitting, the first two of the allowed three recitals each contained five separate sentences, and the third recital contained three separate sentences. In effect, that is a notice of motion containing 13 “Whereases.” Also, in that notice of motion the proposed resolution was made up of two sentences, not a single sentence.

All that being said, I recognize that as a relatively newly-elected group of members of this House, it takes time for all of us, members and staff, to adapt to unfamiliar sets of sometimes-complicated Parliamentary rules and practices respecting things like notices of motion.

Accordingly, I’ll have the Chief Clerk circulate a procedural note on the proper form of notices of motion so that all honourable members are apprised of our duties about them. I hope this information will be circulated to all caucus staff who assist members in the formulation of notices of motion.

I am pleased with the co-operation received by the Chair to date in navigating these matters, and I look forward to the continuing co-operation and feedback of all members. So there you go. You have a couple of minutes to edit your notices of motion.

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1315

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I guess I’ll be the test case. Thank you for your ruling. I instantly altered my resolution to comply as best I could in the last 30 seconds.

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

Whereas today marks 99 years since the start of the Armenian Genocide; and

Whereas Armenian people around the world mark this day by remembering the more than one million people who were victims of mass murder and horrific ethnic cleansing; and

Whereas the Armenian people were subjected to forced deportation, expropriation, abduction, torture, and starvation;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House remember all those who were needlessly killed, so that today will serve as a reminder that we must do all we can to protect freedom and eradicate prejudice and intolerance at home and around the world.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

RESOLUTION NO. 1316

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

Whereas the fire that destroyed the Northern Yacht Club in April 2004 was a devastating blow for the local community and club members, but a new yacht club was built there and there have been 10 years of growth and improvement; and

Whereas in addition to being the place where many families have learned how to sail, the new club served as a social hub of the Northside offering ability sailing, junior sailing, and adult sailing programs, and is the home for the local sea cadets; and

Whereas the new club has 155 members and hosts national and international sailing competitions and is continually expanding its infrastructure;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Northern Yacht Club for growing and improving, even after the devastating fire.

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. 1317

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

Whereas MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects Limited have been providing outstanding architectural and interior design services on cultural, academic, and residential projects in Halifax and around the world for almost 30 years; and

Whereas MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects Limited partners have been contributing to architectural education both in Halifax and elsewhere; and

Whereas MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects Limited received the 2014 Architectural Firm Award from the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects Limited for their exceptional design services over many years and express its appreciation of the value this local business provides to its community and the 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 Timberlea-Prospect.

RESOLUTION NO. 1318

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

Whereas D & Jo's Country Market located at 1812 St. Margarets Bay Road in Timberlea has been in business serving the Beechville Lakeside Timberlea area for the past five years; and

Whereas D & Jo's Country Market is the only retail business offering fresh produce to the area residents; and

Whereas D & Jo's Country Market sells a variety of locally made baked goods, organic coffee, and recently added fresh pizzas to their menu;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly give special recognition to D & Jo's Country Market, and wish them 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 Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1319

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

Whereas Nathan MacNeil and Sarah Arbuckle have opened Iron Salon on Granville Street in Halifax; and

Whereas Nathan has received international recognition from Oribe Hair Care as a finalist in their "Hair Imitates Art" contest; and

Whereas Sarah and Nathan define excellence in their creative abilities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge these two young Nova Scotian entrepreneurs for showcasing their talents and contributing positively to the Nova Scotia economy.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 1320

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

Whereas the students and staff of Clayton Park Junior High successfully hosted a multicultural day on Thursday, April 17, 2014; and

Whereas the event was designed to celebrate the school's diversity and multiculturalism and to showcase the students' many talents through unique performances and exhibits; and

Whereas the event promoted community inclusion and respect for all members of the community;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Clayton Park Junior High for their efforts to increase community support for their members through the Multicultural Day's activities.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 1321

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

Whereas Captain Richard D. Smith of Windsor retired on April 16, 2014 after 35 years of service with the Department of Fisheries Canadian Coast Guard; and

Whereas during his years with the Coast Guard, Richard received several awards such as the Department of Fisheries Deputy Minister Commendation, DFO Regional Citation For Excellence, and most recently a Diamond Jubilee medal; and

Whereas Richard joined the Windsor Fire Department in 1991, serving as a volunteer firefighter for the past 23 years where he also holds several committee chair positions, teaches the water rescue course, and was recognized for writing a book on the history of the local fire department;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Richard Smith on his many achievements and wish him all the best on his well-deserved retirement.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture on an introduction.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: In the east gallery I'd like to recognize Raymond Tynes, he's a well-known councillor in the Truro area and is our manager at the race track in Truro at the present time, and I would ask the Legislature to give him a warm welcome to the House. I'm pleased to see him here today. (Applause)

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1322

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

Whereas each year communities across Canada celebrate National Volunteer Week to thank and honour people who donate their time and help others by supporting the causes in which they believe; and

Whereas on April 7, 2014, Mr. Donald Dunbar from the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's was honoured at the 40th Annual Provincial Volunteer Awards Ceremony; and

Whereas through the sharing of his time and talents he has not only made tremendous contributions through his community but to the Province of Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize and thank Mr. Donald Dunbar for his dedication to his community and the Province 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 member for Pictou East.

RESOLUTION NO. 1323

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

Whereas the Thorburn Peewee B Golden Hawks team captured bronze medals in the provincial championships; and

Whereas the team advanced to the finals when Hockey Nova Scotia had to use the goals for and against to decide who would be in the finals; and

Whereas my buddy Adam MacDonald was named as one of two tournament all-stars, and my other buddy Aaren Macdonald took home top honours in the showdown shoot-out;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate these young athletes on their abilities and their 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 Chester-St. Margaret's.

RESOLUTION NO. 1324

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

Whereas the time, energy and talent volunteers contribute to help fulfill the mission of the organizations they serve comes in a variety of roles and their communities come to depend on their willingness to help; and

Whereas Rachel Nauss is just such a volunteer who contributes regularly to her community and the organizations she belongs to, and is known as someone willing to go the extra mile to serve, fundraise and help wherever it is needed; and

Whereas Rachel Nauss is a youth volunteer, a Grade 9 student at Chester Area Middle School and already an example of the spirit and importance of volunteering;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud Rachel Nauss for her volunteer contributions, for demonstrating commitment and most of all for being an example in 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 Hants East.

RESOLUTION NO. 1325

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

Whereas K&A Taxi Ltd. of Elmsdale, Nova Scotia, has recently been established and provides safe and reliable transportation services to the residents of East Hants; and

Whereas small businesses are the foundation of Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the owners of K&A Taxi, Marc Bragg and daughter Melinda Tibbo of Enfield, Nova Scotia, have made a significant investment in the viability and livability of rural Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Marc Bragg and Melinda Tibbo and their staff, and thank them for the services they provide to residents of East Hants and surrounding areas.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings North.

RESOLUTION NO. 1326

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 Booker School is an independent non-profit school funded by parents which emphasizes an inquiry-based method of learning in a supportive and caring environment; and

Whereas the Booker School is built on integrity and respect and is focused on developing the individual to take his or her place as a knowledgeable and ethical citizen in a complex and rapidly changing world; and

Whereas the Booker School has made its official home on Belcher Street in the Village of Port Williams;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Booker School for its innovation in serving the municipality as a community resource and offer their best wishes for its continued growth and 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 Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River.

RESOLUTION NO. 1327

MS. LENORE ZANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'll see how I do today with the rules and regulations around resolutions.

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

Whereas Beta Sigma Phi, a not-for-profit international organization started in 1937 in Kansas, holds six chapters, with over 60 members in Truro, Colchester County; and

Whereas Beta Sigma Phi is an exemplary group of women who for over 50 years have provided support and growth for their members and communities by fundraising and volunteering their time to numerous organizations; and

Whereas today - April 24, 2014 - marks the 50th annual celebration of the Beta Sigma Phi organization in Truro, Colchester County;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly commend all the women of the Beta Sigma Phi organization of Truro and thank them for their support, tireless efforts, and contributions to their community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

RESOLUTION NO. 1328

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

Whereas on April 5th the Baddeck Valley 4-H Association held their annual county Public Speaking Rally, where 11 awards were given out to seven individuals; and

Whereas through their individual performances, Donelle Campbell Mackinnon, Maggie Berk, Mitchell Mackinnon, Chloe Knickle, Daniel Norman, Bryan Berk, and Robert Berk each displayed their great talent in public speaking; and

Whereas each of these award recipients will go on to compete at the regional level in the categories for which they have received their awards;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize the continued hard work and talent of those individuals and wish them luck in future competitions.

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. 1329

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

Whereas artist Carolyn Vienneau of Pictou is organizing an art show from April 27th until the end of May at the Celtic Circle in New Glasgow called Be the Change, which will focus on cyberbullying; and

Whereas the show will feature local professional artists, as well as youth artists, and is intended to bring awareness about the consequences of cyberbullying and also to showcase the help available to victims; and

Whereas Ms. Vienneau wants to help create dialogue and conversation on the one-year anniversary of the death of her grandniece, Rehtaeh Parsons;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Ms. Carolyn Vienneau for her efforts to bring awareness to this serious issue of cyberbullying.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

RESOLUTION NO. 1330

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

Whereas Composites Atlantic Limited has earned a reputation as a leader in the design, development, and manufacturing of advanced composites for the aeronautics, space, and defence industries; and

Whereas Composites Atlantic Limited, a national and international competitor, has been present in Lunenburg since 1993, employing over 370 personnel and serving as a model corporate citizen; and

Whereas the year 2013 recognized the company as having served 20 years in the community of Lunenburg;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Composites Atlantic Limited on celebrating this partnership and milestone.

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. 1331

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

Whereas New Glasgow native Callee Luddington has been recently chosen by Saint Mary's University to represent them as their Bicentennial Student; and

Whereas Norway is celebrating the anniversary of their constitution and has reached out to universities internationally; and

Whereas Callee has chosen to write her thesis on environmental and educational policies of Norway and Sweden, and she has been chosen to complete a part of her research in Norway on full scholarship from Saint Mary's University as their bicentennial student representative;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Callee Luddington, one of our Pages here in the House, for her unwavering work ethic, maintaining academic excellence at Saint Mary's University, which has put her in the forefront of her studies and made her a worthy representative of Saint Mary's in Norway in 2015.

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. (Standing Ovation)

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

RESOLUTION NO. 1332

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

Whereas Pat and Myrtle Naugle are long outstanding residents of Eastern Passage, Nova Scotia, who wholeheartedly give many, many hours of their own time to help others in need; and

Whereas for the past seven years, they voluntarily operated a community taxi for the residents of Eastern Passage and Cow Bay; and

Whereas the taxi is available for anyone who needs a drive to the bank, medical or dental appointments, groceries, at no set rate and by donations only, making the citizens of Eastern Passage and Cow Bay feel truly blessed from their overwhelming generous nature;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Pat and Myrtle Naugle for their generosity, and wish them safe travels and continued support with this wonderful community service.

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. 1333

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

Whereas Vernon MacIntosh, a resident of Hopewell in beautiful Pictou East, attended the Boston Marathon last year; and

Whereas Vernon was within 50 feet of the second bomb; and

Whereas all of the trauma and devastation around him was overshadowed by the swiftness of the responders, the generosity and support of the people of Boston;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Vernon for returning this year at age 68 and running the Boston Marathon as a memorial run.

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 Labour and Advanced Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 1334

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

Whereas Bedford-based Clearwater Seafoods is dedicated to wild and sustainable seafood excellence, a value that resonates with seafood lovers across the globe; and

Whereas Clearwater has successfully created a truly vertically integrated and global harvesting, processing, marketing, sales and distribution operation, 85 per cent of which consists of exports outside Canada and 65 per cent outside North America, bringing Nova Scotia “ocean” to international “plate”; and

Whereas Clearwater Seafoods was awarded Gold as the Halifax Chamber of Commerce Halifax Business Awards 2014 International Business of the Year;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Clearwater Seafoods, its management and staff, for outstanding achievement and continuing success as a premier Nova Scotia company that supplies the world with our best wild sustainable seafood.

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. 1335

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

Whereas North Sydney native and former MP for Kingston and the Islands, Flora MacDonald, commemorated the very first Earth Day Week with a ceremonial tree planting in 1980; and

Whereas Ms. MacDonald had a very successful career in government, with many prestigious awards such as the Order of Canada, the Order of Nova Scotia, the Order of Ontario and the Pearson Medal of Peace; and

Whereas Earth Day is now celebrated on April 22nd and is the largest environmental event in the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Flora MacDonald for her efforts to bring Earth Day to Canada.

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 12:41 p.m., we will conclude at 1:41 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: GAS PRICES - TAXES

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Gas prices are likely to hit an all-time high later this week. As all Nova Scotians are painfully aware, 25.5 cents of every litre that they buy goes to taxes to the government, plus, on top of that, they pay another 15 per cent HST. That is an immoral tax on tax that must stop.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party in their 2009 platform actually pledged, and I will quote, "There should be lower. . . gas taxes. . . There should be no more 'nickel and diming' Nova Scotians for basic government services." I'll table that.

I'd like to ask the Premier why the government is continuing to nickel and dime Nova Scotians with the tax on tax on gas, now that they have a chance to actually do something about it?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party for the question. This has been an issue not only for this province but indeed across the country. As he would know, the actual base price is set; gold markets. The thing that the province can deal with obviously is taxation.

We've talked about tax on tax, which we believe, quite frankly, is fair. We need to obviously talk to the other Atlantic Provinces with HST - to be part of opening up that to allow the fact that we can de-couple those taxes to give the consumer a break.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the price of gasoline goes up and up and the tax on tax goes right up with it. It is a double-dipping by the government into the wallets of every Nova Scotian, at a time when they can't afford to pay more.

Just last September, speaking about the tax on tax, the Premier said, "Nova Scotians pay a tax on a tax every time we fill up - it's unfair, it's unnecessary and it adds four cents per litre to the price of gas." That is exactly true, Mr. Speaker.

It's also true that the Government of Nova Scotia needs to work with Ottawa to change the HST agreement to get that tax on tax off our gas, Mr. Speaker. The Premier knows that because in the same article that I'm quoting, he actually asked if the Dexter Government had ever made the request for Ottawa to get rid of this immoral tax on tax.

I'd like to ask the Premier if he still believes what he said just a few months ago, has he or any member of his government contacted Ottawa to get rid of the tax on tax on gasoline?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to tell members of this House the fact that I very much enjoy continuing to build a positive relationship with Ottawa through Minister MacKay. We've talked about a whole host of issues. The Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party may not be aware that in May I'll be meeting with the Atlantic Premiers. As he knows, the HST is in a number of our provinces, requires a number of Premiers to actually look for the opening up of the HST agreement. It will be one of the parts of the conversations that I have with the Atlantic Premiers.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I'll take that answer to be "no", after six month in office on such an immoral tax. I'll just to say to the Premier, if he wants to build a positive relationship with the people of Nova Scotia, he should actually stand up for them and do what he said he would do during the election and get rid of that tax on tax on gasoline because it's wrong and it is immoral.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier once said, and I will quote, the tax on tax is "costing you, me and every other Nova Scotian millions of dollars for a system that inflates the price of gas. . ." That's very true and now we are about to see the highest gas prices in our country's history and in our province's history.

I'd like to ask the Premier why he sits by as the tax on tax is costing you, me and every other Nova Scotian millions of dollars.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, like all Nova Scotians, I believe the price of gas is too high but I want to correct the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, it is not the highest, I will remind him that under the Progressive Conservative Party gas prices were actually higher at one point. Not that anyone should take consolation in that, we're going to continue to do what I said, which is to begin to ensure that we work with our neighbouring provinces to look at ensuring we can decouple the HST from charging it off the motive fuel tax.

I would also remind the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party the last time the motive fuel tax was increased in this province was under a Progressive Conservative Party.

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

PREM. - GAS PRICES: INCREASES - RESPONSE

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. CBC and other media outlets are reporting that gas prices may hit an all-time high in Nova Scotia this week and experts are predicting that prices in Halifax could exceed the record high level of \$1.45 a litre and gas in Cape Breton is already selling at close to \$1.47 a litre. My question to the Premier is, what is he proposing to do to help Nova Scotians deal with these extraordinarily high gas prices?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question and inform her, as I said to the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, we will work with my Atlantic colleagues to ensure that we put a united effort hopefully to work with our federal government so that we can move to decoupling the tax on tax so that we can provide some relief to Nova Scotians.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, in 2007, when the Premier sat as an Opposition member of this House, he made a lot of promises to help Nova Scotians deal with the cost of gas prices. He promised to reduce the gas tax by more than 5 cents a litre, and I will table that. My question to the Premier is, what steps is he going to take to help Nova Scotians now?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the honourable member since 2009 the New Democratic Party spent four years in power in this province and drove us into debt. This government is actually going to move our province towards a balanced budget to provide relief for Nova Scotians and job creation, making sure more Nova Scotians get an opportunity to work here in this province.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the Premier made many commitments and raised many expectations around what he would do when he had an opportunity to assist people in this province deal with high gas prices. In fact, in 2009 the Premier promised, "One of the first things I'll do is scrap gas regulation, we'll reduce the motor fuel tax to one cent a litre over a four year mandate." I'll table that.

The Premier has been the Premier for six months and we've seen no movement whatsoever on this file. My question is, now that the Premier has had an opportunity to deliver on his promise to help Nova Scotians at the pump, why won't he help them?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the first thing we did was remove the NDP electricity tax off every power bill in this province. Again, come January 1st it will drive down power rates (Interruptions)

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

THE PREMIER: Come January 1st we'll be driving down power rates and we'll continue to make sure that we deal with the issue of gas prices in this province.

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

PREM. - WEST-EAST PIPELINE: N.S. - INCLUSION

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Another way to help Nova Scotians with the sky-high price of gasoline is to get to work on the west-east pipeline which all Canadians now see as a way to get Alberta oil unrefined to Atlantic markets and beyond across to Europe. In fact, that very pipeline is before the National Energy Board today starting the regulatory approval process. We know when we read the local newspapers that the Premier of New Brunswick is working very hard to make sure that pipeline gets to Saint John, New Brunswick, which will benefit all New Brunswickers. But we have seen no action from the Premier of Nova Scotia to try to extend it here to our province, despite the strong business case to do so and the benefits it would bring to Nova Scotia.

I would like to ask the Premier, could he list for us what steps he personally has taken to see that the west-to-east pipeline also comes to Nova Scotia, like the New Brunswick Premier is doing?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I've continued to talk to the federal government to ensure that the pipeline ends up coming through Nova Scotia, but I will assure this member that the one thing I won't do with every conversation I have with my political colleagues across this province is run to the media outlets so I can put it in the paper to gain political points. This is about doing what's right for Nova Scotia, and that's what this government is doing. (Applause)

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, I have no idea what the Premier is talking about, other than to say that it's interesting that Question Period reveals these secret discussions he's having with the Government of Canada - which, after all, is what the purpose of Question Period is.

It is funny how times change. In Opposition, the Premier accused the NDP Premier at the time of being followers instead of leaders on issues like the west-to-east pipeline. He's revealing to us his secret discussions that are going on, and that's certainly good news.

I'd like to ask him, will he actually share with Nova Scotians how he is being a leader on getting that oil flowing into Nova Scotia, like the Premier of New Brunswick, who is quite openly telling the people of New Brunswick how he is working for them?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the honourable member that Nova Scotians voted last October. The people of New Brunswick are voting next November. That conversation would be more about political theatre than it is about real results.

MR. BAILLIE: What this whole discussion is actually about is having a government for once that when they campaign and make promises they actually do what they say when they get in. Unfortunately, the last time we saw a Liberal Party keep one of its promises, I had a full head of hair. I had to go to the barber once a week, and look at me now, Mr. Speaker. That's what happens after sitting across from that Premier and this government for six months waiting for something to actually change.

That pipeline would be better for our environment, it would create real jobs, and it would help bring down the sky-high price of gas. Will the Premier commit to this House that he will do all it takes, like the Premier of New Brunswick is doing for his province, to extend that west-east pipeline into Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the Minister of Energy to respond.

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, it's a shame that the Leader of the Official Opposition selectively reads news articles, because as was widely reported, the Premier asked me to go to Alberta and meet with both the Alberta Government and the proponents of the Energy East Pipeline in February, and we did that. We've had ongoing discussions both with them and with NewStar in supporting NewStar's application. That is widely known in the province and in the industry. I suggest the Leader of the Official Opposition get better researchers.

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

ENVIRON.: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS - CLARIFICATION

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a question of the Minister of Environment regarding the environmental assessment process. Earlier today I submitted a petition from residents of Colchester County who are concerned about wind turbines, and these are wind turbines that have already been approved for the Greenfield area. The petition is signed by those who will be living in the vicinity of this project, which received approval from the minister earlier this year.

In light of the petition, I'm going to ask, what weight were the concerns of these citizens given when the minister approved the Greenfield Wind Project?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I guess a couple of things, just to clarify. The petition that was put forward at the start of the session today was actually directed toward the Minister of Energy and related to the COMFIT process, which falls outside of my purview of responsibility.

With respect to the actual question that has been put forward about the environmental assessment process, I'm happy to clarify that process. Essentially, through the environmental assessment process there is a requirement for consultation, where the proponents advertise and promote the proposed activity and provide a period of time for people to provide input. That is all submitted as part of the total package that is evaluated by myself and staff to make a decision based upon that information.

MR. HARRISON: I've been involved with this for a number of months now and my concern was then, and still is, the level of consultation that this project has had with the community. Their concerns include potential effects that this project may have on wildlife and nearby residents.

Health Canada has been conducting a study into the impacts of wind turbines on nearby residents. This study is expected to be released later this year. Will the minister review this study once it is released and consider modifying the province's requirements for wind projects?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member opposite for raising some very good questions around this process, because there are a number of people who ask questions like this on various environmental projects across the province.

With respect to the decision-making process and that particular study that is ongoing with Health Canada, I want to assure all members of this House, all members of the public across Nova Scotia, that through the environmental assessment process for windmills and other activities, we do, as a department, engage Health Canada. They are given an opportunity to review the proposed project and provide any concerns that they may have. At no point has that department raised any flags with the ongoing proposals that

we've been approving in this province, even while their own study is ongoing. At no point did they ask us to consider putting a moratorium or considering any concerns that they have with health effects in that regard.

With respect to when that study comes out, by all means, as any study would affect environmental decisions being made in this province, the Department of Environment does, on an ongoing basis, stay up to date. That study would be one of many that we review on an ongoing basis.

MR. HARRISON: I do appreciate that information, Mr. Speaker. I also appreciate what this community of residents has already gone through in the last number of months. They feel that their concerns regarding the project were not adequately addressed.

I guess I'm going to ask the minister, would he be willing to meet, either now or at a future time, with these residents to hear their concerns in person?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, by all means. I don't think I've turned down a request by concerned citizens to meet with me on a wide variety of issues. It's just really a matter of scheduling the time to meet with them and have those discussions. I'm sure we can schedule something in.

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

**PREM.: INVEST N.S. BD.
- LENDING STANDARDS/COLLECTION PRACTICES**

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, again my question through you is to the Premier. Yesterday, with the announcement of the Invest Nova Scotia Board, Nova Scotians learned of yet another broken Liberal promise. Prior to the election, the Premier advertised that his government would turn away companies looking for assistance and send them to a bank. A Liberal Government would be the lender of last resort, the Premier said.

But as of yesterday, we found out that the Liberal Government is more than happy to help private companies with a variety of incentives, which will include free land, capital investments, tax rebates, payroll rebates and, according to the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, even something similar to a grant, called a "contribution".

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is, given that his government is now providing incentives and contributions to private companies, what are the lending standards and collection practices being placed on the Liberal Invest Nova Scotia Board?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the honourable member and all Nova Scotians that any decision made when it comes to lending money in this province will be put through a business lens. It will be arm's length from Cabinet. I want to assure all Nova Scotians that the way money had been thrown around by the previous government has stopped.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, Invest Nova Scotia is a far cry from what the current Premier called for. At the time, in 2010 for example, and I'll table, the Leader of the Opposition said, "Politics has no place in the loan business," and that all government investments would be controlled by Nova Scotia Business Inc. I'll table that.

But today, in 2014, with the creation of Invest Nova Scotia, the Premier has given a small group of Liberal Cabinet Ministers the final say in the loan business. One could even argue, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier has taken the loan business from ERDT and moved it to One Government Place.

So my question to the Premier is, why did he choose to break his pledge from 2010 to hand control of the Jobs Fund over to Nova Scotia Business Inc.?

THE PREMIER: I want to remind and assure the honourable member that not only have we taken the politics out of lending in this province, we've actually put it in the hands of business people. Recently, we announced an increase to small business with the credit union, Mr. Speaker, which means the province will cover 90 per cent of that lending. It was a program that had been put in place for some period of time. It had huge success. It was actually the credit union that was actually reviewing the business plans, making sure that it was being done on sound business principles.

What we have done and put in place is to ensure that we've provided a cover so that credit unions across this province, regardless of size, will be able to participate in that program. Huge success for employment - it hits every community across this province. What we have done in and around Invest Nova Scotia is put together an arm's-length body of business people who are making business decisions. One of the issues that we've heard from businesses from across this province is that NSBI really deals with large corporations. What we've put in place is something that will deal with small business owners across this province and will help the economy grow in every community.

Let me assure the honourable member that it will be made on business case, not on the political lens that that government put it on.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I've had the privilege of serving on boards of credit unions throughout my career. They're a fine institution, as the Leader of the Official Opposition could attest to. We all love the credit union. But really, I'm not sure what that has to do with the political control that exists in that Cabinet over the Invest Nova Scotia fund.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to give the Premier some credit for being forthright yesterday with Nova Scotians when I asked why Liberal Cabinet Ministers would still be involved in making investment decisions to private companies. The Premier responded - and I'll table the Hansard - "This fund is no different." He went on to say, "... at the end of the day the government is paying the bills."

My very final question for the Premier is (Interruptions) I think I've hit a nerve, Mr. Speaker. My very final question for the Premier is, prior to the election, the Premier told Nova Scotians a Liberal Government wouldn't be paying bills for private companies. Why did the Premier change his mind?

THE PREMIER: I think if the Leader of the New Democratic Party was actually being forthright, she would actually identify that what we said is that the model that Invest Nova Scotia is based on is the NSBI model, Mr. Speaker, which quite frankly allows arm's-length business people to make the decisions.

She would know, as a member who sat in Cabinet, NSBI decisions above a certain amount arrive back at the Cabinet Table. Most Nova Scotians were surprised to know that, but that's the reality of what happens, because at the end of the day it is the government that pays the bill.

MR. SPEAKER: I'd just like to remind the Premier before we continue that to indicate that the honourable member across the floor is not being forthright is somewhat unparliamentary.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, let me apologize to this House and retract that comment.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The honourable member for Pictou West.

**PREM. - *BLUENOSE II*: TAXPAYERS/TOURISM OPERATORS
- INFO. PROVIDE**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage about the Lunenburg member's involvement in the *Bluenose II* restoration file. Before the minister could respond, the Premier was on his feet dancing around the question and relying on empty, angry rhetoric. Nova Scotians were still left with unanswered questions.

If the Premier is going to muzzle his ministers, will he at least provide taxpayers and tourism operators with the answers they deserve himself?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, absolutely. It's why we've invested heavily ensuring the Yarmouth ferry is in place to ensure we grow the tourism operations across this province.

I want to assure the honourable member across the floor that the member for Lunenburg has not only been on this file with the minister, she's been in the Premier's office. Let me tell you, the people of Lunenburg appreciate the hard work she's doing because she has been forthright and honest with the people of Lunenburg.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious issue for South Shore residents and businesses. The economy of the region has already been crippled at the hands of the previous government, and the Liberals. By refusing to answer questions about the *Bluenose II* it is leaving everyone in limbo. At a time when Nova Scotians are seeking leadership the Premier resorted to empty, angry rhetoric. Will the Premier apologize to the tourism operators and taxpayers for his angry outburst and give them the answers they deserve?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the honourable member while the former government may have actually made it worse, it was that government that created the problem in the first place. As I said yesterday, we will fix the problem.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier's angry outburst yesterday suggests one of two things must be true. Either the Liberals have completely lost control of the *Bluenose II* file, or they intentionally are keeping Nova Scotians in the dark. Either way, Nova Scotians are tired of the political gamesmanship and empty, angry rhetoric from the Premier and his government.

So which is it - is the Premier going to explain why he's been hiding the facts or is he ready to admit that when it comes to the *Bluenose II* he's completely lost at sea?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we brought in the Auditor General to deal with the issue of the problem that was caused by the Progressive Conservative Party and made worse by the New Democratic Party. I want to remind all members of this House, the member for Lunenburg has always stood up and been forthright not only with her constituents and the people of this province. The member for Pictou West who is asking this question, on one hand talks about cleaning up Boat Harbour, doesn't do anything about the mill, wanting it on both sides (Interruptions) Let me tell you, when you talk about being honest with your constituents . . .

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

THE PREMIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to assure all members of this House that the *Bluenose* issue that was begun by the Progressive Conservative Party and caused by the NDP will be solved by the Liberal Party.

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

EECD - SCH. PROTECTION/ADVOCACY: PARENTS/MLAs - PROCESS

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Yesterday the minister was quoted as saying that she expects every member in this Legislature will advocate for their own schools and for their own community, but that she will not interfere with the process; that is not the responsibility of the department.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, if parents and MLAs want to advocate for the protection of their small schools, how should they do so and to whom?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge that the member did hear correctly when I made my statement yesterday. I would expect every MLA to advocate for the schools in the communities where they are the MLA. She also did hear correctly that it is not the minister's policy. It is a school board policy, and I will not interfere with the school board's policy.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the minister for her answer. The position the minister just took doesn't seem to square with the actions of the member for Antigonish prior to last Fall's election. The now-Minister of Environment has stated publicly that he has very little faith in school boards' abilities to make these kinds of decisions. In fact, an organization he represented took the Strait Regional School Board to court when they were going through their school review process.

Therefore, my question to the minister is, when did the Minister of Environment meet with the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to discuss his animated position on school board involvement, and what was it about his arguments that she found so unconvincing?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I have no idea what the question is, but I will provide some information. Just for the member's information, the situation that she spoke of was not taking the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to court. It was actually taking the school board to court.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, this is a CBC news posting of December 1, 2010, and it would be the Minister of Environment as a spokesman for the Save Community Schools group. It says, "The board was using misleading and erroneous information when it was trying to justify closing a number of schools in the district."

Obviously, the ministers haven't spoken at all of this issue. Prior to the election, the now-Minister of Environment was so passionate about his opposition to school board involvement in these decisions that he launched a lawsuit against the board, encouraged

everyone to write to the Premier, and berated board officials to the point where he was even asked to leave a meeting. I can table these documents.

My question to the minister is, has the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development schooled the Minister of Environment on how the position of his Liberal Government will be the exact opposite of what he advocated for prior to being elected? Will he now be using her speaking notes at future school board meetings?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, another amusing statement, I guess. But I would, in response to the member, remind her that in 2010 there was another Minister of Education and another Party in power. Perhaps any concerns that she now has about what happened in 2010 should have been addressed then. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

FIN. & TREASURY BD. - GOV'T. SPENDING: INCREASES - EFFECTS

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. While in Opposition, the new government was quick to lash out at the mistakes the old government was making, especially around the HST increase. But now, in government, those lashings have become excuses.

Nova Scotians were expecting an HST cut. Families were hoping the cut would help them make ends meet, and businesses were hoping it would help them increase sales and ease pressures on cash flow. Promised tax relief when the budget is balanced - after the incredible increase in spending that we've seen in the budget tabled just a couple of short weeks ago, Nova Scotians are now worried that they are saddled with the same reckless spending that they saw under the NDP.

My question for the minister today is, why is the government willing to continue to increase government spending instead of helping families and businesses?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the honourable member. First of all, during the last election that was held only six months ago, the Liberal Party was very honest in its approach in saying exactly what we could not afford. That was done in the face of both other Parties promising reductions, which are frankly not affordable, given the frank and honest assessment that we saw in the budget that was presented here earlier this month. Thank you.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I hardly think a one-hour Question Period is long enough to get into the promises of what were made to Nova Scotians during the campaign and what we are seeing delivered now. What I will say is that while in Opposition, the now-Premier said that the NDP HST increase was taking the easy way out. I'll table that for the benefit of the House.

The now-Premier also said, quite frankly that they, the NDP, picked the easy one, raising taxes. I'll table that, that's two separate quotes and there are many more. It was a complete theme of the now government, while they were in Opposition.

My question today to the minister is, what has changed? Why is the Liberal Government now content to take the easy way out?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, as a new government and certainly as a new Finance and Treasury Board Minister, we looked at the sources of revenue that this province has, and we looked at the tremendous needs that we have, and we looked at the lower economy that we've seen over the last four years, which has resulted in the deficit that was in place for both last year and this year. We certainly have been honest with Nova Scotians in saying we cannot afford to lose the revenue that comes from the HST or from other taxes at this time.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, obviously governing is about establishing priorities. It certainly seems to be a priority of this government to not worry about the revenue side of it and just jack up the expenses as high as they can because as we've seen, \$400 million in new spending.

The CFIB Business Barometer was released just earlier today, and I'll table that document. (Interruptions) Some advice from the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, which I always appreciate, apparently we are now going to try to debate whether the spending of the government has increased this year or not. We might as well get back to our discussion of whether there will be more bureaucrats this year.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

MR. HOUSTON: The member has a question. The CFIB Business Barometer was released earlier today, for April. Nova Scotia business confidence is now 8.8 points below the national average and second lowest in the country. Under the category of major cost constraints, 56 per cent of Nova Scotians' businesses responded that taxes and regulatory costs are a major cost constraint.

The past government stalled economic growth and now the current government seems quite content to continue in their footsteps. My anxiously awaited question for the minister is, with the abundance of information showing our stalled economy, why is your government continuing with the status quo?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to talk about taxes and the regulatory environment here in Nova Scotia. As members of the House are aware, we have instituted and begun a tax review. It started in February and it will wrap up this Fall. The information from that is coming from the business community. We're getting

feedback from individuals. We're talking to academics, to economists, to people across the province.

That information is going to very much point to regulatory burdens that we can change and also to taxes that people find most troublesome, particularly the business community because the aim of the review is to try to stimulate business activity and growth and job creation.

I have a lot of faith in that process and I hope that the member will participate. Thank you.

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

**FIN. & TREASURY BD. - GRAD. TAX CREDIT:
MIN. COMMENTS - OPPOSITION/GOV'T.**

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. In 2007 the current Minister of Finance spoke favourably, in Opposition, about the Progressive Conservatives' decision to expand the post-secondary Graduate Tax Credit. The minister said, "There are a number of initiatives, which we support in the budget and have advocated strongly for. One of them has been the post-secondary graduate tax credit . . ." - I'll table that.

My question is, why does the minister think it's okay to tell post-secondary students one thing in Opposition and something entirely different when in government?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, to the honourable member, the date she is referring to is 2007. I think it is interesting to note that in the election of 2006, a similar program - a graduate type of tax credit - was proposed in the Liberal platform.

By 2009, it was no longer in our platform, because the evidence was rolling in from other provinces that it didn't work, and also because other groups, like the student groups, even back in 2009 were writing and saying they didn't believe it worked. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the minister to table all of that information that has been rolling in from other provinces, because additionally in Opposition, the minister acknowledged that in order to retain graduates, Nova Scotia needed to be competitive. She said this about the Graduate Tax Credit, ". . . other places are offering it and we need to be competitive . . ."

Mr. Speaker, indeed, other provinces continue to offer this credit. Manitoba, New Brunswick, and Saskatchewan have this type of incentive in place.

My question to the minister is, why does she think Nova Scotia no longer needs to compete to be an attractive place for graduates to live, given the evidence of the Ivany report?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, in fact, when we review a program and you see that it doesn't work, it's our responsibility, as it was the previous government's responsibility, to review programs and to look and see whether they are effective. When they're not, it's our responsibility to Nova Scotia taxpayers to do the right thing and to change and do something different. That's exactly what we're going to do.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, two-thirds of those who used the Graduate Retention Rebate in Nova Scotia were young graduates between the ages of 20 and 29. Approximately 50,000 post-secondary students attend institutions in Nova Scotia each year. The second-highest number of students in Nova Scotia from out of province come here from New Brunswick, where they offer a \$20,000 rebate credit to graduates who live there.

Mr. Speaker, my question is, how can the minister think that the elimination of the Graduate Retention Rebate won't impact the decision of students from New Brunswick to return to New Brunswick and not remain in Nova Scotia?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, the biggest question that all of the parents I've spoken to and young people whom I've engaged with - not just in the last few months as the pre-budget tour went underway, but for years - the question has been, how can the young people in my family get that first job?

That's what we're going to address. A tax credit addresses the need for people to be rewarded when they have the job. We want people to get that job, to be able to stay in our province, to contribute for years to come. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - LYME DISEASE:
COLE HBR.-EAST. PASSAGE - ASSISTANCE**

MS. JOYCE TREEN: Mr. Speaker, I've been contacted by the people in my riding of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage who suffer terribly from Lyme disease and the pain it inflicts on them. I realize there are ongoing initiatives with the government to try to address this awful disease, but more needs to be done.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, what can the people of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage expect from this government in the future to ease the burden of this disease and provide them with the care they need?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to respond to the member, and really to all Nova Scotians. Lyme disease has become a top-of-mind issue for more and more Nova Scotians. We now have six areas that are identified as the hot spots where the blacklegged tick habitat has a greater concentration and, therefore, the possibilities of contracting Lyme disease.

I think what the department has been able to do in conjunction with Doctors Nova Scotia is to inform doctors to provide a greater degree of education on identification when Lyme disease is evident, but more important, I think, are the programs to make Nova Scotians aware of the precautions that they can take. Again, on the website and through pamphlets and posters to still go out and enjoy the outdoors but by taking a number of very simple steps they can reduce the possibility of a tick bite and that's the important measures.

At the current time we are improving research at the IWK to make sure when Lyme disease is contracted we're able to do the double testing procedure to quickly confirm Lyme disease and to give the appropriate treatments.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**EECD - CHIGNECTO-CENTRAL SCH. BD.:
SCH. CLOSING MODEL - INCLUSION**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Yesterday the minister unveiled another model for closing schools. It seems, however, that the new process will be cold comfort to parents and students in the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board whose schools are on the chopping block.

My question to the minister is, will the minister assure parents and students at Highland Consolidated Middle School in Westville, East Pictou Middle School in Sutherlands River, and Wentworth school that their schools will have a chance to go through the new process?

HON. KAREN CASEY: It's true that we did introduce Bill No. 63 yesterday. The bill was designed to put in place a new process that will allow communities, school boards, municipalities, parents, school advisory councils, to come together, to trust one another, and to work through a process that will allow school boards to do what is their responsibility and that is to review schools and, if necessary, close schools.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, there is no argument that the school review process was broken and that's why a new process was developed. However, it's not fair that parents, students, and teachers in one region are being forced to live by decisions made in a broken process. My question to the minister is, will the minister immediately direct the

Chignecto-Central Regional School Board to stop moving forward with the former broken system?

MS. CASEY: I stated yesterday, and I will state publicly again today, that this bill is not to reverse decisions that were made by previous boards or under a previous government, but it is a go-forward bill that will allow the schools and the communities to come together in hopefully what will be a trusting relationship that allows the best interest of kids to be part of the decision that's made.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, there is a precedent, as the minister knows well, for a Minister of Education to step in when a school board isn't meeting expectations, and I realize that under normal conditions you would let the process go through. However, it just seems that with the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board that they're not willing to use this new process which I think would be a very fair process. Now is the time to provide parents, students, and teachers at those three schools with the opportunity of a fair chance using this new process.

My question to the minister is, will the minister help the parents, students, and teachers in the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board, in particular those three schools, and insist that the board do the right thing and use this new process?

MS. CASEY: I would suggest to the member and to all members of the House that if they wish to have some decisions that have been made or will be made by school boards that they take their concerns, or encourage their community members and their parents to take those concerns, to where the decision is made - and that is at the school board level.

MS. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

JUSTICE - GUN CRIMES: REDUCTION - DEPT. ASSISTANCE

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Halifax, we learned yesterday in a Statistics Canada report, has the highest rate of gun violence in 2012. I know that the police are doing their part through their Guns and Gang Unit to try to reduce the incidence of gun violence - can the minister share with us if she has a plan to help police and to lower gun crimes in Halifax?

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the honourable member's very serious question, because I've heard many questions being posed to other members that I didn't consider serious. I appreciate this question.

You're exactly right, the numbers are very alarming. We are concerned; gun violence is a very serious issue, and that's why we worked very hard to bring Ceasefire to Halifax - in fact, we launched it two weeks ago. I'm happy to report to all of you, if you

haven't read the papers, and I don't think you had been at the announcement, but it's the first one in Canada.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, it is good to know that there are things that are happening. The report stated that young people between 18 and 24 were accused of firearm-related crime at a higher rate than any other group. I think of mainly young men who are carrying guns and it's startling the violence that our young people are exposed to - it's glamorized in movies and video games.

I guess, as somebody who has grown up in an era where video games were more like cartoon characters, and we see the degree of violence that we're seeing in video games today, no doubt it's having an effect on our young people. Sadly, for some of these young men, carrying a gun makes them feel better about themselves and that is something that needs to be addressed.

My question for the minister: What specific action has the minister taken to prevent young Nova Scotians from getting involved with guns?

MS. DIAB: Mr. Speaker, we've worked very hard to bring Ceasefire to the Halifax area. If we want to reduce gun violence, or any violence, we need to work together as a community. This particular program is one that is community led and that is the very significant feature that this Ceasefire has. I was at the announcement and I saw the many men that you're talking about, and they were so pleased and I actually saw some tears in some mother's, grandmother's and young men's eyes when that announcement was made. We look very forward to seeing it roll out across Halifax and seeing a lot of good things come out of it.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, we look forward to the success of that program. Another thing that the report uncovered was that many law-abiding people who are innocent often come into contact and are affected by gun crimes; in fact the report stated 60 per cent of gun crimes involved people who didn't know the person who committed the crime against them.

So my question: Are there extra tools or resources the minister is providing to HRM Police that will give people here in our capital city confidence that this government is concerned about their welfare and looking out for their safety?

MS. DIAB: Mr. Speaker, to the honourable member, Justice is working very much in co-operation with the police, with the RCMP, and with all stakeholders in the province to very much address that.

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

COM. SERV.: DEPT. REVIEW - EXPECTATIONS

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Community Services. I'm still attempting to get some answers regarding the recent DCS announcement that there will be a review of discretionary funding for non-profit organizations. Since the early 2000s, Mr. Speaker - and I think the minister is probably aware - there have been two previous governments that have reviewed the grants and contributions. Yet we know there will be yet another review.

My question to the minister is, what does the minister expect to find with yet another review of the department's grants and contributions in DCS?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Thank you for the question. The first part of this review is more about putting the house in order at the Department of Community Services, Mr. Speaker. It's about making sure that the scarce resources that are available to non-profits, which do extraordinary work, which isn't done by anybody else in government, are being used to the best that they can be used.

It's also making sure that this review is done timely, in this year, because as per our platform commitment, we will be going to multi-year funding program starting in the next fiscal year, which the non-profit sector has been asking for years for, to help with sustainability and planning in their own program development.

I've been in the non-profit sector previous to being elected for 15 years, and I have never heard of a result of a review. So when I have executive directors come to me and still ask the question, how does the Department of Community Services decide who gets what and what is the evaluation with that - and I, as minister, can't answer it - then I would say those reviews were a colossal failure.

MS. MACDONALD: I thank the minister for her response. I assure her there have been two very comprehensive reviews. As the minister knows, many Department of Community Services organizations are already stretched pretty thin, based on limited resources that they have to manage. As I've said, they've been through multiple reviews.

My question to the minister is this: Is it the minister's intention to review all groups and agencies receiving discretionary funding from her department, or only those she made reference to that had raised a red flag for her?

MS. BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, we'll be doing a review of our practices within the government to make sure that we have good stewardship and that we are providing the outcomes within our department that we need to be accountable to Nova Scotians.

When we're going into a new funding arrangement - which we will be going into next year - for multi-year funding, we want to make sure that all organizations that receive

funding from the Department of Community Services are able to meet the needs of the people they serve, while we're also being accountable and transparent to the people of Nova Scotia.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, well I think we all would agree that we need more transparency and accountability from government. Indeed, organizations that are providing important services need to know what the standards and the expectations are.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table a copy of all the groups and organizations that receive grants and contributions from the Department of Community Services for the year 2013. There is a wide array of groups there that work with people with disabilities, child care centres, women's organizations, organizations that work with children.

I would like to ask the minister if all these groups will have their funding reviewed as part of this process? If not, if it's a smaller group, would she please identify that it is a smaller group and provide us with a list of who that will be, before the end of the session today, Mr. Speaker?

MS. BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I'd actually like to table the letter that went out to all organizations, not just a small group, detailing how we are going to look at a review this year, which will lead us into multi-year funding for the next fiscal.

I would also like to remind the Leader of the Third Party that yesterday, I made a \$2 million investment through our government department to 23 Family Resource Centres which had not seen a bump in funding in over 10 years. They will be receiving \$75,000 annualized from this day forward. I also would like to look at the government platform commitment of \$500,000 investment into transition houses, second-stage housing and also women's centres, which do a lot of the front-line work that help families in crisis and vulnerable Nova Scotians. The commitments that we made in the platform have been fulfilled. There will be more fulfilled in the next coming weeks.

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

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 that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply unto Her Majesty.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

[1:41 p.m. The House resolved itself into CW on Supply with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

[5:56 p.m. CW on Supply rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

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

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, we have two options: we can start late debate right now or we can take a break until 6:00 p.m. I'm not sure if the mover of late debate is prepared to start. (Interruption)

I am informed that the honourable member is prepared to start late debate so, Mr. Speaker, with the consent of the House, I move that we start late debate now and proceed for the time allotted and then return back to Government Business.

MR. SPEAKER: Very good. The moment of interruption has arrived. We'll now proceed with late debate. The Adjournment motion was submitted by the honourable member for Pictou East:

“Therefore be it resolved that the Environment Minister call on his Liberal Cabinet colleagues to commit to a plan for fixing the deplorable condition of the Old Ferry Road in Bayfield before business owners and operators suffer.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

**OLD FERRY RD. (BAYFIELD): ENVIRON. MIN./COLLEAGUES
- REPAIR PLAN**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, winter this year has caused an unusual amount of substantial damage to many roads in various small communities throughout the province. Roads such as the Old Ferry Road in Bayfield are essential to local businesses and fishermen in the area. As Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal officials would know, the Old Ferry Road should have been fixed long ago. The previous government should be held responsible for this. The previous government should be held responsible for the current road conditions of the Old Ferry Road and the rest of the area.

Mr. Speaker, roads like the Old Ferry Road - and there are many of them across the province throughout rural Nova Scotia - are in such a state of disrepair that in some cases Canada Post, garbage trucks, and even school buses are starting to avoid them. I know of many similar roads in my constituency in Pictou East, and I know that the other members here will have similar roads in their own constituencies as well.

When you get into a situation where a road gets into such a bad state of repair, in the state of disrepair there become legitimate concerns in the community that maybe emergency medical services won't be able to reach the area. In some areas, like I believe in the Old Ferry Road, there are local residents who are battling chronic conditions, so this is a concern for Nova Scotians. At the end of the day, in this case, it's clear that these roads across Nova Scotia, and particularly this one, require substantial repairs and that a quick solution is not enough.

Really, we're not just talking about roads here today, what we're really talking about is rural economies. In many cases roads are the lifeline of rural communities. In this case, due to bad road conditions, local businesses such as Sea'scape Cottages, feel paralyzed right now. Sea'scape Cottages is a small family business that owns seven lodges capable of housing a total of 30 people. Visitors often rent the cottages, or the lodges, hoping to see their sons or daughters graduate from university because the yearly convocation at the close-by St. F.X. University helps fuel business activities in the area. However, the conditions this year on the grounds are so bad that many visitors have had to look for accommodations elsewhere.

The awful road conditions in Bayfield are also threatening local fishing operations. Local lobster fishermen have fished from the Bayfield wharf. The fishing activities are carried out by 15 or so boats based at the nearby wharf, and these activities are critical to many families in the area.

It's an integral part of an MLA's job to be the advocate in the House of Assembly for his or her constituency and to take responsibility for fixing local issues like this. I know the member for Antigonish has a unique opportunity to raise the issue of the Old Ferry Road at the Cabinet Table, where critical decisions are made. I am aware that the member

has met with the business owners on the road and that he's working on the file, and that's a good thing. However, for many years this road has been in very bad condition, and a real solution calls for significant repairs. Again, the member for Antigonish is in an exceptional position to help the people of the road with their road repairs.

Unfortunately, the residents feel like they're still waiting for the minister and the government to commit to doing more than just patchwork in the area. What I'm really worried about today is that this is a symptom of a bigger issue with regard to rural economies. It is imperative that we work to grow the rural economy, as the Ivany report told us.

Old Ferry is crucial for many businesses in Antigonish County, and roads like this need to be made dependable and accessible if we're going to grow the rural economy. I don't question the minister's commitment to his constituents, but I worry about how decisions are being made. Like all of our rural economies, the local businesses in this area depend on good roads.

I know it's hard sometimes for people who don't live in rural areas to understand how important roads are to people in rural communities. When you go around and talk to - I know when I talk to some of my constituents, maybe elderly constituents out in the far reaches of my constituency, they will talk about how it's very expensive for them to get to town, so they have to be very careful of how many trips they take to town and try to get as many things done as they can on a single trip. Then they say, if I'm on my way to town and I hit a pothole or hit something on the road that causes damage to my car, well, I really can't afford to get that fixed.

Roads are an easy thing to complain about and talk about, and I'm sure the Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal Minister gets more than his fair share about that, but roads do impact people's lives. All of us here in this Chamber carry a heavy burden, and that is the burden of making decisions in here that impact the lives of all Nova Scotians. That's what we're here to do, is try to make decisions to make the lives of Nova Scotians better. Sometimes we see that decisions aren't necessarily made in this Chamber, and they're made at a much smaller table surrounded by Cabinet Ministers.

The concern here is that when you have concerns of local businesses brought directly to the Cabinet Table that don't seem to be getting addressed properly, to their way of thinking, then it's a concern for Nova Scotians, and it's a concern that possibly the government doesn't understand the importance of our rural economy and the importance of supporting businesses in rural Nova Scotia. That is something that we need to do.

In this case, we have business owners that feel like they're not being heard by the government, and I just ask, if they can't be heard, then where does that leave the rest of us as Nova Scotians? Thank you for your time today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to stand today in late debate to discuss this particular topic. As the member who introduced it highlighted, it is a very important issue; in fact, one that was noted in *The Chronicle Herald* and has garnered some media attention as well.

What I am a little bit confused about though is the way the topic was introduced here tonight. It was introduced calling on me in my position and capacity as Minister of Environment, yet through the entire introduction and overview of the concerns raised I didn't hear any mention of concerns related to my Department of Environment as to why myself in the role of Minister of Environment would be moving this in any particular way, other than the preliminary statement which did indicate and highlight the damage and the problems that came out from our extremely harsh winter conditions. I'd just like to highlight for the member opposite for Pictou East that despite my role as the Minister of Environment, I really do not control the weather outside nor the effect that it has on our infrastructure and things around the Province of Nova Scotia.

Beyond that I can address a couple of the other issues on that particular file. First and foremost, as the member for Pictou East highlighted, this is an active file through my constituency office not through my Department of Environment, so I'll be focusing my comments here as the MLA representing the great riding of Antigonish.

First and foremost it is a very active file in my riding, and indeed the citizens have actually contacted me as recently as this morning to advise how satisfied they are with the support and the activity that I and my assistant, in the office in Antigonish, have been providing them on this file. They do understand and appreciate the difficult situation faced by my colleague, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, and his dedicated staff in managing the difficult situation facing our roads and aging infrastructure in the Province of Nova Scotia.

As my colleague, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, highlighted many times, as the member for Pictou East highlighted in his opening remarks, and as the constituents who contacted me this morning highlighted, the issues facing this road predate our time in office and, indeed, they place the blame squarely on the previous government for not having addressed the fundamental infrastructure deficiencies and prioritization, or lack of prioritization, on this road.

That being said, this government came into power because the people of Nova Scotia wanted to see things done differently. I find it amazingly interesting to hear from the member opposite criticizing me, or I guess highlighting the fact that in my role as Minister of Environment I'm in - I believe the quote is "an exceptional position" to help the people of my riding. I guess it is true that Cabinet Ministers do have a unique situation to sit at the Cabinet Table; however, I find it odd that the context of that was brought up here

suggesting that I would use my position as a Cabinet Minister to provide preferential treatment to any citizens of Nova Scotia. Indeed my role and the role of my colleagues sitting around the Cabinet Table are to represent all citizens of the Province of Nova Scotia, to make the best decisions in that regard.

Furthermore, as the member for Pictou East continued in his remarks earlier on this particular matter he made explicit statements over his concerns that decisions are not made here in the House but in backrooms, which is ironic that he was just encouraging me as the Minister of Environment to use my position at the Cabinet Table in that backroom that he later on criticized government for being done.

I really don't understand what's going on - what exactly the Opposition Party and the member for Pictou East is asking me to do here. Does he want me to go back to old, backroom political decision making, particularly in the file of transportation which actually falls under the responsibility of my colleague, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal? In fact, we are committed to a far more open and transparent process. The Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal has highlighted on a number of occasions what the process is for prioritizing roadwork in the Province of Nova Scotia, that information is available from the local branch of the Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal Department or they could contact the office of the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to get the details provided to them.

With respect to the constituents of Antigonish, where my predecessor as the MLA for Antigonish was actually the former Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, this topic of the condition of roads in the Antigonish region certainly came up during our public debate. At that debate I made my position very clear as to how I think road work should be administered and managed in the Province of Nova Scotia. To that end, I indicated that the priority needs to be placed on safety - safety first. Indeed, that is a position that the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal has indicated here in the House, in response to a number of other questions being raised during Question Period in the past, that indeed, when safety is a concern or an issue, within roads in this province, that the department responds.

Indeed, with respect to this particular road, Old Ferry Road in the riding of Antigonish, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal has been responsive to this particular issue. Since this issue came to my attention, and we've engaged the local TIR department, the local area manager was out on at least three occasions to investigate and update the information on this particular situation. The supervisor for the area has been out at least a dozen times in the last two months. Four loads of gravel have been provided to that road to attempt to address some of the short-term issues.

Unfortunately, as indicated, because we have no control over the unique and harsh winter conditions relative to what we've been seeing in the province the last number of

years, this area is extremely soft, extremely wet. Based on the investigation of the professionals and the experts in our TIR office - and you can see the effects - the road in its current condition, based upon the current weather, that is how wet and saturated this road is at the present time. So the heavy equipment necessary to provide the long-term work, which the department has been committed to and which has been communicated to the people along that road - that work just cannot be done under the current conditions, based on the environment. Not the part of the environment that I actually have control over in my role as Minister of Environment, but actually because of the natural environment that this road is just saturated.

To bring in the heavy equipment necessary to enhance and update the road and address the root cause - the underlying issues that have gone unaddressed for the last number of years, certainly within the last four to 10 years, when it could have used significant upgrades, far before either myself or the current Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal were in a position to do anything about this. The local TIR branch did commit to providing significant work on this road including culverts, if poor or undersized culverts along this stretch are contributing to the excess water that builds up there. But again, TIR cannot get those culverts in place until the weather improves and dries up that road a little bit. Otherwise it would cause more damage and cost significantly more money. (Interruption) I suppose I mentioned there the history of how long it has been since this road could have used some infrastructure upgrades. I made reference to my immediate predecessor who was the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. (Interruption) That's right, my predecessor's predecessor was also the Minister of Transportation but from the Official Opposition's Party at the time and again, the work was not done.

I also find it interesting that although the member for Pictou East indicated briefly in his comments that he did have road concerns in his riding, he chose to try to represent the constituents from the great Antigonish and I appreciate that he has taken the time. But as I indicated, the constituents who have been raising concerns actually contacted me this morning to advise that they are extremely impressed and happy with the service and support that I've been providing, that my office has been providing them on this file. They recognize the complex situation we're in and facing the TIR department. Thank you.

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

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to participate tonight on this particular resolution in this late debate concerning the Old Ferry Road in Bayfield. I find with interest the Minister of Environment's participation and my colleague from the PC Party because it's something that, as you know, my critic area now is Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and something I can tell you - one of my very first speeches on this side of the House was dealing with gravel roads.

I want to point out that one thing that during the four years we were in government we made great efforts to take the politics out of paving. I recited the story - back in the 1930s, at that time if you were on the right side of politics when the election changed, the government changed and you weren't on the right side of politics you simply were fired. But each Fall people in the communities had a job on the road getting their road gravelled or ditching or whatever, and after the election in the 1930s, on this one particular occasion, the very next day after the election one person who was very observant noticed that the local person who had a team of oxen did not have a politically correct team of oxen.

This is documented in a particular story; I can get the literature for you if you want. It was interesting to note that the individual got fired because he had his brother's oxen in a team. I believe that we need to take the politics out of paving and what I studied that day is at that time it was 10 years, the previous government by the PCs, and that little team of oxen worked one day and they did more in that one day than the previous government back 10 years before 2009 did on gravel roads in southwestern Nova Scotia - one day of working on the roads in the 1930s, that team of oxen did more to address gravel roads in Nova Scotia.

When you sit here tonight and talk about paving roads and the very first thing, do you know what this new Liberal Government did? The very first thing they did on the day that they came into office, within hours, you know what they did?

AN HON. MEMBER: They replaced the oxen with bulls?

MR. BELLIVEAU: No, they didn't - that's a very good insight, but what they did was they cancelled or they took away the paving crew of the previous government. (Applause) You want to save your applause because what we did in four years, we put more money in paving roads and gravel roads in Nova Scotia than any of the previous governments did in history.

Mr. Speaker, you're going to have a history lesson here tonight if you pay attention. The Minister of Environment talks about the thaw, the Spring thaw. Well, guess what? In Nova Scotia we can have a combination of them several times during any winter season, so get prepared and get ready for that. What we did as a government was recognized - and I challenge you, I challenge all of you here in this House, the Liberal Party and the PC Party to go out and get some testimonies from Clyde River, get some testimonies from East Sable where they live on gravel roads and we actually in four years - now pay attention over there - in four years we went out and double chip sealed those roads which they had difficulty, professional people trying to get the work on any given night when they had Spring thaws, and they asked the previous government over a 30-year span and nothing was ever done.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, within four years we addressed that issue. You go out and get the testimony, and I can assure you that we were on the right track. The members opposite may have some concerns about cancelling that paving crew, which I think is one

of their first mistakes in their government - and we'll see as we progress through this particular next four years.

Go out and have discussions with the people and ask them about their gravel roads and get the testimonies from East Sable, get the testimonies from Clyde River, and you'll see who was on the right path. So I welcome the member, my PC member, for bringing this resolution forward. It's a good one. Every transportation link is important. People want to get to work. People need to have an opportunity for whatever their occupation is, whether it's fishing or they are professionals, and they want to get to work. They want to know that their government is working on their behalf.

Again, I'll just end on this: the previous government had an opportunity to correct and do something for roads in Nova Scotia. We were on the right course. These guys have hit the speed bump and they are on the wrong course, and they may end up going in the ditch, simply because of this direction. Thank you for your time.

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

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm very delighted to get pulled into this conversation this evening. It's a pleasure to be here. First of all, I'll move in a backward direction here with the member for Queens-Shelburne, to say that without question - and this is a good opportunity for me to put this on the record officially, although it's been there many times, I think, through media and otherwise - it was a good decision that we made to eliminate the paving plant. It's not based on rhetoric, and it's not based on undoing anything that the previous government did. It was just a bad decision.

In this environment we all talk about the fiscal realities, we all talk about growing the economy - that's one area that we're like-minded on. We don't have to compete with the private sector in paving. We've got some of the best road-builders. (Interruption) Thank you to those two members who clapped. We have tremendous road-builders in this province - in this region, in fact, and now it's a regional competition.

As we've seen - I don't want to get into the numbers because it puts (Interruption) Okay, do you want to get into the numbers? That's fine. The private sector paves per kilometre, on average, in comparison - the cost associated with the paving plant versus the private sector in those areas were 20 per cent cheaper. I don't like using those numbers, because I don't want to make this about the TIR staff. The TIR staff are hard-working, they are dedicated people, they carry out the will of the government with respect to paving and road safety, and we appreciate everything they did. This was not about them. This was about a decision to compete with the private sector, which we knew from the beginning was a mistake.

The NDP will use the rhetoric of, well, they're paving in remote areas, and they brought the cost of paving down. First of all, with the cost of paving - I'll get there, honourable members, give me a second, I'll get there. The paving plants were put in remote areas. It did not compete at any point with the private sector - no bids, no competition, zero, so there is no way that a piece of equipment can drop down the price if it's not competing on direct contracts. So that's number one.

Secondly, we were doing a poor job of packaging those tenders, Mr. Speaker. You can't send a firm to a remote area of the province for one kilometre, one and a half kilometres, and expect them to come up with a rock-bottom price. We're fortunate now, because of the competition in Atlantic Canada, that we have pretty low prices relative to our Atlantic counterparts.

Having said that, we have to do a better job at tendering, and that's what the road-builders asked for. They didn't want competition from their own tax dollars. They wanted a fair and level playing field. So the paving plant was a good decision. I look forward to the disposal of those assets, which will be very shortly. That will end a chapter that in my opinion was a mistake for the taxpayers of Nova Scotia.

I just want to take a few minutes to talk about my friend and colleague the member for Antigonish, the Minister of Environment. The Old Ferry Road is an issue that the member brought to my attention long before it got media attention, long before today, because he was doing his job, Mr. Speaker. He was hearing from his constituents, from those important private sector players - with the Sea'scape Cottages, with those fishers, the 15 licences that are down in that harbour. He's talking to the stakeholders, to the people he represents, and he's doing a good job.

The reality is that we have 9,000 kilometres in the province of unpaved gravel roads that we're trying to look after. Do you want to make it political? Sure, you can make it political and say the minister and the government are doing a terrible job because the road is sinking three inches from mud and water. If that's the game we want to play and that's the narrative we want to use, I think Nova Scotians will understand that that's not the reality, Mr. Speaker. The reality is that we're fighting every day with the budget and the fiscal constraints that we have as a province, but we're also dealing with the weather. I've gotten pictures to my personal email, to my departmental email, from all across the province, of gravel roads that are virtually impassable. They're flooded, they're soft, and people are sinking in them.

With this particular road that the member alluded to, we're doing everything we possibly can. We committed to three culverts, when the weather lets up and the ground hardens. We've committed to ditching; we've committed to doing that work with the gravel. The reality is we literally cannot get our equipment down there, so that's the issue right now. I know that the private sector players down there are concerned about this, without question, as they should be. We've committed, as a department, because of the

situation affecting the cottages, we've committed to do everything we can by next weekend for the St. F.X. Convocation, to make sure that that road is passable, and we'll put every single resource we can into that.

I congratulate the member for his work on this and it was good work by the minister.

In closing, I just want to say that this came from the Progressive Conservative caucus and the PC Party. Mr. Speaker, we've heard them talk about balanced budgets and why we didn't balance the budget this year. We've heard about tax cuts, which as we know is \$150 million per point. We've heard suggestions about Lyme disease and other new spending that we should put money into. We've heard about twinning and everybody wants new twinning. There are hundreds of millions of dollars just to do certain sections of twinning on all of our highways. Highway No.103 needs twinning; Highway No.101 needs twinning; and Highway No.104 needs twinning - there is no doubt about that. We're doing our very best.

In closing, if we're going to send a message about being fiscally responsible, we can't on the other hand talk about new spending. (Applause) There is integrity and credibility that go to this House, and we should honour that. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for late debate has expired.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 60.

Bill No. 60 - Securities Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: I remember I have to be at my very own desk to do this speaking this afternoon. I rise this afternoon to introduce second reading of this bill, which is - I move that the bill now be read a second time. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to do that, because in Opposition we didn't often move our bills for the second time so I'm better on the Private Members' Bills from that experience.

Mr. Speaker, this bill relates to the Securities Commission and I'm pleased to rise in the House to talk about these amendments to the Securities Act. These amendments improve investor protection and bolster collaboration with other provinces throughout Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we know that Nova Scotian investors expect securities regulations to be up to date and provide the best possible protection for their investments. With that in mind we are moving forward with amendments to the Securities Act that will strengthen the abilities of the Securities Commission to protect Nova Scotians and enforce the Act.

To be more specific, one critical amendment we are introducing has to do with the reporting of derivatives. Currently Nova Scotia does not regulate derivatives. Our province is a member of the Canadian Securities Administrators, and we work with our colleagues in other provinces to harmonize regulations across the country. Canada, as part of an agreement among G20 countries, has committed to make the industry more transparent, including better regulating the derivatives market. That goal, Mr. Speaker, is perfectly in line with our provincial commitment of conducting our business in the most transparent way possible. So I am pleased to say that we are indeed moving forward on regulating derivatives in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation also includes other important amendments, including streamlining information sharing for enforcement; confirming the authority of Securities Commission staff to review self-regulating organizations; expanding insider trader prohibitions by widening the definition of who is in a special relationship with a reporting issuer; expanding market manipulation and fraud prohibitions to include attempts; and streamlining how cease trade orders are issued for inadequate disclosure in the marketplace.

The Securities Act helps protect investors from practices and activities that undermine investor confidence. I am proud to put forward amendments that will make them stronger, clearer, and that will result in greater transparency and efficiency for our investors and the people of Nova Scotia. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in my place today and support this housekeeping bill. Addressing the regulation of derivatives is important in protecting investors. Complex financial tools such as derivatives are not designed for all investors, and therefore should be regulated to ensure that advisers and clients are protected from the leverage that these financial tools utilize. When utilizing securities that are characterized as highly leveraged, the upside and the downside are significant. An investor can make a significant gain or take a significant loss.

This bill takes steps to protect the client and help ensure that information is properly provided from the adviser. The client has the right to the proper information and anything we can do to ensure that the client has that information is a good step by government. We support this bill, and with those few words I will take my seat.

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the NDP caucus we would associate ourselves with the comments that have been made by both the minister and the Finance Critic for the Official Opposition. It is the case that this is a bill that will provide greater protection to the public, and for that reason this bill should go forward. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the members of the Opposition, as well, on this bill. With that, I move second reading of Bill No. 60.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 60. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 64.

Bill No. 64 - Financial Measures (2014) Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, this is the Financial Measures (2014) Act which is a bill that we always see each year go through with the budget. I dare say this is a very short Financial Measures Bill. Over the years, we've seen many that (Interruption)

I'll start with that. Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 64 for second reading.

This is a very short Financial Measures Bill. It does not cover a great number of Acts, as is often the case, and I think it's very clear these are items that the members of the House are well familiar with, and I welcome comments from the other side.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately this is a bill that we cannot support. Governing is about making tough decisions. It's about establishing priorities for the people of Nova Scotia. We hear lots of talk from the government side about how the government can't afford to do this or can't afford to do that because of the revenue situation. It's just disappointing to people on this side and disappointing to many Nova Scotians that the government tabled a budget that showed spending increases in the range of \$400 million but yet they couldn't cut the taxes and give Nova Scotians a break, as was anticipated. So we could have reined in the spending a little bit and let Nova Scotians get the break on taxes that they deserve. That's what we feel should have been done.

The thoughts on the Graduate Retention Rebate have been well stated in this House and the thing that's disappointing is we hear a lot of talk from the government about, well, the NDP did that and the Progressive Conservatives did that and everyone is always talking about yesterday and yesterday. Nova Scotians are just looking for some leadership from the government because they don't care about yesterday.

Nova Scotians care about tomorrow and we'd just like to see the government bring forward some stuff and make some of the decisions that are to the benefit of Nova Scotians. I'm sorry, but we can't support this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to be nearly as short as the previous speaker - I was going to say "or as sweet" but that isn't exactly an adjective that I apply to myself and I know nobody else does either.

Mr. Speaker, in the last number of weeks that we've been here, and even prior to coming back into this session, the Premier and the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board on numerous occasions have told Nova Scotians that they were going to approach governing and approach budgeting in a different way than previous governments. One of the things they have said is that they were going to stand up and take responsibility for the trust that people have placed in them to manage the affairs of the province and they would not blame previous administrations.

I've heard them say this on numerous occasions yet I've watched them break that pledge over and over again, repeatedly. It's like other promises and other commitments they've made but I think this one is particularly disappointing because people did, I think,

believe that there would be a fresh start and there wouldn't be this blaming of decisions and limited choices based on decisions that had been taken by a previous administration.

They also - and the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board - talked a great deal about an open, transparent, honest budget. Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to put on the record and have an acknowledgement that (Interruption) I guess we'll have to add a little time to my time on the floor of the House. I can see the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism cheering over there.

The minister has said that this is an open and transparent and honest budget, and perhaps in many respects it is, but what she doesn't say is that there was a fair amount of shifting of revenue from a budget that was introduced last year that for the first time, by the way, in many, many years according to the Auditor General, was a budget that met all of the conditions that he was concerned about with respect to the appropriate way to record and account for the revenue of the province. Every single solitary cent that this government could find to move into last year's budget has been moved into last year's budget, to the extent that the revenue for interest for the change in interest policy on student loans - some \$14 million, which is a policy decision of a government that has come to power in the last six months - was moved into the budget of the previous year.

The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board says, well, that was required, and perhaps it was required, but there was a requirement as well that other expenditures in last year were made last year, and for which there was an unqualified opinion from the Auditor General. Let me be very clear that budgets are about choices, and they are about hard decisions. It may come as a surprise to people to my right that I'm of the view that this government did not make any difficult choices with respect to expenditure management, and you can see that in this budget.

You know, we are a small province and we have faced, particularly in the past four or five years, some very difficult financial times. Our economy was in recession; it stalled. The recovery is still very slow. It will pick up, and the budget assumptions that are contained in this budget and upon which this budget are predicated, I hope they come to pass, and I think they will. I think a number of very, very promising initiatives like Deep Panuke and other exploration on the Scotian Shelf - I think the shipbuilding contract, the Maritime Link, and all of the economic development activity we see around Halifax, in particular, will combine to give this government greater economic flexibility than probably two and perhaps three previous administrations have had.

But nevertheless, we don't entirely know that that is to be the case, and nevertheless, we still have significant debt and a significant debt load in the province. This government has made no attempt in this budget - its first budget - to continue to be prudent with respect to expenditure management and controls in our public services, and I think that is very concerning. It is very concerning, and this is a year that will be lost in terms of being able to pace yourself. We will not get this year back - they will not get this year back,

and let's hope that we do not find ourselves, as a province, jammed up against a political mandate and time in between that will see severe restraint or the kinds of decisions we have seen from previous Liberal Administrations.

I was a rookie member of this House with a minority Liberal Government - a Liberal Government that fell on a budget where it attempted to introduce a budget with off-book spending in the health care sector of, I don't know, it must have been \$300 million. I think it might even have been \$600 million. The Minister of Economic (Interruption) Oh, yes, it was way more than \$200 million. It was close to \$300 million. That creative accounting has its genesis in that Party over there.

In this particular bill in front of us, the Financial Measures (2014) Bill, which is the enabling piece of legislation that accompanies the budget, we essentially have two provisions. We have the provision to remove the Graduate Retention Rebate - to eliminate the Graduate Retention Rebate - which, as we've debated here, is a huge tax grab from the young graduates of this province. Two-thirds of the recipients of the Graduate Retention Rebate were young people between the ages of (Interruption) I hear the Minister of Health and Wellness saying, they had a job, they were lucky; the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board says, they were lucky.

Mr. Speaker, that's kind of a sad statement in this day and age, that a young person between the ages of 20 and 29 is lucky because they had a job. They probably had one of the highest student debt loads of any young person in the country, and this program offered some debt relief to those young people. It was a way for them to see some income returned to their pockets that made it possible for them to stay and choose to stay in Nova Scotia.

I know that the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has apologized for saying that students felt entitled, but I wonder how sincere that apology was when I hear comments like this, that they were lucky to have a job. That's not how I see the young graduates who choose to stay in our province. I am so pleased that they have a job; I am so pleased that they stay in Nova Scotia; I am so pleased that we can offer some tax relief to them, that we can help them with those astronomical debt loads that they carry and make Nova Scotia the attractive place that it is for people to stay.

This part of the FMA that is in front of us tonight will be to remove this program, and this is a program that this year would be worth about \$50 million. The government talks about how they're going to do other things to replace this program, but so far what we know is being replaced is a very small fraction of that \$50 million. We have \$1.6 million replacing the Graduate Retention Rebate through the interest relief, the \$800 annually on student loan interest, but that doesn't come anywhere close to what people would be receiving through the Graduate Retention Rebate.

Additionally, there will be a new program, pathway opportunities to employment, or - \$1.6 million, and we know none of the features of that program and how exactly that is

going to work, and whether or not that money will be transferred into the hands of young graduates or whether it will be an employment-based program into the hands of employers and apportioned through some kind of training program or apprenticeship program or internship program. So this is not something that gives us much encouragement in terms of this government's approach to retaining our best and our brightest, for sure.

The other thing I want to talk about of course, with respect to this bill, is the HST. Now we sat in this Legislature for a number of years and we listened to many, many hours of debate where today's Premier, the current Premier and the current Finance and Treasury Board Minister criticized, they railed against the increase in the HST. You would have thought, given the words that came out of their mouths in those debates that this would be at the top of their priority to deal with.

Now this is their first budget, and what do we see? There's no spending restraint and there's no tax relief in terms of the HST - none whatsoever. It's hard to believe that those members across the floor are the same members who were over here speaking about what a blasphemy it was for the previous government to increase the HST. So it's interesting to see how quickly their tune has changed. The HST and the revenue from the HST suddenly is needed - four and a half, five years, after the recession. Four and a half, five years after a recession the HST revenue is needed, but right on the cusp of the recession, when the revenues from the offshore and the royalties from the offshore and all of the other revenues into the province were dropping like a concrete block, it wasn't needed?

The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board is a very well-informed member. She reads and she pays attention and she knows full well what the Deloitte report said in 2009 about the state of the province's finances; she knows full well that that report said that if we continued on the path we were on, with respect to spending, expenditures, that the operating expenses of the province in a four-year period would grow and the deficit at the end of four years would be \$1.4 billion - \$1.4 billion.

That was confirmed by (Interruption) Well I hear the minister, my friend from the south end of Halifax, say that's not accurate. You should read the report; it's in the report. It's black and white in the report, and I don't . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party to direct her comments through the Chair, please.

MS. MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just saying that the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island would find it quite interesting to actually read the Deloitte report with respect to what it was that they were projecting for a deficit at the end of four years if the expenditures of government continued on the path they were on, and they were projecting an operating deficit in the Province of Nova Scotian of \$1.4 billion - \$1.4 billion.

It's there in black and white. This is not my number. This is not some fantasy that people have made up. It was something that was in the Deloitte report. Moreover it is also contained in the report of four very eminent, knowledgeable economists - Elizabeth Beale, Donald Savoie, Lars Osberg, and Tim O'Neill - who looked at the situation in Nova Scotia and they concurred that this was the path that we were on, to a \$1.4 billion deficit, and in order to come to grips with that, a plan had to be made to deal with both the revenue and the expenditure.

You know, being in government is not easy and we all know that. There are limited resources, there are lots of needs, there are lots wants, and lots of demands, and you can't please everyone. You have to make some very tough choices and sometimes the revenue is fairly dismal and in times of recession, slow growth, it can be very difficult. In that context the HST was increased. The minister opposed that. The minister stood here and railed against it and really berated the government, the minister of the day and the government for having made this decision, thought that there were other decisions that could have been made. But yet here we have a government now that have forgotten all about that - that's no problem. The minister says, well you know financially we need it. Well what's changed? (Interruption)

The Minister of Natural Resources seems to have some ideas about what's changed and I'm sure he'll stand up and let us know because he seems to have answers to a lot of things that none of the rest of us have. (Applause) But, Mr. Speaker, I think that the minister, when he has an opportunity, should talk to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board and find out more about the choices that are being made and what's in front of them for choices.

I'd like to table a press release from the - looks like this is a press release from the Liberal Party at the time, in Opposition, that says - we'll actually it's a media release on this very thing, if I could read for a few minutes, Mr. Speaker. David Jackson, the provincial reporter from *The Chronicle Herald*, said, "The Grits tried to change the Financial Measures Act to say that if the NDP is in power in 2014 and doesn't follow through on a commitment to cut the harmonized sales tax by a percentage point, an election would be triggered." It's different, I guess, when you get into government, you have all kinds of insights that you didn't previously have. (Interruptions) Well, I hear the member for Northside-Westmount saying, it's do as I say, not as I do. Isn't that the case?

Here we have a very small bill accompanying the budget - a budget that the member says is open, transparent, and honest; a budget that contains very few difficult choices. There's \$400 million, I believe, of new expenditure in this budget, and a projected plan for the government that will continue to add much more than \$1 billion to the debt over a four-year period. The government has no intention of doing in government what they said or what they led people to believe they were going to do when they were in Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I think I've made my points about what the problems are with this particular piece of legislation, but I'm looking forward to hearing from members of the government on this. They have a lot to say when Opposition members are up and have an opportunity, so I'd be more than happy to relinquish the floor and give one of those members an opportunity to engage in debate on this. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to take just a few minutes tonight to address a bill, the Financial Measures Bill for this year, on behalf of the people that I represent. It's interesting - I heard the previous member talk about the recession and how she felt it might be over, but I can tell you that where I come from, people aren't saying the recession is over. They're still very much feeling the effects in many, many ways, and they're going to, and they accept that for some time to come, for a whole variety of reasons.

Let's be honest. The last four or five years have not been stellar in the Province of Nova Scotia at all. They've been tough times. Decisions have been made - some would see, according to last October, maybe not the best decisions, and they made a new decision. They chose another Party to come into this place and to try to make better decisions, or maybe decisions that were more acceptable to them.

That's fine. That's democracy. We're lucky to have that in this province, and certainly in this country. That's the way it should be, Mr. Speaker, nothing wrong with that - not a thing wrong with that. But do you know what? Each time there's an election, and regardless of who is coming into government - and it was no different in 2009 when this Party was going out and the NDP were coming in - there was hope that things would be different. That's why we have changes, and that's why we have the ability to make those changes - they hope things will get better. They elect new people.

I did a count today. There were 38 people in 2006 who were elected, who did not come back to this House in 2009. There were 33 people who did not come back in 2013 who came in here in 2009. That's amazing when you think about how many people have changed.

I took a little time this morning just sitting in the Uniacke Room. I was looking while waiting for a meeting. I started counting faces, and as I went around, I went, wow, look at how many people are no longer here in the eight short years that I've been here. I think there are two or three, maybe, who are left from the class of 2006, as I call it. That's very unusual, I thought, but people want change. That's acceptable.

When we look at this budget and we look at this bill before us, I think that people are quickly frustrated when the students - I talked to a lot of students. I've had a lot of calls in the last little while about this student retention money going away. It was a huge benefit,

there's no question. We've heard a lot of discussion about that, a tough decision that government made. Government will ultimately be judged on that decision.

It doesn't matter what we, as members, may think or say or rant about: government will ultimately be looked at at some point, and say, that was good, maybe that paid off, maybe not. Right now people aren't happy. We know that.

I had a call today from a young man who is a businessman. He's in construction. He said, why does nothing ever change in this province? Things only tend to get worse. He is taxed to death. He talks about working hard every day, and when he goes to purchase something, all he pays is tax, tax, and more tax. When he buys his gas - of course that's in the news today, we heard New Brunswick went up a couple of pennies last night. What's going to happen tonight in Nova Scotia? Well, I don't know, someone in here might know, but it's in all likelihood going up as history would dictate. We may reach record high at some point in this province. Can people afford that? No, they can hardly afford to get back and forth to work now, Mr. Speaker, you know that's an issue.

More importantly people want to know, they say - this young man asked me today, what do you have to do to make a real change in there where you work, in that place they call the Legislature? Nothing ever seems to change, and it doesn't matter which Party is in government in there, you all seem to be the same. Well, you know what, that's a fair comment and it's not just from that young man. I hear it all the time, why are there no changes, what does it take, who has to run, who has to get elected, what kind of decisions need to be made to benefit Nova Scotians?

Let's talk about everyday Nova Scotians, Mr. Speaker, everyday hard-working Nova Scotians. Everyday Nova Scotians who are trying to find a job who cannot, who have lost jobs. In my area alone, I could reference Fundy Gypsum that's been gone in the last few years; Minas Basin we saw shut down, over 100 jobs more gone there, that's just in a very few miles of one another. Good paying jobs, 40, 50 grand a year, millions of dollars into the tax bases. Anyone in here who ever sat on council would know how important that is. Millions have been lost right there. The spinoff effect of that has been hugely detrimental.

Again, people have hope during election time, they put people in this place, this historical Chamber, to create good legislation, to put forward bills, policies, and regulations that will be beneficial. Gas prices, jobs, power prices, power rates - never-ending, that battle. That's been going on now for years, that's all we hear about. What are we doing about it? It doesn't appear to be a whole lot in the eyes of many people.

People going to food banks, I don't know what it's like in other members' areas in this House - hundreds a month go to the food bank in my local area, Mr. Speaker, hundreds. That is wrong. People ask what are you doing to help me out, how do you make these decisions? They want a job, people that are homeless, people who just lost their homes,

three, I think on the weekend due to fire, displaced. Now living - one gentlemen in my area and two children living with his mother in a room that might be half the size of this Chamber. That's the reality of everyday hard-working people in this province, they're the people that want to know what are you doing for me, how will you make life better in this province for me, when will those decisions come?

They hope to see that by way of programs that come forward in a budget, and I know the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board knows this and every member in here knows this, but they don't see it. It's not the level we speak at, we speak in higher terms to the tunes of - we listen to the estimates, how many tens or hundreds of millions, or billions in some cases, in departments. They can't even fathom that figure, can't even begin to imagine what that kind of money management is like. Seniors living on \$12,000 a year, I ask them when they come into my office, how do you live on that? They don't; they say, Chuck, we don't live on that, we exist. That's what they do, they don't live.

They want to know what programs are you putting forward as a government? What are you doing as a member in that House to create, and help, and work toward creating programs, putting them forward to help those people out? Well, there are a few programs that are out there, government tries to create, maybe Efficiency Nova Scotia programs - that might not be a good one to bring up tonight but anyway, again though we do work these programs to say, we know that they're not utilized to some degree, they're paying for it, we do our best in my office to say, take advantage of that. You know you're paying 50 bucks a year in your power bill for an efficiency program, go get the \$50 worth of free stuff that they're offering - they shouldn't call it even if nothing else, perhaps there is some satisfaction in that. I don't know how many people look at it that way, I do, that's okay, people take advantage of the program, that's all right.

What other programs are available? Everyday hard-working Nova Scotians in this province want to know, what are you doing to help us out? What are you going to do to keep your kids here? I talked to this young man today. He said, if my family wasn't here, my grandparents weren't here, and so on, I wouldn't be here, I'd be gone. I've got one daughter in Ontario, 10 years - when are you coming home? Why would I come home, you've got a job for me at home? No, sorry, I don't, guess you're right, Jill, stay there. I got another gal in university, what's she going to do? Well, I don't know, but she probably won't be in Nova Scotia.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, some of us aren't going to be here either. Some of us are going to have to move to the middle of the country so that we can visit closer with our children in years to come, because they won't be here, unless there is opportunity to turn this province around, and there could be. There are ideas, there is not one Party or one political stripe that have all the best ideas. It's been said before in this House, and I've always agreed with that. Bill Estabrooks, a very fine man, said that on many occasions - good man, stood here, worked hard for his constituents, would probably still be here if he ran again, but he had some good ideas.

I know it's tough to be in government, when I came into this place in 2006, although I didn't sit around the Cabinet Table, I was on the government side and I know it was no fun some days. Some would claim it doesn't matter, the worst day is still a good day in government - well, maybe so, maybe not. The last number of years has not been a great time for anyone in government, tough decisions had to be made, as I said, and there are a lot of tough decisions yet to be made for many years ahead - many years ahead.

We talk about the debt; we talk about budgets. It was interesting to listen to the previous member speak, what did the debt climb by - \$1.5 billion in four years, near five years? A ridiculous amount of money. Anybody who ever took a little bit of an education course, Economics 101, don't spend what you haven't got - there's no further lesson required. But that's easier said than done, I realize that when there are needs out there, it's not quite that simple for a government and a province this small.

We talk about immigration. How do we raise our revenues? There is only one way to raise revenues and it's through the tax base. What ideas are there out there to bring people in? Previous governments have talked about immigration as well and not a lot has happened. It has become very difficult to become an immigrant and come to Canada for some reason. You know, we look around at other ideas around the world. We did a study in this province a couple of years back on land use and land availability through agriculture. The former minister had a study done, and I forget how many thousands of acres there were available - why aren't we doing something with them? We talk about how desperate agriculture is in this province, I don't even think it equates to 1 per cent of the provincial budget anymore - it's less than that. Others would know for sure.

Why not bring some of those people that know what they're doing? We did it years and years ago, hundreds of years ago when people came here. We allotted plots of land for them to work that land - is that such a crazy idea today? Maybe not.

Have you seen New York State, in America? Tax-free zones (Interruption) I mean there has to be ideas to help grow the province and create revenue to make you survive. There are other ways thinking outside the box, but everyday Nova Scotians, like the young man I spoke with this afternoon - what are you doing to make life better for me to stay here? You're making life terrible, you're making life worse, and he's frustrated on a number of fronts. He rightfully took the half-hour or so on the phone when I spoke to him to share his rant with me and his concerns, and they were all legitimate - every one of them was legitimate. A young family man with one child about a year old, just married not long ago and he admits, my wife has a good-paying job, works for the provincial government by the way, great, makes good money. He's a businessman, he does all right, but do you know what? He still lives paycheque to paycheque trying to survive; he doesn't live lavishly.

That is the reality of today in Nova Scotia. Maybe some, it doesn't matter, maybe that's not what our goal is here - to make life better for Nova Scotians. But I think when

we're on the doors knocking and asking for their support or asking for that vote, we're thinking about it then. Do we think about it the day after the election? Maybe. Do we think about it the week after the election or the months after the election? We should be. I'm not sure that's the case often, or at least it doesn't matter what my opinion is, what I hear from my constituents is you forgot all about us, that's what it feels like.

My job is to stand here and bring these issues up and to raise these concerns, certainly around the Financial Measures Bill as it is today, and it's a very short one. I don't know that I've seen a Financial Measures Bill quite this condensed, small, short, two clauses, okay, that's fine . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Hants West has the floor. I just counted, and there are 10 other conversations going on in the room. If you need to exit the Chamber, please do and carry on your conversations.

The honourable member for Hants West has the floor.

MR. PORTER: Mr. Speaker, thank you. Maybe my words are boring the rest or something, I don't know, maybe it's of no interest. But I can tell you this, at least I'm doing what I was elected to do by that person who called me today - standing in my place on his behalf and all the great people that I have the honour of representing, to bring forward their points. He's but one example; they're daily.

Again, when talking about the people who are hungry, I had a student come into my office a short while ago, hadn't had a meal in two days, but he had to be at class that night. Those are the realities of our people in Nova Scotia today. That's a tough pill to swallow for some of us who fortunately haven't been there - but we might. We don't know where we're going when we leave here; we don't know what the future holds.

Hard times can happen overnight. You do not know what will happen. We've seen it on more than one occasion, and it will come around again - it will, and so will good times by the way, I think. There will be an opportunity in the future that we can hope for good times once again in the Province of Nova Scotia, where we might financially be able - where money may be freer to be able to spend on programs and to pave roads. We all have roads.

We heard a conversation in late debate, as funny as some might have taken it to be, there's nothing funny about it really. There are all kinds of roads that need work, that's just one small piece. We'd love to put more money in his budget. We've got a health care budget that takes 42 per cent, over \$4 billion, Mr. Speaker.

What about Community Services, Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, and jobs? Communities, Culture and Heritage may be a small piece but there is some meaning to that. Natural Resources - I can look around the room and pick them all. I've

been here long enough. I know what happens in those departments, I know the benefits, so do those who have reaped the benefits in our areas, projects that need to get done.

Mr. Speaker, you and I have had a conversation about a new arena we're trying to build over where I come from, the birthplace of hockey. I put a bill in this House in 2007. That bill has never been proclaimed but it passed unanimously. It sits around somebody's desk, it never gets proclaimed.

Big thing, talk about the economy and financial measures, what that is, that's a vision. That's not just a place where you're going to play the game of hockey, albeit important, on the surface of ice - this is about a vision for the area. This is about jobs, spinoff effects, talking about tours and Ski Martock and curling and the wineries, the highest tides in the world - all kinds of opportunity to really think outside the box on this.

We'll talk more about that as the days and the months and maybe even years go by in here, Mr. Speaker, but it's all relative. It's all about what we are doing for everyday Nova Scotians who elected us and put us in this place to stand in our place here and talk about what it is we are supposed to be doing.

It's not about one Party or another Party, and we'll criticize one another - well, that's fine. I guess that's all part of what I call the silliness or the game that goes on in this place some days. I said earlier today, when I was in debate with the Minister of Service Nova Scotia, if you took the politics out of this Chamber, you might actually get something done in Nova Scotia. Not many may agree with that, Mr. Speaker, but it's my opinion and I'm entitled to it, that's democracy. That's what my people elected me to come here and talk about - them, what's right for them.

I do hope, as we work through this process and as the months go by and the years and whatever else - maybe I won't be here too much longer, who knows, we'll see - but hopefully, when we're talking about budgets, the Financial Measures (2014) Act and programs and all the things that go along with that and the spending of \$9-plus billion now, whatever it might be at, and we think about our \$13.5 billion or \$14 billion or whatever the debt is provincially, the cost of servicing that alone is phenomenal - can you imagine if we didn't have it?

We should think seriously about what we are doing. Will there be an effect on those students, the Graduate Retention Rebate? Quite possibly yes. We are hearing from lots of them, we know what it means to them. It's a heavy debt load. Who wants to come out of school with debt of \$60,000 or \$70,000 or \$80,000? Some do, many do - for what? They're looking for that assistance.

Maybe we need to rethink that whole process. Maybe it's on a different end that we're helping capture some of that debt, I don't know, but I hope in - not this budget, it's not going to happen, but the minister says maybe she will talk more about it. Maybe there

are programs down the road that will be assisting our students and our universities and so on. We look forward to hearing all about it, as we do every other department that is out there, offering up programs and opportunities for Nova Scotians and the willingness and the want, the desire to stay here, and to work here, and to raise their families here, and to have a little fun in this fine province.

We live in one of the best parts of the world. We would argue that, it's a great place. Who wouldn't want to stay here? Who wouldn't want to come here, given the opportunity? Perhaps we need to create that opportunity or think more about creating that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, again, it's important that we really think about why we're here when we're talking about this budget, not that one dime will probably get changed on any one line in any of it; I doubt that it will. It's the same process with the whole estimates process, we go through it. We spend 40 hours in here and we spend 40 hours over there and for what? We ask question after question after question about money, not one - in eight years that I've been here at least, that I have ever seen looking back - I don't think one line item has ever changed in that Budget Book.

I don't think there has ever been an edit that said oh, Chuck, that just changed, thanks for that. Well, we don't expect it to, hence the reason we ask the local base questions, try to reconfirm some things that might be accurate or inaccurate, and show the people at home that there are some benefits, maybe, to what we are doing here and to the process of estimates and the budget itself and that there is a purpose because there is, to some degree. To some degree some might say, there are a lot of wasted hours on that, but we like to think some effort goes into it too.

The ministers have been very good, I must say, at giving clarification on points that are relevant to us at home and to the people that we represent, and we appreciate that. We do. But nothing changes from that. Let's not kid ourselves. It's the decisions that are made prior to coming here, prior to the House opening in March. Those decisions made then are what matter. Again, people will judge the government when the time comes on the decisions they have made on the programs and whatever else they put in place.

I hope as we move forward - this budget, next budget, the following budgets - that we take into consideration that there's some ability to help out Nova Scotians that need it, the ones I referred to. We hope the government will make good decisions.

With those very few words and few minutes, I will take my seat.

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

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to move second reading on Bill No. 64. I did want to say just a few words, and I intend to keep it brief, which is difficult after all the information that we've heard from the other side as well that I'd like to respond to.

First of all, I believe the Leader of the Third Party has her own revisionist history of the financial situation of the province, and I think it would be worthwhile noting a few things that I think are erroneous in her description. I'm really looking forward to the book that she may be writing, along with her other former colleague. We'd like to hear this in a little bit more depth.

In the lead-up to the 2009 election, the NDP said they would not raise taxes, and during a debate during that election their then-Leader, the member for Cole Harbour, Darrell Dexter, said that he would not raise taxes. That was why all of us were very surprised when the HST was raised very shortly after they came to office. That was a broken promise, and it was completely counter to what they promised in Opposition. I would mention that our current Premier was very honest in that debate and said that there was no way he could promise not to raise taxes until he saw the condition of the financial situation.

That's very important. That's a distinction between this Party and the Party opposite. I think that's very important. I think that in going forward, the former government made sure to hire consultants and get reports and try to vilify the previous government - the Official Opposition today - to say they were responsible for everything that was wrong in the world. In getting the report from the Deloitte consultants, if you read the report it says that the HST increase would be acceptable if it meant that there would be no additional debt.

That was supposed to counter the need for more debt, more debt financing, but that didn't happen. The HST rose, and so did the debt. The net debt rose about \$1.5 billion, but more importantly, the debt that we have to pay interest on, the bonds and the outstanding debt, went up \$3 billion. It's called our funded debt. It's what we pay interest on, and at the end of March 2013 it stood at \$15.3 billion, but four years earlier it was \$12.2 billion.

So \$12.2 billion up to \$15.3 billion in the debt that we need to service, and that equates to \$180 million, roughly, in additional service charges. So you can understand that any government today is bearing the cost of that, and any future government continues to bear that cost, regardless of which of us are going to sit in this seat and be the Finance and Treasury Board Minister and make these decisions.

I have gone out of my way not to waste time, energy, and money on previous audits and more consultants to look at what happened in the last four years. I want to move forward, and I believe the budget that was presented was a fair and accurate presentation of where we're at. I can tell you that through many hours of going through departmental

budgets and looking at approvals of budgets, every effort was made to contain costs - every effort.

But time and again, we found programs that were being offered with no funding, that the previous government had said, yes, continue to do that, continue to offer this and that program. The program that provides energy efficient equipment - what's that called, with the oil tanks? EHAP? They were instructed, continue to offer that, but we won't put any more money in your budget for it. You don't have money for that, but continue to tell the people of Nova Scotia that they can apply for it. Well, how ridiculous is that? If they have people assigned to it and programs are approved, then clearly there is going to be an over-expenditure, a need to come back and say we're over budget. We found that time and again in every department.

There was a manipulation of the date on which social assistance cheques would go out so that this past year it would look like there were 11 months of cheques, not 12, that did a nice handy maneuver to save \$17 million on the books, but not in reality. In reality that \$17 million had to go out the door to people who were being very much put in a position of anxiety and distress because of the change in the date. We reversed that, we want an honest assessment, if there is 12 months in a year there are 12 payments in the year.

Mr. Speaker, we didn't try to bend ourselves into all kinds of crazy shapes to come up with a budget that would not be honest. I really do take exception to the idea that we put as much as possible in last year. The example given by the member opposite was \$14 million that went in to recognize interest payments that are being forgiven from 2008 to 2013, to the end of that fiscal year. We were obliged to recognize that in that year because the decision, the policy had been taken and it recognized all those years, 2008 to 2013, that was why the announcement was made at the end of March 2014, to recognize it in that period. Those are honest assessments of where the money should be recognized.

To even speak that we put everything possible in the previous year completely ignores the NDP trick of putting money from the universities in a pre-payment, which they did the year before on March 28th, they prepaid \$35 million that was going to Acadia and NSCAD which belonged in the 2013-14 year, but which was paid in the previous year to push a lot of the debt or the deficit higher in that year and allow them to show what was supposedly a balanced budget in 2013-14. These are no more than manipulations and tricks and we did not do that and I do take exception to that being suggested in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, I have given some idea of what was included in the efforts to make this budget a less deep deficit. We've worked hard, we cut costs in every department. We were also inheriting the labour mandate of 2 per cent, 2.5 per cent and 3 per cent which is in contrast, I might add, to other provinces, who in the last number of years have had zeroes and 1 per cent increases. B.C. has just recently had a five-year agreement with their health unions for 1 per cent a year over 5 years and they also included an option to cost share some

of the GDP growth, if it exceeds what is actually estimated, so that way they have made some option of increase if their economy is stronger.

We didn't have any of that kind of thinking going on in the previous administration when we got 2 per cent, 2.5 per cent and 3 per cent. We've honoured that, we've continued to make sure that all the unions get that as they came forward. We were at the tail end of that mandate, but we didn't want to pull back on that because it was a commitment of the previous government and because many other unions had had that offer given to them.

I think on every count you would find that this government has been as fair as possible, with the people working for us, with our obligations right across the board and what the people of Nova Scotia have before them in the budget is a fair assessment. That doesn't end there because we have a huge job to go forward. We have to pull ourselves as a province out of the current deficit and work as fast as we can toward a surplus situation, we appreciate that. But to get there, when decisions are made and programs are curtailed, we need help, we need people in the province to support that because this is not an easy road to hoe and previous governments have not taken those harder decisions and if they don't - then that's why we're still in this position.

The Ivany report has called upon us to get our fiscal house in order. I've committed that we will begin a much more detailed analysis of each of the departments and their spending requirements, but we're not going to stop investments that are going to help the economy grow. We're going to make sure that they are balanced changes. The most important thing for this province is that we get our economy moving. The Leader of the Third Party has mentioned some of the big projects that are on the horizon. Let us all hope that each and every one of them grows and matures and becomes a reality because we need those to kick start the economy, to create jobs, to provide opportunity for the young people in this province, and we want to do all of those things in the coming months.

Mr. Speaker, with those short remarks I would like to close debate on second reading of Bill No. 64, thank you. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 64. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is carried. We'll now recess for one minute while we resolve into Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

[7: 32 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Ms. Margaret Miller in the Chair.]

[7:40 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy resumed the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

THE ASSISTANT CLERK: That the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 44 - Public Trustee Act.

Bill No. 49 - Motor Vehicle Act.

Bill No. 52 - Liquor Control Act.

Bill No. 53 - Police Act.

Bill No. 55 - Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

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

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

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

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, we will now return to the order of business, Public Bills for Second Reading.

[PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker would you please call Bill No. 56.

Bill No. 56 - Dental Act.

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

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 56. As the members opposite know, this is really a housekeeping bill that establishes that it has always been a corporate body and that's what the bill now clarifies.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 56. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker would you please call Bill No. 62.

Bill No. 62 - Halifax Convention Centre Act.

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

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 62 be read a second time. I'm pleased to rise before the members to speak on Bill No. 62. The Halifax Convention Centre will be a landmark in downtown Halifax, presenting significant opportunities for economic, tourism and revenue growth for this city and Nova Scotia as a whole. The centre will attract thousands of new visitors to Nova Scotia and connect them with communities throughout the province.

Through the conferences and other large events it will bring to Halifax and Nova Scotia, the new convention centre will bring more people and business here, benefiting local businesses, generating revenue and boosting tourism. The new centre will be a much bigger space than the current one; think of the large events we as a province will now be able to host, bringing many new visitors to our province and offering the opportunity to showcase all that Nova Scotia has to offer. Also, think of the people who will be needed to work in this large new space. With construction well underway on this site, we want to be sure we have the structures in place to be ready for the new centre to open in 2016.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank our partners in the new convention centre: the federal government which is a one-third contributor to the construction project and the Halifax Regional Municipality. Yesterday Mayor Mike

Savage joined me to talk with the media about this bill, about our partnership and the opportunity ahead of us. The provincial government and HRM will share responsibility for managing the new convention centre. Together we will establish a new corporation to manage and operate it.

The Halifax Convention Centre Act requires the two levels of government, provincial and municipal, to jointly appoint a board of directors to oversee the corporation. The bill describes and formalizes the formal partnership between HRM and the provincial government and how the new centre will be managed going forward, accountable to all Nova Scotians. The new board of directors will have the skills and experience to help the Halifax Convention Centre attract thousands of people and millions of dollars to Nova Scotia. Once it is in place, the board will set and implement the strategic direction for the new corporation.

The corporation will be required to manage the centre in a way that will promote and develop economic development, tourism and industry in Nova Scotia and HRM. It will be accountable to Nova Scotians for its results. This legislation requires the corporation to report to both the provincial government and the Halifax Regional Municipality. This reporting includes annual audited financial statements and a report on the effectiveness and competitiveness of the centre's operations, including a third-party evaluation every five years.

Mr. Speaker, once this legislation is enacted, the two levels of government can move forward with appointing a full board and planning for the transition of Trade Centre Limited staff to the new corporation. Understanding that Trade Centre organization still needs to continue operating until the new convention centre opens, it's not likely that staff will all go at once, but over time to meet the operational needs of the organizations.

The new board and the experience and expertise of Trade Centre staff will ensure we are ready to attract and welcome new visitors to Halifax and our province and maximize this great opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, the province and the Halifax Regional Municipality are pleased with their success to date. Sales and marketing are well in hand. Already 19 groups have committed to bringing national and international conferences to the new centre when it opens. The events booked to date are expected to attract nearly 15,000 visitors to our province and more are on the way.

Mr. Speaker, the new Halifax Convention Centre is an opportunity to connect our businesses, tourism operators, and researchers, with visitors from around the world that would explore our province and all we have to offer. This legislation is another important step in getting ready to open the centre, ready to make most of the opportunities the convention centre will bring, and to welcome the thousands of new visitors when it opens in 2016. Merci beaucoup.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I have just a few comments on Bill No. 62, a few concerns that could easily be clarified, I think, by the minister, maybe in his closing comments or, if not, maybe get some information to me or to our caucus over the next little while.

When looking through the piece of legislation, it looks like it may be possible for the HRM Council to authorize the sale of any convention centre without a public hearing. Currently the situation within the municipality is that any sale of municipal property goes through a public hearing and they need to put forth a rationale for that sale, so I am concerned that this piece of legislation might allow for the municipality to have a different approach if, down the road, there's a decision of selling it. Maybe the minister could get some clarification for us on that piece of legislation.

The other thing that appears in the legislation is that the sale of shares is possible, under this bill, for the project or for the convention centre. I would assume that may not happen until the convention centre is profitable but it's still a concern, so could the convention centre be privatized under this bill? Those are some of the concerns that we have in the caucus so I would hope that the minister may be able to endeavour to get some of those answers for those questions and concerns. We're more than happy to have this piece of legislation go through the process and over to Law Amendments Committee. Thanks.

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

The honourable Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, in light of the couple of points raised by the member for Sackville-Cobequid, we'll certainly look into that and provide the member with that information.

As far as the issue regarding the Halifax Regional Municipality, obviously we'll reach out to them for some clarification on the concern raised. I can certainly advise the member that we have no intentions of privatizing the new convention centre. This bill simply formalizes the new relationship between both the province and HRM and makes it clear that it is a 50-50 partnership in the operation of that.

There was some concern that the previous legislation, in fact I'm told was structured such that the sole shareholder of Trade Centre Limited was the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. I didn't know I had that much of a portfolio, Mr. Speaker, but clearly that's only in legislation, certainly not meant to be reflective of actual ownership.

This legislation clearly outlines the fact that it is a 50-50 partnership between the province and HRM, but obviously if any concerns are raised, we'll be happy to address those of the members or through the Law Amendments process, and any issues that may come out of that.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would now close debate on second reading of Bill No. 62.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 62. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 63.

Bill No. 63 - Education Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

HON. KAREN CASEY: I move that Bill No. 63, an Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1995-96, the Education Act, be read for a second time.

Mr. Speaker, the current school review process has been a difficult and emotional process for families, communities, school boards, and municipalities. Mr. Robert Fowler headed a year-long review of the process and did extensive public consultation. He heard the concerns of parents and communities, and as a result, a new school review process is a departure from the past. This legislation sets the foundation for a new process based on long-term planning, public engagement, and collaborative action.

The new process will involve the public, municipalities, families, communities, and school boards in a new school options committee. The mandate of that committee is to focus on examining the best solutions for a region or group of schools versus responding to the proposed closure of only one school. A facilitator will lead that school options committee, and the report and recommendations to the school board will be generated by that committee, and not prepared solely by school board staff or by parents or by the community. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we know that you cannot legislate trust, but we will begin to try to rebuild trust through a new process. This legislation will only work if trust is there among the stakeholders. Policies and legislation have a greater chance for success if there is that

element of trust among the stakeholders. I look forward to hearing comments from members of the Opposition, and encourage them to support this legislation.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, this legislation will give everyone more awareness of each step of the process and ample time to prepare. Communities should not have any surprises dropped upon them. It appears that under this new school review policy we will witness a more collaborative process, and a number of options for schools under review, with closure not necessarily the only one.

Will school closure continue to be emotional? I think the answer is yes. That's the reality of the process. The process that has been used is not working. I believe this new school review policy is a positive move in the right direction. I would have liked to see some schools that are currently in the process in the CCRSB involved in this new process, and I guess the answer to that is yes.

Hopefully the air of trust will eventually surface, and communities will feel more comfortable about the process. Again, I think this new bill with review of schools is definitely heading in the right direction. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: I'm just going to be brief on this. We do support the review, as you heard my colleague for Pictou Centre talk about. I have a school that the minister is well aware of, Newport Station District elementary school, which will actually celebrate 50 years of existence this coming Saturday. It is slated to close right now, through a procedure that was indeed emotional and lengthy.

It is slated to close at the end of 2014-15 school year, which is unfortunate, but I know that with this new law many questions have been raised, and I think you addressed some of them earlier today, maybe in Question Period - the minister did, Mr. Speaker - with regard to when it takes effect or whether it's retroactive and what might possibly be done. The only issue, personally, that I have with it that has been raised through parents of those children now going to Newport Station District Elementary, is geographically there is a school three minutes up the road in Three Mile Plains that could take some, if not all - it was stated at one point they could take all 75 students at Newport Station. A letter was sent out recently from the school board through the school's acting principal there, that basically said there are no more options, you're just all going to Brooklyn now.

It just doesn't make sense from a geographic perspective, I guess, and I'm not sure - I know the minister puts everything back and maybe that's the right thing to do to the boards and it may be difficult to get involved in, but some of these decisions via the board, I think, need to be reviewed more than the school closing process. I'm a little concerned,

I've always stood in my place here and talked about the board and our relationship being good, some great people on the board, but there's a lot of - I don't know what the right word for it is - "dictatorship" if you want. Maybe that's too strong, but it's dictating now there's only one option; we're going there and that's it. That's not right as far as those parents are concerned, they've just gone through a very emotional couple of years actually, it's been long, as the minister is aware from the previous processes and it bounced around a bit too, as well with what was accurate and what wasn't accurate and how the process should work - it wasn't a good process.

Knowing we're moving to a new world and Mr. Fowler, we all know the abilities there and don't question those, but I think that although the minister may wish to be hands-off for the most part with regard to how this process works, I, for one, would like to see her and her department to be a little more hands-on in some of these examples. There aren't a lot of them, I don't think, there may be more to come as populations decline, that's fine, the process is fine, but I think that the department has to be part of that decision making to some degree, I'd certainly like her to consider some of that.

I have a letter here from the Newport Station District School that basically states that, and I'll table that just for her reference more than anything else, I'm not sure if she has a copy of it or not, but I would table it. With those few comments, thank you.

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

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to stand here this evening to talk on Bill No. 63. As an MLA, I went through the process of a small school closure so I have a lot of experience with respect to how emotional it is for the community and the challenges.

It's important to note the school closure process has been around for a long time. Before I even ran in 2009, I remember as a community member the issues that were coming forward about small school closures. One in particular was on Tancook Island, a very small school with normally only maybe sometimes up to six children, so this is not something that is new, it is a very long process.

I am proud to say that it was the NDP Government that commissioned Mr. Fowler to look at the issues with respect to this process, so I'm very pleased that the minister is accepting the report that is coming forward from Mr. Fowler and that they travelled the province and they have talked to parents and they have talked to teachers and community members. I know that this is just a start and we are looking forward to what will come out of the Law Amendments Committee because there are questions within that are not focused on in the Legislature. So we're hoping that those will come to light and they'll be dealt with. It's important that there is long-term planning and it's very important that communities get involved at a very early stage in the process - and those are the things that

we're going to be watching for in terms of the long-term planning, that the planning that is done by the many different school boards that we have in the province will be consistent.

We have to ensure that whether a school board is representing the South Shore of Nova Scotia or a school board from Cape Breton it is using the same process. You can adopt many different types of long-term strategies, so we have to ensure that there's consistency there, and who is going to monitor that to make sure that the strategies are equal, the accountability, the time frame of a long-term strategy. What is the definition? Is it three years? Is it five years? Is it eight years? And when in the plan will there be a communication strategy within that long-term planning that will be the same throughout the province, from every school board, to ensure that communities, families, parents, and teachers know exactly when they have the ability to provide input, and not just the input but also be part of the decision-making process?

The other point we will be watching to see how it is worked out is with regards to school boards' responsibilities in terms of - we do know that they have the power to make the decision. How does the minister or how does that power structure work? Presently it's in the hands of the school boards. If there is an issue, is the minister able to be involved in that or is it that the minister will say well that's totally a school board decision?

I can tell you that from a public perception, even though they do vote for their school members, the public always feels very strongly that those who represent them in government, and the minister in particular, should be having some more hands-on, in terms of decision-making. I think those are some of the things, especially when you look at the outcomes that will be addressed in the long-term strategies - who is going to be accountable for that? What happens if a school board does not follow the recommendations? Does the minister have the authority to come in and make sure that process takes place?

The other piece that we'll be looking for is the suggestion - we know that small schools, especially in rural Nova Scotia, can certainly be an economic base for community. School boards have an educational responsibility and we know that their prime concern is education. I know that within some of the review it talks about the economic part of that.

We need to make sure that that system is there and that there is input at looking at not just the hub model because of the fact that sometimes communities, because they're all so very different and unique, have different resources. Some communities don't have the same resources to be able to offer a hub model that may be able to work for them, so will there be financial supports? Will it come directly from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development or will it come from the school boards, to enable them to be able to provide for a community that may lack the same opportunities as a community that is only 30 minutes away that has more of the resources to be able to offer those hub programs, keeping in mind those programs are usually operating at the times that the school would be closed?

We do know that we have some community school models in the province but we have many schools that are not accessible after school hours or on the weekend, so we need to see how that is going to all be worked out.

I think this is a good start and I'm pleased that through the former NDP Government we were able to - because we did know that there were a lot of issues and often things do come to a head before - we had many discussions over the process and there were decisions that were made in past governments that tied our hands, too, as a government, as will be with this government. How are they going to approach that to make changes with regard to that, to ensure that this legislation does work and it truly works at the grassroots level and that communities have the ability to work through that?

We also know there will be times, as the minister has said, that a school will just have to be closed. I think the key is that people want to be part of that process very early on in those stages.

Those are a few of the things that we're looking at and want to see how it works out in Law Amendments Committee and what recommendations and what people are talking about and how there will be a transitional plan put in place to ensure that the legislation that's being presented here will actually work, not just on paper but in reality. Thank you very much.

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

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I just have a few comments, I'll be short. First, I would just like to mention that my daughter, who is now 35, was 16 months old when I went to the first process of trying to keep a school open, and we've been doing that ever since. Here is the thing I would like the minister to consider in this bill: first and foremost there should be some kind of a regulation that the amount of distance the child has to travel to get to the school, especially elementary, be part of the decision-making. They need to be able to look at that.

Secondly, I think we need to be able to look at the fact that sometimes geographically a school may be closer in another school district rather than in the school board that you're dealing with, and we should encourage them to work together to make it better for the child. We know from experience that travelling a long time on a bus and not getting their proper nutrition in the morning has an effect on the outcome of the education of that child.

My last point is, I just want to congratulate the minister on this being her birthday.
(Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Well, now that it has been brought to our attention, I will take the liberty on behalf of all the members of the House to wish the honourable minister a happy

birthday. (Interruption) Oh, and the honourable member for Halifax Chebucto as well. (Applause)

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

The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, perhaps before I begin to respond, I would like to thank the member and I would like to acknowledge my colleague - he does affectionately refer to me as his "Leg. mother."

Mr. Speaker I'm pleased to hear the comments from my colleagues. I sense from all of the comments that there is support for a new process. I think everyone recognizes that it is a very emotional time, it has never been without emotion, it has never been without conflict. What we're hoping that this legislation can do is to rebuild the trust, keep the community and keep the parents involved from the beginning, not at the end of the process, to make sure that the committee has a broad representation. The distrust that exists in some communities between the parents and school board staff can be taken away and there will be equal players on the committee to make sure that whatever is recommended is something that is a joint recommendation from all of those people who are involved.

I will make the comment that there were 19 recommendations that came in the report from Mr. Fowler; we have accepted all 19 recommendations. They were based on what people told Mr. Fowler as he was going about doing his public consultations. One of the things that we did in order to try to demonstrate that we did care and we did respect the voices of those people in our communities was that we had a community representative go to each of those public sessions, a different representative for each community so that we and that person followed the process through and sat at the table with Mr. Fowler when they came up with their recommendations because I wanted to make sure that people in those communities understood that what they were saying was going to be heard and was going to be part of the final recommendation.

With those few comments, I want to thank my colleagues for their comments, for their insight, and I will now close debate on second reading of Bill No. 63.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 63. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 65.

Bill No. 65 - Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 65, an Act to Amend Chapter 69 of the Acts of 1992, the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission Act, now be read for a second time.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today in the House to talk about this amendment. It will enable the appointment of an interim board to run the commission and bring stability to the operation. This interim board replaces the former board, which I have suspended. This interim board will oversee the completion of an audit from the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition and development of a permanent and sustainable operating plan for the provincial exhibition.

My three potential candidates for interim board are Chairman Bruce Kennedy, as well as Cameron MacEachen and Gary Muise. These three gentlemen will assume their positions with the passage of this proposed bill.

The tender for the financial audit for the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition has been awarded to KPMG. Primary work is underway, and the audit is expected to be completed in July. An audit and operational review will help the new board of directors get a clear understanding of the commission's current finances and help them chart a path for a sustainable future.

In closing, this will ensure that the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission is self-supporting, has long-term stability, and is able to help grow Nova Scotia's economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise to my feet today to speak to Bill No. 65, amending the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission Act. I rise in support of this bill today - I'm sure some of the members across the way might be surprised, but yes, we do support bills that we believe in. The minister and I have talked at great length about this particular bill and about what's going on in Truro-Bible Hill.

Personally, I believe this is a continuation of the work that I started a couple of years ago when I introduced a private bill as a backbencher in order to try to open the then-existing board for outside members to be able to join the board. When I became an MLA four and a half years ago, one of the first things I was told was that people in the area

were very concerned about the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition, and the board in particular. They said there was no transparency, that people didn't know where the money was going, that the money was being mishandled and mismanaged, and that the place was basically going to the dogs, although it was supposed to be for horses.

I looked into the matter. I talked to a lot of people. One of the people I spoke to at great length was Bruce Kennedy, who is now on the board, and hopefully will be on the interim board. The minister has indicated that he is the number-one person who would be the chair of the new interim board. Bruce knows all about the history of harness racing in Nova Scotia - he's had horses, he knows everything you want to know about it, and he cares, and he's a businessman, so he knows how to make things successful.

He also knows how to deal with expenditures and how to try to make people want to come and spend time and spend money at something that is part of our tradition. The Truro Raceway is 138 years old, and this summer, unfortunately, the board that was already in place took a long time for some of the members to decide that they were going to retire, after being on the board for some time.

We opened it up, and a few new members got on, but not enough. So the board, as it existed, threatened to close down the racetrack overnight. They didn't give anybody any warning - not me, not the government, not the people, nobody. We read about it in the newspaper, that they were going to close down the Truro Raceway after 138 years.

For myself, I felt that this was something that I could not stand by and let happen, not on my watch. I felt that it was really unfair to the horse owners, to the trainers, and the people who worked there and all of the spinoff businesses right around the province, really, a lot of farmers who grow the hay that feeds the horses, and the tack shops, the harness makers and so on, gas stations, coffee shops in the area.

I basically came out of the woodwork and said no, this is not acceptable. We have to do something about this and we had emergency meeting, after emergency meeting, after emergency meeting. If anybody thinks that MLAs don't work hard, I'm sure that newer members are starting to get the idea now. We work really hard. We work long hours and you never know what's going to come next. You never know what crisis is going to be on your doorstep tomorrow and you have to be ready for it. You have to be able to show up, dress up, get out there, and get the job done.

A lot of people don't realize that about us, they just think oh, they just collect their big, fat cheque and they sit around and go out and eat hotdogs and hamburgers in the summertime and that's all they do when they're not sitting in the House, but that's not true. I know we all work hard and I believe we're all here for the same reason: we care about Nova Scotia, we care about the people, we care about our way of life, and we care about our cultural activities.

In Nova Scotia at this time harness racing is still part of our culture. In P.E.I. it's a huge part of their culture. Everybody, pretty well, has a horse over there and they've got a beautiful racetrack too. This summer we came very, very close to losing it, but what happened out of that crisis was the whole community rose to its feet and said no way, José, we're not going to allow this to happen, and it basically forced the board's hand to then sit back and go oh, okay, I didn't realize that people were going to be so up in arms and that the MLA was going to come out of the woodwork and be on every television show that she could be to talk to the people of Nova Scotia and say this is not right, this is not fair.

A lot of these people, by the way, don't have pensions, they've done this job all their lives. Some of the drivers have worked at it, they're 65 years old and they don't have pensions. They've given their sweat, their blood, their tears, and their own finances into this industry. For them to be told, by the way, after the next race you're not allowed on the racetrack, you're not allowed walking your horses on the racetrack, we're not going to have any more races and, by the way, you've got two weeks to get rid of the horses out of all the stables and move them off somewhere else.

What happened next was we had a meeting and, sure enough, a number of the board members did step aside and three men were voted in to take their places. One was Bruce Kennedy, one was Cameron MacEachen, and one was Gary Muise. I'm very pleased to see that these are the three names that the minister has put forward as being the probable or possible people to be taking over the interim board. I feel very confident that they will do a good job. Gary Muise is well known in Halifax and he is very well known in the harness racing industry in parimutuels. He knows that world very well. For years now parimutuel betting has actually been paying most of the bills at the Truro Raceway, 92 per cent of the revenue comes from parimutuels at this point in time. We'd like to change that and have more income coming in from other sources, and that's what these gentlemen will be doing: they'll be taking a look at the whole picture.

I'm also glad to see that the forensic audit will be continued. It's only going back a few years. Personally I would like to see it go back for the last 10 years, but it's better than nothing and it's good that the minister started that and I commend him for that.

I'm very pleased to be here to speak to this bill and, together, I believe we can change things and we can make this province a better province. Thank you very much.

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

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for those words of support on this very important issue. I know when I was first approached by the Premier to take this over, I thought to myself, oh no, what am I getting into? I'm pleased that I was given that responsibility. I remember from being in this House for a long

time it has always been an issue of the raceway, and the issue has always been around accountability. That changed the day I took it over and I appreciate the support from both Parties in this regard.

I'll just bring a quick update and then I'm going to take my place, but I was talking to the operators and managers, the temporary people we have in place now, and they are actually paying their bills on time now and there are a few old bills that they're going to clean up shortly. So this is the off-season, the season before everything gets underway, so the centre with the fantastic volunteers who are there working and the in-kind support that is coming in from several parts of the community, this facility has turned around in a very short time.

When we get the audit finished and we get the final structure in place that we're going to put in place this Fall, I look for great things from that facility, so we can have another 135-plus years there, which I think is very important to Nova Scotia's economy and to the economy of Truro-Bible Hill.

So with those few words I want to close debate on Bill No. 65.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 65. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 66.

Bill No. 66 - Halifax Regional Municipality Charter and Municipal Government Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: I move that Bill No. 66 be now read a second time. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House this evening to speak to the six amendments. These amendments were requested by Halifax Regional Municipality and we are pleased to bring them forward to ensure the charter contains the consistency and clarity HRM is seeking. The amendments give HRM greater flexibility and discretion when making decisions, they clarify some inconsistencies in the legislation, and ensure the municipality can govern and administer efficiently and effectively.

One of the six changes requires an amendment to the Municipal Government Act; the other five amendments are contained in the HRM Charter. The amendment of the Municipal Government Act pertains to the ability of municipalities to regulate development near airports. This amendment will apply to all municipalities that have airports, not only HRM. It corrects an oversight in the legislation for municipal planning purposes and harmonizes provisions regarding regulation of development near airports. Mr. Speaker, we want municipalities to have clear legislation and policies so they can carry on business and govern on behalf of their residents.

I'm not going to give members of the House a history lesson, but I will provide a little background for context. Halifax Regional Municipality was incorporated in 1996; they've governed under the Municipal Government Act and now the HRM Charter. Mr. Speaker, it's the charter where most of these amendments are being made. HRM approached us seeking clarity through amendments through the charter and how they are to govern. The amendments align with HRM's long-term planning and are important to the council as they move the municipality forward.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on each of these amendments. I already spoke to the change in the Municipal Government Act relating to the development near airports - the remaining five apply to the charter to address inconsistencies the municipality has identified. Specifically the proposed amendments will: allow the municipal council to hold in camera meetings for confidential intergovernmental matters; clarify the councils may make policies relating to when a special majority is required to decide a question arising at a meeting of council; allow infrastructure charges to be imposed for new or expanding recreational fire and library facilities in a subdivision bylaw; include a Justice of the Peace as an issuing authority for entry orders; and make it optional for HRM to do a formal survey and description of property when considering property to be expropriated.

Mr. Speaker, the reason for the amendment allowing council to hold in camera meetings is simple - council needs the ability to discuss confidential intergovernmental information prior to it being made public. The rules apply the same as all other in camera discussions with regard to reporting back to the Committee of the Whole, and ensuring all decisions pass council approval in the regular manner.

The amendment relating to special majorities to decide a question at council meetings won't make any difference in terms of how council is operating. This is a housekeeping item that is intended to add clarity to the process that is currently being used by council. The amendment is retroactive so there is no question as to what constitutes a majority vote on council decisions before and after the passage of this amendment.

The purpose of the amendment allowing for infrastructure charges in certain areas is to support planned development identified in the regional plan. This change should encourage growth in a planned manner and be a clarifying tool for developers in answering questions around who pays for additional infrastructure to support the development.

Finally, the amendment to include a justice of the peace is an issuing authority for an order to enter a property. Allowing justices of the peace to issue entry orders will expedite the process for HRM.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to listening to the comments of the Opposition.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise on Bill No. 66. Where there have been a number of pieces of legislation come through the minister's department, we've been looking through all of them to make sure we fully understand them.

With this piece of legislation, Bill No. 66, we do have some concerns. I'll take a few minutes to go through those and we'll say that we won't hold up the process, we want to see the public and the ability of the public to come and make comments at Law Amendments Committee around Bill No. 66.

The first piece which might be just some clarification the minister could provide either in his closing remarks or afterwards is around, "Administrative Order Number One is hereby validated . . ." I'm trying to figure out exactly what that entails. There's not a lot of information about it in the bill, so maybe the minister or staff could provide some information over the next couple of days around what exactly that clause allows the municipality to do. That's the first thing.

The second thing that we do have concerns with, and being an MLA for the last almost 11 years in the HRM, one of the areas that I've heard a lot of concern around with the municipality over the last decade is those closed sessions or in camera meetings. I don't understand why this piece of legislation expands the opportunity for the municipality to do that. There are a number of areas that currently allow them to do that. I know this specific change deals with when the municipality has some negotiations with either the Government of Canada or the Government of Nova Scotia. I don't believe that in camera sessions, or closed sessions, is the right approach to take.

Being in government over the last four years, there were a lot of projects that we worked on with the municipalities around the province and we did that through communications, being transparent - not holding closed, in camera sessions. We looked at projects like the new library here in Halifax; I know it has been recognized for the architecture. It's a piece of work that the province worked with the municipality on all through the normal process of the departments that oversaw it, whether it was Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal or even right down to Finance and Treasury Board. They were able to have those meetings with the officials within the municipality, but at no time was there ever a closed session or in camera session to get that project off the ground.

The other one, the piece of legislation we just passed dealing with this is the convention centre, a huge endeavour which has a big price tag on it. The Province of Nova Scotia has been able to negotiate with the municipality on that, and at no time was there ever an in camera closed session to deal with that. The other one is the four-pad arena in Hammonds Plains on the Hammonds Plains Road. Another great project for the community, a great project for HRM, and it was the relationship between the municipality and the province and I believe the federal government had some funding in there also. That, too, at no time was there a closed session or an in camera meeting with the municipal council.

Now over the years, I think some of those closed sessions that the HRM have had on huge projects that really were - I mean most of them were terrible. I remember one on the Oval. Everybody appreciates the Oval in Halifax, but there was a series of closed sessions, in camera meetings, with the municipality around the sponsorship and who would be allowed to try to bid for sponsorship of the Oval. The public didn't like that, they were upset with the fact that so many closed sessions happened.

The other one is the KISS concert, there were closed sessions on that. I'm a big fan of KISS, but when taxpayers' money goes towards supporting events like that, there shouldn't be opportunities for these closed sessions. This is dealing with taxpayers' money. I think the opportunities that the municipality has now for those closed sessions are well-defined in the charter. Of course, I think recalling back a number of years ago now, but probably one of the biggest, I think - I'm trying to use the right word because you might call me - botched job was the Commonwealth Games, Mr. Speaker, something that I, as an individual, thought was a great endeavour to go after, the opportunities that would have presented to Nova Scotians would have been great.

We just witnessed, for example, hosting the Canada Winter Games and the legacy from that is amazing, Mr. Speaker, from one end of the province to the other. The Commonwealth Games, the reason, I believe, really took off in the wrong direction was because of the closed sessions, in camera meetings. People in Nova Scotia, in Halifax, for example, were not told what was going on, they weren't told how much it was going to cost. That was all behind closed doors.

I remember - I think it was the Minister of Service Nova Scotia at the time, Barry Bernet, MLA for the next community that I represented, I saw him on the news that day or that night, that they decided whoa, as a province we can't support this because the information wasn't there because most of what happened was behind closed doors. The province itself, I think at the time, made the right decision. They walked away from supporting that project. That project went nowhere, I think it ended up in Glasgow, Scotland, I believe, were the ones that hosted that (Interruption) Edinburgh, Scotland.

There are just three examples of what happens when closed door, in camera meetings happen. I don't think there's an appetite in HRM - I know there's not an appetite

in Sackville - for more of those closed sessions or in camera sessions and I do have concerns with that.

I know the minister wasn't the minister at the time, but I hope he goes back to the department and asks what the atmosphere was like around some of these projects that went in the wrong direction because of these closed sessions.

With those comments, as I said, I hope the minister might be able to give me some clarification on Administrative Order Number One, but we do have concerns around increasing the ability for HRM to have more in camera, closed-door sessions here in Halifax. I don't think the public would support it either.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we will look forward to this going to the Law Amendments Committee, and I hope that the public, if they feel the same way and I'm reading them right, will voice their concerns on some of the clauses that are here in the charter that will change the charter - I believe we were told at the time when it came forward that the HRM needed the charter and you'll never see us again, it's going to allow us to do our business.

I know many of the changes that have come forward in this session are changes to the charter. I know there are always opportunities that we need to adjust, but I think some of these adjustments that we see here are not what the residents of HRM would like to see. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for his detailed analysis and I'll make two commitments to my colleague: we will pursue and gather additional information on the Administrative Order, Number One, and I will certainly engage staff, specific to the examples that my colleague has provided, and follow up in discussion with my colleague at that time.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I rise to close debate on Bill No. 51.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs wish to correct the bill number?

MR. FUREY: My apologies, I'm sorry. Bill No. 66, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 66. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to advise that does conclude the government's business for today. It has been a very productive day. We will meet tomorrow, Friday, April 25th between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. The order of business will be the daily routine, whereas we will then proceed to the consideration of the estimates. Following that will be the budget vote and if time permits we will be moving into Committee of the Whole House on Bills and third reading.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now rise to meet again on Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise to meet again on Friday, April 25th between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

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

[The House rose at 8:37 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1336**

By: Hon. Michel Samson (Economic and Rural Development and Tourism)

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

Whereas the Strait-Richmond Atom A Pirates won gold at the Allan Sullivan Atom A Hockey Tournament on December 1, 2013; and

Whereas the Strait-Richmond Atom A Pirates defeated the Bedford Blues 5-1 to win the tournament; and

Whereas the team consists of Brayden Marchand, Ethan Donaldson, Dylan Campbell, Kent Denny, Ethan Richards, Hunter Johnson, Charlie LeBlanc, Brayden Kelly, Trent Diggdon, Bryden Landry, Ryan Digout, Dave Matthews, Andrew MacNeil, Christine Ryan, Brady MacNeil, and Shamus Beaton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating the Strait-Richmond Atom A Pirates on their impressive victory.

RESOLUTION NO. 1337

By: Hon. Michel Samson (Economic and Rural Development and Tourism)

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

Whereas Barb Cameron is a singer/songwriter from Grand River, Richmond County; and

Whereas she was featured on The Gordie Samson Songcamp Volume One compilation CD; and

Whereas The Gordie Samson Songcamp began in 2010, and brings together songwriters between the ages of 15 and 24;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Barb Cameron, and wish her the best of luck in her career.

RESOLUTION NO. 1338

By: Hon. Michel Samson (Economic and Rural Development and Tourism)

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

Whereas on December 1, 2013, Donnie Mariner of Foodland Village Grocery, in St. Peters, won an award for outstanding achievement from the Lieutenant Governor's Persons with Disabilities Employer Partnership Awards; and

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

Whereas Donnie Mariner and Foodland were one of ten employers in the province given the award this year;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Donnie Mariner and the staff of Foodland Village Grocery on the well-deserved award, and in thanking them for their continued leadership.

RESOLUTION NO. 1339

By: Hon. Michel Samson (Economic and Rural Development and Tourism)

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

Whereas Richmond County natives Tristan Martell and Jamison Sampson competed at the Eastern Canadian Powerlifting Championship at Sydney Academy on October 26th; and

Whereas Tristan Martell earned the trophy for best sub-junior lifter competing in the 66 kg division, and broke his own national bench-press record with 281.1 lbs; and

Whereas Jamison Sampson, competing in his first event, took home silver in the 74 kg sub-junior division;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Tristan Martell and Jamison Sampson on their impressive showings.

RESOLUTION NO. 1340

By: Hon. Michel Samson (Economic and Rural Development and Tourism)

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

Whereas the SAERC Saints girls volleyball team competed at the Division III girls volleyball provincials at the Université Sainte-Anne on December 8th; and

Whereas the Saints finished second in the province, with victories over École du Carrefour, South Colchester, Clare and New Germany; and

Whereas the team consisted of Inma Perez, Rebecca Acker, Carly Carter, Emilie MacKinnon, Hannah MacDonald, Megan MacNeil, Melissa Bland, Jenny Beaton, Cassie McNamara, Jenna Pierce, Cailey McNamara, Madison Timmons and coaches David MacIsaac and Solange Landry;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate the SAERC Saints girls volleyball team on their second place finish.

RESOLUTION NO. 1341

By: Hon. Michel Samson (Economic and Rural Development and Tourism)

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

Whereas Richmond native Dr. Rosemary Polegato, a Professor of Commerce at Mount Allison University, has received a 2014 3M National Teaching Fellowship; and

Whereas 3M Fellows must demonstrate superlative undergraduate teaching, sustained over several years, as well as educational leadership that enhances post-secondary teaching excellence locally, nationally and internationally; and

Whereas Dr. Polegato is the daughter of Louisdale resident Mary Ellen and the late Geno Polegato;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Dr. Polegato on this impressive accomplishment.

RESOLUTION NO. 1342

By: Hon. Pat Dunn (Pictou Centre)

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

Whereas Stellarton native Mark Vokey has been named the Nova Scotia Major Midget Hockey League's Most Valuable Player; and

Whereas the high school student works extremely hard to maintain his academics and has still been able to be a leader among his peers in the hockey arena, with his strong work ethic and leading his team by example; and

Whereas Mark has played a key role in helping his team, Pictou County Weeks Major Midgets, advance to compete in the Atlantic Major Midgets Hockey Championship;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mark Vokey for an incredibly successful hockey season and wish him well in his future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1343

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 14th annual Nova Scotia Recycles Contest celebration took place on April 15th, including an award ceremony and dinner; and

Whereas RRFB Nova Scotia hosts a contest in partnership with the seven solid waste management regions for students from Grades Primary to 12 across the province in various artistic activities, to promote participation in waste reduction; and

Whereas Tyler Russell of Glooscap Elementary was awarded 3rd place in the Grade 2/3 Sticker Design Category;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Tyler Russell for his industrious efforts and creative abilities.

RESOLUTION NO. 1344

By: Mr. Allan MacMaster (Inverness)

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

Whereas the meeting of cousins Candice MacEachern and Shauna Beaton as rival women's hockey coaches took place in Fairbanks, Alaska; and

Whereas the two women were coaching provincial midget teams from their respective adopted homes of Yukon and Nunavut in an elite female tournament; and

Whereas the two will both be back in Mabou this summer to visit family;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Candice MacEachern and Shauna Beaton for their contribution to young women in amateur sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 1345

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 Becky Hanna of Howie Centre has committed to play for the Cape Breton University Capers women's soccer next season; and

Whereas Becky is currently a student at Riverview High School and will be attending Cape Breton University in the Fall; and

Whereas Becky was named a first-team all-star and league MVP for Division 1 Girls in the Cape Breton High School Soccer League in 2012 and was also the league's top rookie and an all-star in 2011;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Becky Hanna on becoming a member of CBU's Capers and wish her the best of luck in her future academic and sports endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1346

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 Kyle Farrell from Howie Centre, a player with the Cape Breton Screaming Eagles, was recently honoured at the team's annual awards banquet; and

Whereas Kyle Farrell was awarded the fan's choice award for the third year in a row, an honour voted on by the fans; and

Whereas Kyle also received the Jim Hawkins Memorial Bursary, which recognizes community and educational involvement;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Kyle Farrell on receiving these awards and wish him the best of luck as he continues on with his hockey career.

RESOLUTION NO. 1347

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 14th Annual Nova Scotia Recycles contest celebration took place on April 15th, including an award ceremony and dinner; and

Whereas RRFB Nova Scotia hosts a contest, in partnership with the seven solid waste management regions, for students from Grades Primary to 12 across the province in various artistic activities to promote participation in waste reduction; and

Whereas Anna Salsman, a Grade 6 student at Northeast Kings Education Centre, was awarded 3rd place in the Grade 4 to 6 Whiteboard Design category;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Anna Salsman for her industrious efforts and creative abilities.

RESOLUTION NO. 1348

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 Mr. Thomas McCallum, formally of Six Mile Brook, Pictou County, has completed and released his first CD, entitled *Crocus Song*; and

Whereas Thomas, who is now a student at King's College, spent his younger years participating in numerous musical programs in Pictou County, including his school choir and the Pictou District Honour Choir; and

Whereas Thomas' CD *Crocus Song* contains five songs in the folk style, inspired by his family, friends, experiences, and the Nova Scotia landscape;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Mr. Thomas McCallum on the release of his first CD and wish him all the best completing his degree and in his future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1349

By: Hon. Andrew Younger (Energy)

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

Whereas Jayne Beaumont, a member of the Main Street Business Improvement Association and owner of Happy Smiles Dental Hygiene, offers discounted dental hygiene services to clients who have no dental plan; and

Whereas Gift from the Heart is a national program comprised of independent dental hygienists who open their doors to those who could not normally afford proper dental hygiene care; and

Whereas on February 8, 2014, Happy Smiles Dental Hygiene, one of the only two Nova Scotia locations, participated in the sixth annual Gift from the Heart program by offering free cleanings for an entire day;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing Jayne Beaumont and Happy Smiles Dental Hygiene for her generosity and community spirit, and wish her continued success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1350

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 the Yarmouth City Drug Store Female Bantam A Mariners won the Bantam A Female Provincial Championship on March 30th; and

Whereas Laura Legere was named tournament MVP, leading scorer and all-star team forward; Lindsey Minard was all-star goalie; and in the provincial skills competitions, the team won five of six competitions; and

Whereas the team consists of Lauren Symonds, Tori Devine, Abby Legere, Angele LeBlanc, Payton Doucette, Alex d'Entremont, Hallie Moore, Samantha Nutter, Mackenzie Muise, Laura Legere, Saige Breton, Lauren Goudey, and Lindsey Minard, and are coached by head coach Paul Legere and assistant coaches Mark Muise and Craig Minard;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Yarmouth City Drug Store Female Bantam A Mariners on their gold medal victory and wish each of them success in their future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1351

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas Communities in Bloom is a nation-wide non-profit organization that celebrates civic pride, environmental stewardship, beautification, and community involvement; and

Whereas the Town of Windsor once again received a Five-Bloom rating in the Fall of 2013 thanks to Windsor's Communities in Bloom committee co-chairs, Pat Gould-Thorpe and Heather Donohue, and the many volunteers who lent a hand in the beautifying their community; and

Whereas among the notable improvements made over the past year was the planting of approximately 225 new trees during a Tree Canopy Project which took place in the Spring;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Communities in Bloom committee and volunteers for their ongoing efforts to make Windsor a more eye-pleasing place to live and wish them great success as they look towards the national challenge this year.

RESOLUTION NO. 1352

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas CelticCuts owner Tish Deemer has been an active commercial sponsor of the Princess Windsor Tea since 1989; and

Whereas Tish is always ready to do whatever is necessary to assist the Princess candidates leading up to the tea, which this year was held on April 5; and

Whereas when Princess Windsor begins her preparations for the 82nd Queen Annapolisa pageant coming up in late May, there is no doubt Tish will only be a phone call or a text away from offering any assistance being sought;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly applaud the community spirit demonstrated by CelticCuts owner Tish Deemer in her 25-year sponsorship of the Princess Windsor pageant.

RESOLUTION NO. 1353

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas volunteers contribute \$1.8 billion worth of services to Nova Scotia's economy on an annual basis; and

Whereas the Municipality of West Hants is honoured this year to recognize Alicia Wile as their 2014 Provincial Volunteer Representative, as a result of her work with the Avon View West Hants Band Parents Association and current efforts in organizing a local charity event to raise money for the Canadian Tire Jumpstart program; and

Whereas Alicia is also actively involved with the Southwest Hants Fire Society where she has volunteered for eight years, serving first as a director and as chair for the past three years;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the community spirit exemplified by Alicia Wile for her ongoing volunteer efforts in the Municipality of West Hants, while congratulating her on being nominated by the municipality for her outstanding community assistance.

RESOLUTION NO. 1354

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas the West Hants Ground Search and Rescue organization is a group of dedicated volunteers who are willing to donate their time, energy, and skill to search for people who have gone missing; and

Whereas they are skilled volunteers who undergo extensive training and must be ready to go at a moment's notice; and

Whereas the West Hants Ground Search and Rescue team also volunteer in their community and help out with activities such as selling 50-50 tickets at the New Boundaries Charity Hockey Classic held in Windsor, March 30th;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the efforts of West Hants Ground Search and Rescue while commending executive members on their strong organizational skills in President John O'Brien, Vice-President Barry White, Treasurer Emma Horne, Secretary Margo Griffin, Search Director Jason Butler, and Directors Jody O'Connor, Carla Sheaves, Kerry Oickle, James Cole, Sissel Eakens, Beatrice Schofield and Chris Evans.

RESOLUTION NO. 1355

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas 19-year-old Christine Spurr, daughter of Steve and Dianna Spurr of Hants Border, was crowned Princess Hantsport 2014, during a candidate selection tea hosted at the Hantsport Fire Hall on April 13th; and

Whereas Miss Spurr graduated from Horton High School in 2013 with Honours with Distinction, certificates in Business Education and Fine Arts, and was nominated for

the Queen Elizabeth Award for superior academic achievement and understanding school and community involvement; and

Whereas passionate about business and politics, Christine likes to stay on top of local and world news and will be returning to Dalhousie University in the Fall to obtain a Bachelor's degree in Commerce;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Christine Spurr on being crowned Princess Hantsport 2014 and wish her all the best with her future studies.

RESOLUTION NO. 1356

By: Hon. Stephen McNeil (The Premier)

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

Whereas Emily Olsen, a Grade 8 student at Annapolis Royal Regional Academy, discovered her talent for art and interest in world peace resulted in a winning combination; and

Whereas Emily recently entered her poster to participate in the 2013-14 Lions International Peace Poster Contest, which is sponsored by the Annapolis Royal Lions Club and Lions International; and

Whereas Emily was surprised recently when several members of the Annapolis Royal Lions Club returned to ARRA to announce that her poster had been chosen first place in the district and presented Emily with her prize and a plaque to be displayed in the school's trophy case;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Emily Olsen on her win and wish her good luck in the upcoming Multiple District judging in Newfoundland and Labrador in May.

RESOLUTION NO. 1357

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Agriculture)

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

Whereas Ed Matwawana moved to Nova Scotia in 1983 from the Democratic Republic of Congo and graduated from Acadia University in 1988; and

Whereas Ed Matwawana eventually joined the Black Business Initiative as Managing Director of Training and as a consultant he provided expertise in youth work and education in Portugal, The Bahamas, South Africa and Angola as well as serving on boards such as Music Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Talent Trust, African Nova Scotian Music Association, North End Health and Community Clinic as well as serving as a councillor at New Beginnings Ministries; and

Whereas in 2003 Ed Matwawana received the National Humanitarian Griot Awards for his work with youth, community, and the enhancement of African countries' education and health systems and was featured on the CBC TV program "Living Halifax" as one of Halifax's heroes;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the many contributions Ed Matwawana has made to Nova Scotia and, in fact, to many areas of the world.

RESOLUTION NO. 1358

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 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 Allison Munday of Kentville was recently awarded a Silver Medal for her accomplishments of these requirements;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Allison Munday on her accomplishments in receiving this prestigious award and wish her continued success in future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1359

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 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 Malachy Schwartz of Canning was recently awarded a Bronze Medal for his accomplishment of these requirements;

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1360

By: Mr. Larry Harrison (Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a life-altering event that marks the beginning of a wondrous journey of discovery and joy where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas author Elizabeth Stone says, "Making the decision to have a child is momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body"; and

Whereas on March 1, 2014, Kevin and Natalie Brenton welcomed their son Wyatt John into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Kevin and Natalie on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 1361

By: Mr. Larry Harrison (Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a life-altering event that marks the beginning of a wondrous journey of discovery and joy where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas author Elizabeth Stone says, “Making the decision to have a child is momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body”; and

Whereas on February 5, 2014, Petra Graham and Patrick Stewart welcomed their daughter Lainey into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Petra Graham and Patrick Stewart on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 1362

By: Mr. Larry Harrison (Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a life-altering event that marks the beginning of a wondrous journey of discovery and joy where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas author Elizabeth Stone says, “Making the decision to have a child is momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body”; and

Whereas on January 14, 2014, Andre Garneau and Krysten Stewart welcomed their daughter Sadie Jane into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Andre and Krysten on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 1363

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Education and Early Childhood Development)

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

Whereas Jack Langille is a Grade 8 student at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche, Colchester North; and

Whereas Jack is an enthusiastic student whose love of learning has led to his achievement as a Straight-A student and winner of the award for Best All- Round Student in Grade 8; and

Whereas Jack is a skilled and determined athlete on the soccer team, the basketball team, and as a competitor in track and field, and applies the same effort as he applies to his academic endeavours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Jack Langille for being selected as the Student of the Month for November 2013, and wish him continued success with his academic and athletic pursuits.

RESOLUTION NO. 1364

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Education and Early Childhood Development)

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

Whereas Emily Smith is a Grade 8 student at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche, Colchester North; and

Whereas Emily is an excellent academic student who takes a conscientious positive approach to her school work and genuinely enjoys learning; and

Whereas Emily is involved in a diversity of extracurriculars, including being a member of the soccer and basketball teams, a competitor in cross-country running and track and field, a piano student, and a performer in musical presentations and theatre productions;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Emily Smith whose work ethic, intelligence, leadership ability, and many talents, were reasons for her selection as Student of the Month for December 2013 at North Colchester High School, as well as for ensuring her success in future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1365

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Education and Early Childhood Development)

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

Whereas Ceanna Mardian is a Grade 12 student at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche, Colchester North; and

Whereas Ceanna is very involved in student activities, serving as a Student Council member, a ski club participant, a member of the Girl's Leadership Program, and is involved in committees such as dance, winter carnival, and fundraising; and

Whereas Ceanna is an organized, conscientious student who is known for producing excellent academic work;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Ceanna Mardian for her contributions to her school life, her positive influence as a role model and mentor, and for being selected as Student of the Month for October 2013 at North Colchester High School.

RESOLUTION NO. 1366

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Education and Early Childhood Development)

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

Whereas Haley Ferdinand is a Grade 10 student at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche, Colchester North; and

Whereas Haley has excellent athletic ability and is a top goal scorer for her soccer team, plays on the North Colchester basketball team, as well as softball, and competes in track and field; and

Whereas Haley has a positive attitude toward her academic studies and is hard working and very committed;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Haley Ferdinand for being selected as Student of the Month for September 2013 at North Colchester High School, and wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 1367

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Education and Early Childhood Development)

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

Whereas Emma Bush, a Grade 12 student at North Colchester High School, maintains the highest standards of academic excellence, contributes to several youth-centred programs, and has a strong sense of social justice; and

Whereas Emma competes in Reach for the Top, is a member of Girl's Leadership, Safe Grad, and Student Council, plays hockey, skis, is president of her 4-H Club, participates in the Duke of Edinburgh's program, and was 2013 recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Medal; and

Whereas Emma also takes horseback riding lessons, trains and prepares for horse shows throughout the region, plays the piano, and sings;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Emma Bush for being named the Student of the Month for January 2014 at North Colchester High School, and wish this very talented, conscientious student the best in her future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1368

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Education and Early Childhood Development)

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

Whereas Kevin Doyle, a Grade 9 student at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche, Colchester North, always has a positive attitude and puts forth his best effort; and

Whereas Kevin shows talent, responsibility, and leadership as an athlete acting as co-captain of the soccer team and captain of his hockey team, and as a coach in the Pucksters Program for young players; and

Whereas Kevin's organizational skills are clearly shown by his ability to balance his many athletic pursuits while still maintaining excellent academic standards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Kevin Doyle for being named Student of the Month for January 2014 at North Colchester High School and wish him continued success with his academic studies and with his many contributions to school and family.

RESOLUTION NO. 1369

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Education and Early Childhood Development)

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

Whereas Alyssa McKay is an exceptionally gifted athlete who participates in numerous sports: soccer, basketball, track and field, cross-country running, skiing, figure skating, and hockey; and

Whereas Alyssa is a role model who shows strong leadership ability by promoting an active, healthy lifestyle through her own sporting activities and also by coaching with both CanSkate and Pucksters; and

Whereas Alyssa approaches her academic pursuits with the same effort and determination as her athletic pursuits and often goes above and beyond what is expected to be successful;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Alyssa McKay, a Grade 8 student at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche, Colchester North, for being selected as Student of the Month for October 2013 and wish this intelligent and talented young role model continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 1370

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Education and Early Childhood Development)

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

Whereas Kailley Forbes, a Grade 9 student at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche, Colchester North, is an excellent role model and mentor for others; and

Whereas Kailley shows exceptional ability to balance a busy schedule with the demands of school and extracurricular participation, playing volleyball and basketball, competing in track and field, and training for, competing in, and coaching gymnastics; and

Whereas Kailley is known for her intelligence as well as her positive attitude, respect for others, motivation, determination, and desire to learn;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Kailley Forbes for being selected as Student of the Month for November 2013 and wish her continued success with her future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1371

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Education and Early Childhood Development)

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

Whereas Jill MacMillan is a Grade 12 student at North Colchester High School in Tatamagouche, Colchester North; and

Whereas Jill is an excellent student who works hard to achieve the high academic standards she sets for herself; and

Whereas Jill uses her artistic abilities to sing and play the piano at musical events and her leadership ability to participate in many activities, including the Girls' Leadership program, the Reach for the Top team, soccer team, and ski club;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jill MacMillan for being named Student of the Month at North Colchester High School for the month of December and wish her success with her future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1372

By: Hon. Leo Glavine (Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas the Kingston United Church is celebrating 100 years of ministering and leading their congregation to Christian witness and service; and

Whereas the Kingston United Church will celebrate this special year by event planning for each month of 2014, and at their service on June 1st, a dedication of the Anniversary Stone took place; and

Whereas the Kingston United Church has for 100 years characterized its spiritual presence in our community by its mission, gospel values, and fellowship;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Kingston United Church on its 100-year Anniversary.