



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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

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

First Session

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS:	
TIR: Dalrymple Dr. (Nine Mile River) Problems - Rectify, Ms. M. Miller.....	2511
PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES:	
Law Amendments Committee, Hon. L. Diab	2512
Law Amendments Committee, Hon. L. Diab	2512
GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 1557, Gaelic Commun. - Language/Culture Promotion: Vols./Organizers - Thank, Hon. R. Delorey	2513
Vote - Affirmative.....	2513
Res. 1558, N.S. Monarchs - Roy Hobbs Baseball Tournament: Win - Congrats., Hon. L. Glavine.....	2514
Vote - Affirmative.....	2515
Res. 1559, Doctors Day (05/01/14) - Acknowledge, Hon. L. Glavine.....	2515
Vote - Affirmative.....	2516

NOTICES OF MOTION:

Res. 1560, Gaelic Awareness Mo. (05/14) - Acknowledge, Mr. A. MacMaster.....	2516
Vote - Affirmative.....	2517
Res. 1561, Foster, Jackie: Team Can. Lawn Bowls Team - Selection, Hon. David Wilson	2517
Vote - Affirmative.....	2518
Res. 1562, Benedict, Anita: E. Hants Mun. Town Crier - Instatement, Ms. M. Miller	2518
Vote - Affirmative.....	2518
Res. 1563, Shannon, Joe: St. FX - Hon. Degree, Hon. J. Baillie	2519
Vote - Affirmative.....	2519
Res. 1564, Vardy, Leigh Ann - Merritt Award, Hon. M. MacDonald	2519
Vote - Affirmative.....	2520
Res. 1565, Leger, Krista/Schelew, Jordan: Lemon Dogs Bus. - Applaud, Mr. A. Rowe	2520
Vote - Affirmative.....	2521
Res. 1566, Fish. & Aquaculture: Pictou Co. Lobster Season - Safe Season Wish, Mr. T. Houston	2521
Vote - Affirmative.....	2522
Res. 1567, Stevens, Vanda: Commun. Serv. - Congrats., Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	2522
Vote - Affirmative.....	2522
Res. 1568, Spryfield Silver & Black Attacks Jr. C Hockey Team - Championships, Mr. B. Maguire	2522
Vote - Affirmative.....	2523
Res. 1569, Whalen, Fred: Retirement - Congrats., Mr. J. Lohr	2523
Vote - Affirmative.....	2524
Res. 1570, Water of Life: Vols. - Commend, Ms. L. Zann.....	2524
Vote - Affirmative.....	2524
Res. 1571, Snyder, Krystal: Educ. Wk. - Congrats., Ms. S. Lohnes-Croft.....	2525
Vote - Affirmative.....	2525
Res. 1572, S. Col. Minor Hockey Assoc. - Exec.: Appreciation - Extend, Mr. L. Harrison.....	2525
Vote - Affirmative.....	2526
Res. 1573, Knights of Columbus - East. Passage: Support - Thank, Ms. J. Treen	2526
Vote - Affirmative.....	2527

Res. 1574, Bragg, Allan: Commun. Commitment - Congrats., Mr. A. MacLeod	2527
Vote - Affirmative.....	2528
Res. 1575, Boudreau, Luc: Achievements - Congrats., Mr. K. Irving.....	2528
Vote - Affirmative.....	2528
Res. 1576, Pictou Lobster Carnival Comm./Vols. - Thank, Ms. K. MacFarlane	2528
Vote - Affirmative.....	2529
Res. 1577, Sir John A. Macdonald HS Leadership 12 Class: Participants - Congrats., Mr. I. Rankin	2529
Vote - Affirmative.....	2530
Res. 1578, Pictou Co. Firefighters Assoc.: Mar. Fire Chiefs Assoc. Anniv. (100 th) - Hosting, Hon. P. Dunn.....	2530
Vote - Affirmative.....	2531
Res. 1579, Paroisse Sainte-Marie - Prix Mary Schaefer Places of Worship, Mr. Gordon Wilson.....	2531
Vote - Affirmative.....	2532
Res. 1580, O'Connor, Emmett & Mae: Commun. Serv. - Thank, Mr. E. Orrell.....	2532
Vote - Affirmative.....	2533
Res. 1581, C.P. Allen Cheetahs Boys Hockey Team/Coaches/Vols.: NSSF Hockey Title Congrats., Hon. K. Regan.....	2533
Vote - Affirmative.....	2533
Res. 1582, Slaney, Olivea: Beauty Pageants/Charitable Work - Congrats., Mr. E. Orrell.....	2534
Vote - Affirmative.....	2534
Res. 1583, Lun. Co. Youth Advisory Comm. - Lt.-Gov.'s Award, Hon. M. Furey.....	2534
Vote - Affirmative.....	2535
Res. 1584, Makhlof, Nisma: Commun. Serv. Vol. Award - Congrats., Ms. P. Arab	2535
Vote - Affirmative.....	2536
Res. 1585, Clyke, Ms. Geneva: Guysborough Breakfast Prog. - Dedication Congrats., Mr. L. Hines.....	2536
Vote - Affirmative.....	2536
Res. 1586, The Ark: Serv. (50 Yrs.) - Congrats., Hon. M. Furey.....	2537
Vote - Affirmative.....	2537
Res. 1587, Simmonds, Ross: N.S. Work Force - Contributions, Hon. K. Colwell	2537
Vote - Affirmative.....	2538

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS:

No. 301, Prem. - Ivany Rept.: Goals - Enact, Hon. J. Baillie	2538
No. 302, Prem.: DHAs - Amalgamation/Savings, Hon. M. MacDonald	2540
No. 303, Prem. - Ivany Rept.: Long-Term Goals - Implement, Hon. J. Baillie	2542
No. 304, LAE: Employment Decline - Action, Mr. E. Orrell.....	2544
No. 305, Prem. - Grad. Retention Rebate: Cut - Timing Explain, Hon. M. MacDonald	2546
No. 306, EECD - Fowler Rept.: Chignecto-Central Reg. Sch. Bd. - Decisions Suspend, Ms. K. MacFarlane.....	2548
No. 307, Agric.: Women's Instit. N.S. - Funding, Ms. L. Zann.....	2549
No. 308, Prem. - Elections: Fixed Dates - Legislation, Mr. L. Harrison	2550
No. 309, Finance & Treasury Bd. - Public Sector Workers: Wage Increases - Details, Hon. M. MacDonald	2551
No. 310, EECD - S. Shore Reg. Sch. Bds.: Libraries - Funding, Ms. S. Lohnes-Croft.....	2552
No. 311, Energy - Electricity Billing: Review - Confirm, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	2553
No. 312, Prem.: Striking Nurses - Disciplinary Action, Hon. David Wilson	2555
No. 313, EECD: Educ. Investment - Promises Explain, Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	2556
No. 314, Agric.: Grass Fed Beef Ind. - Priority Confirm, Mr. J. Lohr	2557
No. 315, Health & Wellness - Aristospan: Market Removal - Details, Mr. C. Porter	2558
No. 316, TIR - Ferry West Rd. & Lockes Island Rd.: Repairs - Timetable, Hon. S. Belliveau.....	2560
No. 317, Nat. Res. - Donkin Mine: Sale - Update, Mr. A. MacLeod	2562
No. 318, Agric. - Land Dev. Progs.: Agric. Dept./Agriculture Can. - Cost-Sharing Agreements, Mr. J. Lohr.....	2563
No. 319, Agric. - Community-Supported Agric.: Meetings - Min. Advise, Ms. L. Zann	2565
No. 320, Health & Wellness - Med. Graduates: Out-of-Prov. Training - Return Transition, Ms. P. Arab.....	2566
No. 321, TIR - Hwy. Nos. 101 & 103: Completion - Plans, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	2566

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS:

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:

No. 36, Economic Growth Goals Act

Hon. J. Baillie	2570
Mr. I. Rankin.....	2573
Hon. M. MacDonald	2575
Ms. K. MacFarlane	2578
Mr. T. Houston.....	2580
Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	2581

No. 38, Balanced Budget Act

Mr. T. Houston.....	2582
Hon. D. Whalen	2585
Hon. M. MacDonald	2588
Mr. L. Harrison	2591
Mr. A. MacMaster.....	2591

ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Thur., May 1 st at 2:00 p.m.	2595
---	------



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 2014

Sixty-second General Assembly

First Session

2:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

MS. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition. The operative clause is:

“We, the undersigned electors, citizens, and residents of the Province of Nova Scotia request that the province of Nova Scotia reconstruct portions of the road, proper ditching, grading and routine maintenance of Dalrymple Drive, Nine Mile River.”

There are over 30 names. This is every resident on that road, 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. 62 - Halifax Convention Centre Act.

and the committee recommends this bill to the favourable consideration of the House, with certain amendments.

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. 63 - Education Act.**Bill No. 64 - Financial Measures (2014) Act.****Bill No. 67 - Invest Nova Scotia Board Act.****Bill No. 69 - House of Assembly Management Commission Act.**

and the committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, each without amendment.

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

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Gaelic Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 1557

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

Whereas May is Gaelic Awareness Month, which is a chance for all Nova Scotians to learn about, and more fully appreciate and experience, the language and cultural expression of the Gaels; and

Whereas Gaelic-speaking elders, a dedicated adult learner community, young and actively engaged adult learners, and a growing number of youth involved in school and mentorship programs are testaments to the numerous contributions Gaels make to our province and to a community that is actively working to reclaim its language and identity; and

Whereas a focal point of this year's Gaelic Awareness Month is the recognition of the many young people enrolled in the Gaelic Affairs' and Gaelic College's collaborative pilot program, The Young Heroes, a program that focuses on conveying Gaelic cultural expression such as storytelling, song, music, and step-dancing through the medium of the Gaelic language;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize and thank the many volunteers and organizers in the Gaelic community who work tirelessly to share and promote Gaelic language and culture in 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 Minister of Seniors.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I'd like to do an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. GLAVINE: To the members of the House, you can direct your attention to the east gallery where we are joined today by the Nova Scotia Monarchs. They are a men's senior baseball team that, last November, won the Roy Hobbs World Series Baseball Tournament, which is held annually at Hammond Stadium in Fort Myers, Florida.

So 2013 marked the 25th year of the tournament and with the Monarchs' victory in the Classic Division - one that I would fit in, 60 and over - they are the first Canadian team to have won it. So it is my distinct pleasure, as a baseball fan and as the Minister of Seniors, to congratulate and welcome the Monarchs, led by Team Captain Gary Foran, to the House here today. Let's give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Seniors.

RESOLUTION NO. 1558

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

Whereas May 1st has been - I think they've given me the wrong one - sorry, if I could change direction, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Absolutely.

AN HON. MEMBER: That happens to seniors.

MR. SPEAKER: A senior moment.

MR. GLAVINE: See what I have to live with every day.

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

Whereas the Roy Hobbs World Series Baseball Tournament is an annual event held in Fort Myers, Florida, and 2013 marked its 25th year of existence and the fourth in which the Nova Scotia Monarchs participated; and

Whereas the Monarchs, all but one of whom live in Nova Scotia, led by player/coach Gary Foran, and featuring - and they can stand as I call their names here - Ray Bradshaw, Ardell Barkley, Kevin Cody, Gary Slaunwhite, John Royea, Eric Calnen, Doug Clarke, Greg Slaunwhite, Carl Boutilier, Mike German, Dan Burns, Derek Ross, Len Ede, Bob Revels, George Somers, Les Sampson, Albert Slaunwhite, Dick Morris, and Walter Bowes, became the first Canadian team in 25 years to win a championship in any category at the week-long event; and

Whereas the Monarchs won the Classic Division - 60 and over - defeating the Houston Colt 45s by a score of 5-3 in the championship at Hammond Stadium;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Nova Scotia Monarchs on being the first Canadian team to win the Roy Hobbs Tournament, and for showing us all it's never too late to win the World Series.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1559

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

Whereas May 1st has been proclaimed Doctors Day in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas physicians play an integral role in our health care system, providing care to about 30,000 Nova Scotians each day, in a variety of settings across our province; and

Whereas the choosing of that date to honour physicians is significant as it commemorates the birthday of Dr. Emily Stowe, the first female physician in Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly acknowledge May 1st as Doctors Day, and recognize and celebrate the important and valued work of physicians in Nova Scotia and their unwavering commitment to high-quality patient care.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Absolutely.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, today we have some guests with us, Na Gaisgich Òga. Bu toil leam fàilte a chur air Na Gaisgich Òga. I'm going to call out their names and ask them to please stand as I say your name. We have Stephen MacIntyre, Leah Morrison, Grace Campbell, Nora MacNeil, Logan MacLellan, Mikayla MacNeil, Alasdair Cameron, Sarah MacInnis, Lily Watson, and Abi MacDonald. We also have some parents, some mothers who are with them today: Glenda MacNeil, Phyllis MacLellan, Patricia Campbell, Tracey MacNeil, Nancy Cameron, Frances MacEachen, and my sister Mary Elizabeth MacInnis. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to acknowledge their instructor, and really my first Gaelic teacher, Goiridh Dòmhnallach (Jeff MacDonald). Just very quickly Mr. Speaker, they're with us today, as the Minister of Gaelic Affairs has already referenced, for Gaelic Awareness Month.

RESOLUTION NO. 1560

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: A Labhraiche Urramaich, tha mi a' leigeil fhaicinn gum bi mi, san àm ri tighinn, a' cur air adhart an rùin a leanas airson gabhail ris:

Whereas May is Gaelic Awareness Month in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Gaelic continues to live because of young people like those we have with us in Na Gaisgich Òga who are learning the language and culture of their people; and

Whereas modest government support for Gaelic is an investment in education and the maintenance of a language and culture that contain insights, wisdom and humour that date back thousands of years;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House acknowledge Gaelic Awareness Month for recognizing the spirit of Nova Scotians who are Gaels.

A Labhraiche Urramaich, tha mi a'guidhe gun tèid brath-glusad an darna taobh agus gun tèid a' chùis air adhart as aonais deasbaid.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

RESOLUTION NO. 1561

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

Whereas Jackie Foster is a resident of Lower Sackville and a well-known reporter and news anchor in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Jackie has been named one of 14 members of Team Canada's lawn bowling team following February's selection camp held in Florida; and

Whereas Jackie, the only Nova Scotian on the team, along with four other women, five men, two para-athletes, and two team officials, will travel to Glasgow, Scotland, in July to represent Canada for the 20th Commonwealth Games;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Lower Sackville resident Jackie Foster on being selected as one of 14 Team Canada lawn bowling members, and wish the team success as they compete at the 20th Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hants East.

RESOLUTION NO. 1562

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

Whereas the position of town crier carries the historical and cultural value of informing community members of significant events, spreading cheer and news; and

Whereas Anita Benedict of Noel, East Hants, has been instated as the new town crier of the Municipality of East Hants and inducted into the Nova Scotia Guild of Town Criers; and

Whereas Anita is the first female town crier for the Municipality of East Hants;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Anita Benedict for the honour and wish her many years of success and happiness serving the residents of East Hants.

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 Official Opposition.

RESOLUTION NO. 1563

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

Whereas Joe Shannon will be the recipient of an honorary degree from St. F.X. University on Sunday, May 4th; and

Whereas Mr. Shannon is a companion of the Order of the Canadian Business Hall of Fame and a member of the Nova Scotia Business Hall of Fame; and

Whereas Mr. Shannon's Atlantic Corporation, with offices across North America employing 5,000 people, has donated over \$5 million to various organizations in the last decade;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize Mr. Shannon as a captain of industry and a tireless advocate of enterprise throughout North America and in Cape Breton in particular.

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. 1564

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

Whereas Leigh Ann Vardy is a talented and well-respected lighting designer living in the north end of Halifax, who has worked in theatres across Canada; and

Whereas Leigh Ann Vardy is involved in theatre education as an instructor and coach at the National Theatre School of Canada; and

Whereas on March 24, 2014, Leigh Ann Vardy received her fifth Robert Merritt Award for Outstanding Lighting Design for her work on 2b Theatre's production of *The God That Comes*;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Nova Scotia House of Assembly congratulate Leigh Ann Vardy on being chosen as the 2014 winner of the Robert Merritt Award for Outstanding Lighting Design and express its appreciation for her contribution and commitment to Halifax and its theatre 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 Dartmouth South.

RESOLUTION NO. 1565

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

Whereas entrepreneurship is an important vessel for innovation, prosperity, and inspiring community collaboration; and

Whereas Krista Leger and Jordan Schelew of Dartmouth have reinvented the original entrepreneurial concept of a lemonade stand into a creative and delicious business called Lemon Dogs, where they sell fresh, fun flavours of lemonade made from local market ingredients; and

Whereas since July 2013, Lemon Dogs has been represented at the Alderney Landing Farmers' Market in Dartmouth with new, different flavours every weekend, and Krista and Jordan also make free deliveries within metro for the lemonade sold through their website;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud the creative and innovative approach to an original idea by Krista Leger and Jordan Schelew,

and wish them every success with their business as Lemon Dogs approaches their 1st Anniversary.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

RESOLUTION NO. 1566

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

Whereas today is Settin' Day in Pictou County, and the 2014 lobster fishing season kicked off this morning with the annual Parade of Sail; and

Whereas Pictou County is world renowned for having the most delicious lobsters; and

Whereas it is a tradition for many in the area to go to the wharf early on Settin' Day to watch the boats loaded with traps and workers as they sail out to start the season;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly wish the brave Nova Scotians a safe and successful lobster season.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1567

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 leaders stand out, and among their many qualities, they are proactive, problem-solving, ready to work, willing to learn team players, and respectful to those around them; and

Whereas when people bring those qualities to their volunteer work, they have an impact on the organization or people they are helping, which the people around them can easily see; and

Whereas Vanda Stevens of Chester has been an outstanding volunteer since she was a young teenager, as a founding member of the Chester Junior Fire Department, and has become a valued volunteer, leader and mentor in numerous efforts she supports in her community;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House congratulate Vanda Stevens on her hard work and determined service to her community and applaud the qualities that make her an excellent leader now and 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 Halifax Atlantic.

RESOLUTION NO. 1568

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

Whereas the Spryfield Silver and Black Attacks Junior C hockey team has had an exceptional season; and

Whereas they won the Nova Scotia Junior C hockey championship on March 15th, defeating Truro 6-3; and

Whereas fresh off their victory at the Nova Scotia Junior C championships, the Silver and Black Attacks went on to win the Maritime Hockey North Junior championship on March 30th;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Spryfield Silver and Black Attacks on their championship and wish them continued success in future seasons.

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. 1569

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

Whereas Fred Whalen has had a lifetime of public service in the Municipality of Kings, the Province of Nova Scotia and the Country of Canada; and

Whereas Fred spent 21 years in the Air Force and spent 15 years working at the House of Commons in Ottawa, eight of those as Chief of Maintenance Services; and

Whereas Fred spent four terms in the Kings County Council, 10 years as the Warden, and six years on the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities board;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Fred Whalen on his retirement from over 50 years of exemplary public service and wish him well.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1570

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

Whereas millions of people around the world die each year due to water-borne illness from a lack of access to clean water; and

Whereas Water for Life was an initiative started by residents of Colchester County who volunteered their time and raised funds through penny drives, dances, donations and other fundraisers; and

Whereas for over 10 years, Water for Life has helped to build over 17 water wells for sustainable and safe drinking water for communities in Africa and Haiti;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly commend the volunteers of Water for Life and the residents of Colchester County for their efforts and contributions to bring water to those in need.

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. 1571

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 teachers are tasked with building our futures through educating our children; and

Whereas Education Week provides an opportunity to focus on and reward those teachers who go above and beyond with their dedication; and

Whereas New Germany Elementary School Primary teacher Krystal Snyder has helped her students develop the skills to become responsible citizens and to contribute to their community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Krystal as a teacher who makes a difference.

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

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

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

RESOLUTION NO. 1572

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

Whereas the South Colchester Minor Hockey Association consists of 11 teams between the novice category and the Midget A age group; and

Whereas the South Colchester Minor Hockey Association hosted the 9th Annual Phil Sears Memorial Christmas Hockey Tournament in December; and

Whereas minor hockey in any area of the province will not be successful without a strong organization of skilled individuals;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend our appreciation for the volunteer work ethic put forth by President Kathy Weatherbee, Vice-President Kelly Spencer, Treasurer Pam Osborne, Secretary Jennifer Fisher, and 50/50 draw coordinator Peter Watson, and wish them continued success.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

RESOLUTION NO. 1573

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

Whereas the Knights of Columbus provide exceptional support to the community of Eastern Passage/Cow Bay; and

Whereas they hold monthly breakfasts for the community and weekly card games for the seniors; and

Whereas they participate in community events, such as the annual Eastern Passage/Cow Bay Summer Carnival;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the Knights of Columbus for their unwavering support and wish them success in their future endeavours.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education on an introduction.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave now to introduce some friends who have joined us in the east gallery today. With us today is the 1st Bedford Scout Troop - if you would please rise. Our Scouts are accompanied by their leaders: Alan Havill, Dale Brown, and Paul Henderson.

The Bedford Scout Troop is a very active troop and they are here today watching democracy in action. I ask the members to give them the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1574

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

Whereas Allan Bragg of Coxheath is a very committed community volunteer; and

Whereas Allan Bragg is retired from the United Commercial Travellers and has been the driving force behind one of its biggest community events for elementary school students on the Island, the annual Skating Jamboree; and

Whereas for Allan Bragg the Skating Jamboree, co-sponsored by the United Commercial Travellers and the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board, is a labour of love which he began eight years ago, but that is just the tip of the iceberg as far as his community involvement is concerned;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate and thank Allan Bragg for a strong commitment to his 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 Kings South.

RESOLUTION NO. 1575

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

Whereas Mr. Luc Boudreau is a native of New Minas, Kings County, and swims with the Acadia University Swim Team in Wolfville; and

Whereas Luc has set university and provincial records in the breast stroke and is a national-calibre swimmer; and

Whereas Luc Boudreau has recently been awarded the inaugural Acadia President's Award for exceptional leadership skills in athletics, academics, and in community building;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate Luc on his achievements and wish him continued success in his sport.

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. 1576

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

Whereas the Pictou Lobster Carnival is celebrating its 80th Anniversary from July 10th to July 13th in Pictou; and

Whereas the Pictou Lobster Carnival began in 1934 to celebrate the conclusion of the lobster fishing season and is now recognized as a signature Nova Scotia event, having been voted Canada's favorite festival in 2010; and

Whereas the three-day event, which features musical entertainment, lobster boat races, derby races, antique car shows, and a parade, attracts visitors from far and wide and brings former Pictonians home;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate present and former members of the Pictou Lobster Carnival committee and the many volunteers who make the carnival a memorable event each year.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

RESOLUTION NO. 1577

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

Whereas students at Sir John A. Macdonald High School's Leadership 12 class, through The Learning Partnership's Entrepreneurial Adventure, an integrated curriculum program that helps students develop valuable 21st Century skills such as financial literacy, innovative thinking, and social responsibility, raised over \$10,000; and

Whereas teacher Dwayne Blanchard guided the Sir John A. Macdonald Leadership 12 class on their experiential learning journey, earning the students school credits and sparking an enterprising and philanthropic spirit that benefited both Phoenix Youth and Bryony House, two worthy Halifax-based charities; and

Whereas Entrepreneurial Adventure Nova Scotia's program manager, Terry Wadden, said the Sir John A. Macdonald Leadership 12 Class was among the top groups in Canada for fundraising this year;

Therefore be it resolved that this Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly send congratulations to all involved in this innovative learning experience.

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. 1578

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

Whereas the Maritime Fire Chiefs Association held their very first conference in 1914 in Halifax, and this event has been held in various communities throughout Atlantic Canada each year; and

Whereas the Pictou County Firefighters Association will host the 100th Anniversary Conference and Trade Show on July 6-9, 2014, with the theme 100 Years - A Century of Pride and Challenges; and

Whereas the host committee, representing all 24 volunteer fire departments of the Pictou County Firefighters Association, expects approximately 600 participants from across Canada and the United States to attend this conference;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly wish the Pictou County Firefighters Association success as they continue to prepare to host the 100th Anniversary of the Maritime Fire Chiefs Association.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

RESOLUTION NO. 1579

MR. GORDON WILSON: M. le Président, par la présente, j'avise que je proposerai à une date ultérieure l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que le prix Mary Schaefer Places of Worship est attribué par le Heritage Trust de la Nouvelle-Écosse; et

Attendu que le prix Mary Schaefer Places of Worship a été donné à la communauté chrétienne de l'Église Sainte-Marie à Pointe-de-l'Église pour l'année 2013 pour ses efforts de préservation de la plus grande église en bois en Amérique du Nord; et

Attendu que l'Église Sainte-Marie est un lieu religieux historique reconnu depuis 1903 comme un témoignage de la foi, la langue et la culture d'une communauté acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse;

Par conséquent, qu'il soit résolu que les membres de cette Assemblée félicitent les paroissiens de l'Église Sainte-Marie à Pointe-de-l'Église.

M. le Président, je propose l'adoption de cette résolution sans préavis et sans débat.

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

Whereas Mary Schaefer Places of Worship is attributed to religious communities that sustain the protection of places of worship in the Province of Nova Scotia Heritage Trust; and

Whereas the Mary Schaefer Places of Worship was awarded to Saint Mary's parish for the year 2013 in preserving the largest wooden church in North America; and

Whereas Saint Mary's parish church is an historical religious building built in 1903 and is part of the heritage reflecting the Acadian language and culture in Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this Assembly congratulate Saint Mary's parish for obtaining the Mary Schaefer Places of Worship.

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. 1580

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

Whereas Emmett and Mae O'Connor, now 80 years of age, are two of our community's longest-serving volunteers and have no plans to retire from their volunteer activities; and

Whereas after retiring in 1990, both began volunteering at Harbour View Hospital, Meals on Wheels, the Kiwanis Golden K, and the Red Row housing project; and

Whereas after 23 years of volunteering, the impact these two have had on residents and patients of Harbour View Hospital is immeasurable;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank this dynamic couple for their years of service and making our community a better place to live.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 1581

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

Whereas the Charles P. Allen High School Cheetahs boys hockey team claimed the Provincial Division 1 Boys Championship on March 23, 2014; and

Whereas the Cheetahs capped off their season of 53 wins, 10 losses, and 1 tie with heart and determination, defeating local rivals Lockview High School in a 2-1 victory, thereby winning their first back-to-back provincial championships; and

Whereas the team consists of players Andrew Cooke, Austin Donlevy, Brett Estabrooks, Austin Hubbard, Liam Isnor, Nathan Jardine, Nathan Ledrew, Nolan Leeco, Cameron MacDonald, Graeme MacKinley, Mathew Mayer, Connor Morrison, Connor O'Brien, Brogan Pachal, Brandon Pottie, Jonathan Prall, Sam Robertson, Alex Shaw, Mackenzie Woodman, and Leighton Yeo;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate the C.P. Allen Cheetahs boys hockey team and their coaches Jack Abraham, Chris Baxter, Gary Hebert, and Billy Comer, managers Paul Baxter and Rob MacKinley, school liaisons Ryan Thornton, Shawn Young, and Andrew Woods, volunteer trainer Daniel Kimber, the parent volunteers, plus all their supporters on their second consecutive Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation Provincial Boys Division 1 hockey title.

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. (Interruptions)

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

RESOLUTION NO. 1582

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to see my diet's working. No one can see me. (Applause)

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

Whereas 9-year-old Olivea Slaney has won 35 beauty pageant titles in her young life while pursuing charitable work over the years; and

Whereas Olivea moved to Sydney Mines from Marystown, Newfoundland and Labrador, where her first campaign was a clothing drive for a women's shelter, and she has been involved with the IWK Telethon and supplying backpacks filled with school supplies for elementary schools; and

Whereas Olivea is organizing knitters to produce hats, mitts, and scarves for a local family centre, and is an avid supporter of Christmas Daddies;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate this 9-year-old young lady for making a difference in this world through her giving spirit.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 1583

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

Whereas the Lunenburg County Youth Advisory Committee received the Lieutenant Governor's Respectful Citizenship Award; and

Whereas representatives of the committee accepted the award on February 26, 2014, at Government House; and

Whereas this award is shared by 31 students from Lunenburg County who show leadership and dedication in this community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Lunenburg County Youth Advisory Committee for their award and thank them for their time, dedication, and leadership.

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. 1584

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

Whereas Nisma Makhoulf dedicates her time to support and promote literacy in her community, and is an enthusiast and driven volunteer at the Literacy and Homework Program at Frontier College; and

Whereas Ms. Makhoulf gives back to her community despite her busy schedule as a student at Dalhousie University; and

Whereas Ms. Makhoulf was honoured at the 11th Annual Mainland North Volunteer Awards and is the recipient of the Community Service Volunteer Award;

Therefore it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Nisma Makhoulf and thank her for all of her years of volunteer service in our community.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie.

RESOLUTION NO. 1585

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

Whereas Ms. Geneva Clyke of Guysborough is considered a pillar of the Guysborough Breakfast Program; and

Whereas the Breakfast Program runs three days a week and is intended to ensure a quality breakfast is provided for all of the students, and she volunteers faithfully every Tuesday and Thursday; and

Whereas she always welcomes the students and new volunteers with a smile and kind approach while ensuring she provides a quality breakfast to over 200 students;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize and thank Ms. Geneva Clyke for her dedication to the Guysborough Breakfast Program and be ever so mindful of the difference it makes in the lives of so many.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 1586

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

Whereas in 1964, led by Ora Wentzell, a mother with a child dealing with complex disabilities, what is known today as The Ark was formed to help people with disabilities find opportunities in Lunenburg County; and

Whereas today 60 clients participate in activities at The Ark, which include the production of handcrafts, woodworks, and furniture repair, to name a few; and

Whereas The Ark celebrated its 50th Anniversary on April 5, 2014;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate The Ark for its 50 years of service to the community of Lunenburg County and helping those with disabilities contribute to the local economy, and also congratulate all clients, past and present, of The Ark for their hard work.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 1587

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

Whereas Ross Simmonds is from East Preston and graduated from Saint Mary's University with a Bachelor of Commerce, and while attending university he won several business awards and scholarships; and

Whereas he worked with many organizations, such as the CBC and the advertising agency Colour, until he founded his own company called dreamr, which organizes events for thousands of people, such as rock climbing and skydiving, just to name a few; and

Whereas Ross is an avid public speaker as well as an avid writer and has been featured in *Forbes*, *Huffington Post* and *Yahoo Business*, and he also volunteers as a board member for the Boys and Girls Club, a board member for the Black Business Initiative and the East Preston United Baptist Church;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House join me in congratulating Ross Simmonds for his many contributions to the Nova Scotia workforce, as well as donating his time to these very valuable community organizations.

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.

Barring any more notices of motion, we'll now move on to orders of the day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The time is now 2:52 p.m., we'll conclude at 4:22 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - IVANY REPT.: GOALS - ENACT

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. According to a new report out yesterday, Nova Scotia's economy grew by only 0.8 per cent in 2013. That makes us the second worst performing province in all of Canada. In fact while the rest of the country moves ahead, our province continues to lag behind.

The fact is that we do have one road map for turning around our economy, Mr. Speaker, and that is the Ivany report. I'd like to ask the Premier, in light of this new

information about our stagnated economy, will he now commit to enacting the 19 goals contained in the Ivany report?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I had an opportunity to meet with Mr. Ivany and members of the commission today. They are pleased at the direction government is going. They are encouraged by the fact that we continue to reach out to the private sector and continue to build the plan that they laid out towards a 10-year vision and I'm looking forward to continuing to work with those members, even though the commission is no longer in existence, but all of them have a tremendous contribution to make and it's their voices over the next number of years that will continue to ensure that we move forward and grow good jobs here in Nova Scotia.

MR. BAILLIE: One of the recommendations of the Ivany commission itself was that the province put its 19 goals to turn our economy around into legislation, much like we've done before with the environmental goals in the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act. Since the Ivany commission has reported, we now find out that not only has our economy flat-lined but manufacturing output is down by 2 per cent with 14 of 19 industries in outright decline, a real recession in the manufacturing economy where some of the best-paying jobs are, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to ask the Premier, what more evidence does he need that it's time to actually enact the 19 goals contained in the Ivany report?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how many jobs are going to be created by creating another piece of legislation in this province.

I could tell you what Mr. Ivany and all members of that commission said, Mr. Speaker: it is the spirit and the intent of their work that will drive this government going forward. That's what they were looking for, a government that is focused on the future 10 years out, not one that is focused on 10 days out.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Ivany commissioners themselves felt that it would be worthwhile to enact their 19 goals to turn our economy around, much as we have done before on things as important as our environmental targets. I'll tell you, there is legislation that actually kills jobs in this province, like the budget of the Liberal Party, which adds \$500 billion to our debt, which leaves our taxes high, which taxes our young graduates with the highest increase in their taxes in the history of the province.

We certainly have seen examples of legislation that kills jobs in this session, Mr. Speaker. It would be nice to see some legislation that actually aims to create the environment to get jobs going again.

The fact of the matter is that we now have the highest taxes in the country; we have the highest power rates. These are issues that really need to be addressed, Mr. Speaker. We've now had almost seven months under the Liberal Government and coming to the conclusion of the second full session since the new government took office.

I'll ask the Premier, why has he squandered two full sessions of this House and seven months in office, without a real plan to create jobs?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, let me begin by suggesting to you that the Leader of the Official Opposition has run out of questions during this session - it's a good thing that we're coming to an end. He likes to stand here and lecture the members of this House when, in fact, it was Ray Ivany himself who said it is not the fact that these need to be in legislation, it's the intent of what this report says - and we want to ensure that the government focuses on the intent and commits to long-term jobs.

It was this government in six months that, Mr. Speaker, ended up taking off - will end up taking the NDP electricity tax off every power bill in this province; it is this government that has broadened the apprenticeship opportunities for young apprentices in this province, keeping more young people at home; and it is this government that is investing in research, giving young graduates an opportunity to find that research opportunity here in Nova Scotia.

One of the things the Ivany commission said very clearly is short-sighted goals will not do it, a government with a long-term vision will make it happen - and that's exactly why Nova Scotians elected us. (Applause)

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

PREM.: DHAs - AMALGAMATION/SAVINGS

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

Yesterday I tabled in this House a briefing note that indicated the Liberal Government has estimated and approved the costs of DHA amalgamation, something the Minister of Health and Wellness subsequently denied, but as the minister said to reporters yesterday afternoon: "No, I have no figure on what it would cost, no."

Mr. Speaker, this is not what the Health and Wellness Minister was telling media on the 8th of March this year when *The Chronicle Herald* reported that the Liberal plan to restructure DHAs would save \$13 million a year - and I'll table that report.

So my question to the Premier to this, if his Liberal Government has yet to determine how much DHA amalgamation will cost Nova Scotia, how are they able to say how much it will save?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all let me congratulate the Minister of Health and Wellness on the tremendous work he has been doing on behalf of all Nova Scotians. I must tell you there is not a day that goes by where I am not contacted by a health care provider or someone involved in the health care system who actually congratulates me for appointing the Minister of Health and Wellness - somebody is finally listening.

What the Minister of Health and Wellness has clearly said is that we are going to move from an administrative-focused health care system to one that is patient-focused. Let's not lose sight of the fact that this is about patients' access to health care in this province. By breaking down the walls that have been created in this province, we are going to allow Nova Scotians to have greater access to health care in every community across this province.

MS. MACDONALD: Well, Mr. Speaker, yesterday following Question Period, the Minister of Health and Wellness was unable to provide a figure for what the DHA amalgamation would cost, he wasn't able to say what staff or services would be impacted, and he wasn't certain how long the process would take. He couldn't even say if the DHA CEOs and vice-presidents would be terminated - he suggested that some of them might just get new job titles and be moved around. The most the minister could promise was "that it would be an evolving and organic kind of process."

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Premier is this, since the Health and Wellness Minister had no idea what the real or even assumed costs of DHA amalgamation would be, why is the Premier taking Nova Scotia on what could be a costly and chaotic ride where the health care system requires immediate attention at the front line and not another Liberal reorganization?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the only people in Nova Scotia who have not come to the conclusion that there is too much administration in health care and not enough focus on the front line is the New Democratic Party.

The Minister of Health and Wellness is working and collaborating with health care providers and health care professionals across this province to ensure that we deliver a cost-effective health care model, one that is sustainable and one that is focused on the patient and one that will deliver health care to every community across this province.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I need no lecture from the Premier on reducing administration in the health care system. Health care administration decreased by 2 per cent in the previous four years and with respect to front-line health care, we have seen

pharmacists being able to deliver flu shots and vaccines. We have seen significant improvements in mental health front-line care. (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honorable leader of the New Democratic Party has the floor.

MS. MACDONALD: Thank you. The briefing note I tabled yesterday also reveals another blatant Liberal broken promise. In the Liberal platform, on Page 25, in black and white, to reduce health care administration costs by \$13 million in 2015-16 but we now know that the Liberal DHA amalgamation is going to result in added administrative costs, not just in the transition year but several years after that. Once again the Liberal Government is not delivering as advertised. My question to the Premier is why did he make a promise to Nova Scotians without knowing or having a plan on how to achieve it?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, now we know why Nova Scotians made the decision they did on October 8th. Only in the NDP mathematics could cutting administration actually cost more. One of the things that we know for certain is almost every wait time in this province is above the national average. One of the reasons for breaking down the walls in the health care service in this province is to ensure better access, more focus on front-line health care, and more focus on wait times. The Minister of Health and Wellness will end up delivering, not only on the commitment that we've made, but ensuring that Nova Scotians get the kind of health care services they deserve.

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

PREM. - IVANY REPT.: LONG-TERM GOALS - IMPLEMENT

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I see the lectures are flying fast and furious across the aisle here this afternoon in the House of Assembly. A moment ago the Premier expressed his concern about short-term goals or short-sighted goals, I believe he said. I'll tell you what a short-sighted goal is: promising to charge Nova Scotia Power the efficiency fee before the election but then charging it right back to their customers after. That's pretty short sighted. Promising to balance the budget before the election and driving up our debt another \$500 million in your first year - that's pretty short sighted. Promising to support young grads and then putting the largest tax increase in the history of the province on their backs - that is very short sighted.

No wonder business confidence in this province reached an all-time low in the month of April, as reported by the CFIB, and I will table that. I would like to ask the Premier, if he is so concerned about short-sightedness, why doesn't he get on with the job of implementing the long-term goals contained in the Ivany report as they themselves asked?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we're going to get on with the task of working with the private sector to ensure that we have long-term job growth in this province. We're going to get on with the task of ensuring we deliver on the commitments we made to Nova Scotians. All we need is for the Progressive Conservative Leader to stop being so pessimistic, all other Nova Scotians are optimistic about the future.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I just tabled the report that says the people that create jobs, the small businesses of the province. . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order please. The official Leader of the Opposition - as opposed to the unofficial leader. (Laughter) The Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor, sorry.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I should watch behind my back, is that what you're saying? (Interruptions) Well he does have the hair cut for it, Mr. Speaker, I will say that.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business says the biggest constraint to actually hiring people in this province is the cost of fuel and energy - 68 per cent of our small businesses said that in the report I just tabled. They aren't optimistic when all they see is a shell game of an energy plan from this government that promised them so much more before the election. They say that taxes and regulations are the second biggest impediment to getting going and creating jobs at 58 per cent, but that they watch a government that raises our taxes and drives up our debt and projects deficits well into the future.

I'd just like to ask the Premier, how much lower does business confidence have to go before he gets serious about the goals contained in the Ivany report?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to first of all congratulate the Minister of Energy for the tremendous work that he's been doing on behalf of all Nova Scotians. For the first time in the history of this province, shareholders of Nova Scotia Power are being forced to ensure that low-income Nova Scotians have access to grants.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy is also removing the NDP electricity tax on every power bill as of January 1st, which means power rates are going there but he didn't stop there. He continued to ensure that we work on energy efficiency and we drive in competition so the fuel prices will continue to decline. That means power rates will continue to go down even further.

The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has continued to work with businesses across the sector to ensure that we continue to see which taxes we can lower to best drive the economy of the Province of Nova Scotia.

The Minister of Labour and Advanced Education is working with the university sector to ensure that we take advantage of the great economic entities our universities are to ensure that young people are here. The great announcements we've made around the sandbox program, working with private sector and public intuitions, the investments we have made in research ensuring that university graduates get their first opportunity here in Nova Scotia.

In six months, Mr. Speaker, that's what we've done and we're not stopping there.

MR. BAILLIE: I see we're not done with the lectures here this afternoon but the fact of the matter is that actions speak louder than words and the actions of this government have sent a very strong message to the small businesses that make up the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the ones that have the lowest confidence in the whole country. His actions to add another half a billion dollars to our debt this year, to jack up government spending for years to come with so little to show for it, to project another billion dollars in debt over the life of his government, no wonder they have the second lowest confidence level in all the country. When it comes to things that they say hold us back, like taxes and regulations, all the Premier offers is more study and no action and more lectures.

Mr. Speaker, I will ask as this second full session of the government winds down, how many more Nova Scotians need to leave, or how many more need to lose their jobs, before this Premier stops studying and starts taking action.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I just laid out very clearly the direction that many Cabinet Ministers - and I could go through the entire Cabinet if you'd like to know the positive things that have happened in the last six months. But at least he's finally talking about something that matters to Nova Scotians, instead of criticizing the SPCA and the tremendous work they're doing ensuring that we can adopt more dogs in this province.

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

LAE: EMPLOYMENT DECLINE - ACTION

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: My question is to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. Over the last five years, according to numbers from Statistics Canada, the number of youth and their employment has been in decline in this province, and I'll table that document. The number of people aged 15 to 65 has declined by 16,500. The number of people aged 65-plus has increased by a whopping 37,600. To make a bad situation worse, the unemployment rate for our youngest workers is sky high: females 15 to 24 have an unemployment rate of 17.7 per cent, and males of the same age have an unemployment rate of 22.1 per cent.

My question to the minister is, will the minister commit to taking these issues seriously going forward and taking real action to address the looming challenges?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I do believe we have been very clear about our concern about our young people, Mr. Speaker, and that is why we have, for example, brought in our graduate scholarships program. The Department of Labour and Advanced Education is very serious about the employment of our young people, for example and that is why we have brought in a new special operating agency for apprenticeships here in this province. When we took office, our apprentices were taking a full two years longer to complete their apprenticeship programs than anywhere else in the country. We're changing that.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I believe the reason it has taken a full two years longer for our apprentices is there are no jobs for them to gain their hours with. The Ivany report points to bold change, a drastic change that is needed to turn a major problem around. The House of Assembly has now been sitting for over a month, yet there is no movement towards enshrining the Ivany goals into law. Setting these goals in law would unite the province behind them and send a strong message that these goals are being taken seriously. My question is, why is the minister hesitant at getting goals and targets in law?

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I remain astonished by the Progressive Conservative caucus who appear to believe that if you enshrine something in legislation, it will magically happen. That's not how it works. We have been very clear that we are creating the conditions that will make it possible for business to step up and create the jobs in Nova Scotia, especially for our young people.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, the youth in our province need to know that Nova Scotia has a place for them in the future. They have been dealt the biggest tax increase they will likely ever see by this government with the elimination of Graduate Retention Rebate. In the last five years the level of employment for males age 25 to 54 has declined by 10,400; full-time employment has declined by 23.9 per cent for females and 10.9 per cent for males 15 to 24. These statistics point to drastic changes needed, but ignored by the government in this House sitting.

My question to the minister: How bad do the demographic issues have to get before the minister will take them seriously and take action?

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I do believe the biggest impediment to restoring confidence among our business sector and among our young people is, in fact, the negative Nellies across the way over there.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I just want to point out to the honourable minister that "negative Nellies" is unparliamentary and I would ask her to apologize and retract that remark.

MS. REGAN: I would like to point out to my honourable colleagues that the summer student program, the co-op program that we have added positions to, the Graduate to Opportunities Program, which my honourable colleague the Minister of ERDT will be announcing shortly, all of these things, coupled with the sandbox announcement, are things that we are doing for our young people, Mr. Speaker - and there will be more to come.

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

PREM. - GRAD. RETENTION REBATE: CUT - TIMING EXPLAIN

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. On Monday evening, graduates in our Red Room said the Graduate Retention Rebate helped them pay off debt, invest in the economy, and pay their bills. When explaining why the cut of the Graduate Retention Rebate was not followed with an equal investment in programs for young people, the Premier explained that his government needed more time to develop all these new untested initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, if the Premier needed more time for new programs, why did he immediately cut the Graduate Retention Rebate when he could easily have phased it out over a couple of years to ease the burden of the cut on the people it was helping?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the issue around the Graduate Retention Rebate program is that it was not doing what it intended to do, which was retain more students. There is absolutely no question there were some students in this province - they actually weren't students - some young Nova Scotians had regained employment and were receiving a tax benefit for having that job in this province.

The reason for the Graduate Retention Rebate program was actually to provide opportunities for more students to access the workforce. What we've done is take the money that was involved in the Graduate Retention Rebate program, and targeted it towards job opportunities and job creation. We understand from students the cost of post-secondary education is creating great pressures on them. We're going to continue the conversation with students to see how we can ensure that post-secondary education is affordable for all Nova Scotians.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, student leaders said they were meeting with the government the very day before the Graduate Retention Rebate program was cut and they were hopeful that there would be programs based on what they were speaking to the government about.

In *The Chronicle Herald* today students said the loss of the Graduate Retention Rebate redirects about \$35 million away from young people - and I'll table that article, Mr. Speaker. Why did the government not tell students and graduates that they intended to cut

the Graduate Retention Rebate and not reinvest in the programs they were hopeful that they were going to see based on their advocacy with government members?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the honourable member and all members of this House that there wasn't a single student who received any of that \$50 million that she's talking about. It was a tax benefit to people who had received a job and earned a job in this province. The initiative was to actually try to drive more job opportunities. We recognize that there's a difference between what the Graduate Retention Rebate program was and the investments that we have made. We've invested in reducing the interest on student loans; we've created a program, Graduate to Opportunities, in the first year - that program is in its infancy. It is our hope that because of the success of that and the combination of working with business owners to provide more opportunities that program will grow.

Just like the Graduate Retention Rebate program grew over time, this program - we're doing what a responsible government should do and that's budget and make sure that we're getting the most effective use of taxpayers' dollars.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, on the backbenches of the Liberal Government, there's a former president of the Acadia Student Union; also, the MLA for Yarmouth is a former student leader. I wonder, would the Premier tell us what he said to convince these members that it was okay to vote in favour of cutting programs for students without redirecting these funds? (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party has the floor.

MS. MACDONALD: Thank you. I'll begin again.

Can the Premier tell us what he said to convince former student leaders of his government that it was okay to cut a program like the Graduate Retention Rebate without redirecting these funds to help students?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it was today's student leaders who told us the program didn't work. It was today's student leaders who said the program wasn't doing what it should, to get rid of that program.

Let me be clear, we're not questioning whether or not at all that those Nova Scotians who were benefiting from this program actually saw a benefit from it. But the issue of the program was trying to create new job opportunities for university graduates. That's what we've redirected some of that funding into, to ensure we could provide more job opportunities. Student leaders are telling us, just like the members she mentioned have told us, we need to work on post-secondary education affordability. We had hoped, quite frankly, in the last four years there might have been some movement on that. What we're

going to do is continue to work with university student union presidents and we're going to work with Nova Scotians to ensure the affordability of post-secondary education for every single Nova Scotian.

I want to remind the honourable member: post-secondary education is unaffordable for some Nova Scotians and we're going to make sure that every Nova Scotian has access to post-secondary education.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**EECD - FOWLER REPT.: CHIGNECTO-CENTRAL REG. SCH. BD.
- DECISIONS SUSPEND**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

There's no doubt that the process used to decide school closures is broken and flawed; Mr. Fowler's report made that perfectly clear. He said school reviews were having a negative impact on the relationship between school boards, parents, and communities. Schools in the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board are being forced to live by decisions made under our broken system - and I know that from the other side of the floor here we've been talking about being negative and pessimistic, but I am positive and optimistic that the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development will hopefully demand that the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board will suspend decisions made under the broken process.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, my thanks to the member opposite for the question. The member has made a statement that is very true in that the school review process can have a negative impact, and the intent of the new legislation is to try to reduce the negativity and perhaps build some collaboration and some trust. I could go on to tell the member - and I've stated this publicly - that I have asked the Chignecto board to look at the decisions that they made that were conditional and that they would give those schools impacted an additional year. Thank you.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that. That's very positive and hopeful, especially for the River John Consolidated School, because it is the lifeline of the community. Residents are working very hard to develop a hub school model to ensure the building is completely utilized and the community is well served. I'm hoping that the minister will throw the community of River John a lifeline and act to make sure the school is not closed before every option is examined, and I'm hoping that she can confirm that.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, the informal request that went to the Chignecto board was to have the time frame extended by one year on those conditional closure motions. The

formal request has gone to the board chair and the board chair has informed me that that will be on the agenda when the board meets - I believe it's May 6th. I would encourage the member opposite to work with her school board member to ensure that her concerns are heard and that her school board member takes them to that public board meeting.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her answer. I'm a little bit perplexed because there are a lot of parties involved in this situation that's happening. I'm just wondering if she could table that formal request that was made to the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board, and if it was perhaps informal, if she's willing to maybe provide a letter now just so the parents, teachers, and children - even those who have been attending all of these meetings that I have been going to - that they actually have a paper trail. I know they want to believe that the minister did request that to the school board, and it would just give them much comfort.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if the member is questioning the statement that I've made or not. I did make a formal request and I'd be glad to give her a copy.

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

AGRIC.: WOMEN'S INSTIT. N.S. - FUNDING

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Agriculture. An important and respected organization, the Women's Institutes of Nova Scotia, has been enriching our province for more than 100 years. This vibrant organization currently has over 700 members who contribute in excess of 100,000 volunteer hours every year. The organization recently had to inform its members that its annual operating grant of just \$27,000 for the current fiscal year is being discontinued by the minister's department.

My question is, why has the minister chosen to no longer fund this organization's operating grant?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. It's a very important question. I did meet with the Women's Institutes last year. Actually, your government had decided not to fund the Women's Institutes for the \$27,000. I did have the \$27,000 put in place last year at the end of the year after I met with them and proceeded with that, and I've made arrangements for a little bit different structure this year, but if you'd like to ask me another question I could describe that in more detail.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, the volunteer hours that these women contribute to our communities represent more than \$1 million in unpaid work that are donated to the province, and their service at our homeless shelters, food banks, women's centres, and countless other community organizations is really invaluable. My question is, is the

minister saying that he is going to fund \$27,000 of operating grants, you're going to continue that to the Women's Institutes of Nova Scotia?

MR. COLWELL: Yes, we will, but it's going to be a little different structure this year. What I proposed to the Women's Institutes last year when I met with them was we were very interested in continuing supporting them. They do very important work in the community, a wonderful group of ladies who are very dedicated to agriculture in the province. What I suggested they may do is help us promote some of our industries - the wine industry, the agriculture industry - do some displays and offer them some promotional material to do that and work with the industry to do that. I think that would give them an opportunity to get their profile higher in the community, and also serve as a very important function for us in promoting locally-grown and produced products.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, is the minister suggesting a workfare type of situation for this incredibly important organization that put so many volunteer hours into so many of our different organizations right across the province for over 100 years? I've heard through the grapevine and through speaking with them that this is indeed what you are suggesting, that in order to get any money now that they need to do some work for your department for that funding.

MR. COLWELL: No, that is not correct. We are going to fund the Women's Institutes for \$27,000. We also want to work with them to help promote Nova Scotia products in the Superstores, grocery stores or whatever - the ones that they want to do. It would be totally voluntary on their part. We will provide the materials to do that, and it's going to be a working relationship between our department and the Women's Institutes, which I think is very important - a very well-respected organization, and what better group to do this and work closely with us in that regard.

Again, it is totally voluntary, and we look forward to working with them. They were very receptive to that approach when I met with them this earlier this year.

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

PREM. - ELECTIONS: FIXED DATES - LEGISLATION

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Premier. In 2009 the Premier said he would introduce fixed dates for elections, for the Legislature, for the budget. In December, he indicated again that he would move to set fixed election dates.

I remember how I felt last summer and Fall, waiting and waiting for a date to be called. I'm just going to ask the Premier, through you, Mr. Speaker, when he might table legislation to introduce fixed election dates.

THE PREMIER: Before the next election.

MR. HARRISON: Well, that was a quick answer. Yesterday the Chief Electoral Officer for the province told us that we can probably save \$500,000 if we set a fixed date. So my question to the Premier is, through you, Mr. Speaker, would the Premier consider meeting with the other two Parties to help set some dates in the future?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I think I've demonstrated that I'm always open for good suggestions, so I'll be more than happy to listen to anyone who wants to give me a good idea.

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

**FINANCE & TREASURY BD. - PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS:
WAGE INCREASES - DETAILS**

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. More than 80,000 public sector workers are asking questions about the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board's most recent Budget Address, where she suggested wage increases were unsustainable. She said, "We need a new approach, and we must be innovative and creative in tackling these issues."

Mr. Speaker, the last time the Liberals were in government they rolled back wages and they laid off hundreds of nurses, teachers, and other government workers. My question to the minister is, will the minister respect public sector workers and explain to those hard-working Nova Scotians in our public sector what she means by her new approach?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. Essentially there's an easy answer to this question, and it is that all of us need to work together to find a way for Nova Scotia to be on a firm fiscal footing. We've already demonstrated that we respect the collective bargaining process, and we hope to work very well with all of the unions that we are involved with. Thank you.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I know that we all have the greatest respect for people in the public sector and in our workforce, but this is a very serious matter for public sector workers who can read the words of the minister and who do get concerned when they see language like, we have to rise above narrow interest.

In the same budget address, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board said that a wage increase of 2 per cent is, ". . . simply not sustainable", which is a far cry from what her Leader said when they were in Opposition where he said, "The efforts of many Nova Scotians have not been rewarded because wages were essentially flat . . ."

Mr. Speaker, since 2 per cent is not sustainable, can the minister tell the 80,000 public sector workers affected what she considers to be a sustainable wage increase?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the honourable member. As all of us know in the House, we have to respect the collective bargaining process and that will ultimately determine where each of the agreements go in the future. Thank you.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I don't know that all of us know we need to respect the collective bargaining process, given that we've had Bill No. 37 imposed on the workers of this province. But in a Canadian Press article from March 14th, it says, "... civil service job cuts are not a priority in this year's budget." So it's not in this year's budget, but we don't know where the government will proceed in subsequent years.

Public sector workers know what the Liberal Party did in the 1990s, and they are worried that this history could repeat itself. So my final question to the minister is, will those workers in our public sector expect to see wage freezes, wage rollbacks or layoffs under the Liberal Government?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I think it's really important to remind members of the House that when we came to office just six months ago, the Premier made a concerted effort to visit every single department in the downtown core and in the far-flung corners of this province to speak to civil servants and to engage them in the work we have ahead of us. We know that all of the challenges that we face are going to require the creativity and innovation and frankly the experience of our civil servants in the public service, and we hope to work with them at every step of the way. I know all other members are following the Premier's example.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

EECD - S. SHORE REG. SCH. BDS: LIBRARIES - FUNDING

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, in 2011, the South Shore Regional School Board received a 50 per cent funding cut from the provincial government. This resulted in significantly reduced services, where some school libraries are operating one out of six days a week and leaving some high schools, like Forest Heights, without a functioning library.

School libraries play a significant role in the developing of literacy and research skills that will benefit students when they move on to their professions or pursue a post-secondary education. My question is, will the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development work with school boards to develop and invest in our school libraries?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for the question. It's true that during the previous three years, school boards did have severe cuts to their funding and had to make some very difficult decisions as to how they provided services and supports. However, we have changed the way that we're providing funding to boards and we will target funding so that boards will have to provide the services that we deem to be important. Library services may well be one of those in the future.

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

ENERGY - ELECTRICITY BILLING: REVIEW - CONFIRM

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask a question to the Minister of Energy. I know we haven't asked too many questions of him this sitting so I thought, as we're getting close to an end, we would ask him a question and listen to what kind of interesting things he'll have to say.

Larry Hughes of Dalhousie University is skeptical that the changes to Efficiency Nova Scotia will result in savings to consumers. In *Allnovascotia.com* today, he suggests that changing the way electricity is billed by offering off-peak incentives would be best, and I'll table that of course. My question is, can we expect the government to review electricity billing in order to bring down electricity costs for Nova Scotians?

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, first of all just to clarify what Mr. Hughes actually said, he said he was skeptical over the energy saving amounts that Efficiency Nova Scotia said they had achieved last year. In that article he actually didn't say anything one way or the other about the particular changes we made. In fact, I've spoken to him about it myself.

To the member's question, it's actually a very good question. What he is talking about is time-of-day pricing. The member may be aware that time-of-day pricing is actually specifically included in the RFPs and the reviews that just went out and are part of the electricity review underway at the moment.

I will say, however, in some places where we have switched to time-of-day rates, the amount paid by consumers has actually increased, not decreased, because of course the times that most people use energy are during the peak-price times, which are higher than they would be now. It is under review but we shouldn't assume that it's necessarily a cheaper option.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: The quote is - well it's not really a quote because it's just written, of course, in this article: "Larry Hughes, professor in electrical engineering at Dalhousie University, is skeptical of the benefits touted by Efficiency Nova Scotia. He says if the goal is to save all Nova Scotia electricity customers money, the province needs to change the way electricity is billed."

We recognize that the government is currently conducting an electricity review but as this review is conducted, Nova Scotians will continue to pay the highest electricity rates in the country. This new electricity plan is not expected to be introduced until somewhere near 2015 or early 2016.

My question to the minister is, does the government plan to enact any relief for ratepayers in the meantime, over the next couple of years?

MR. YOUNGER: Well as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, last night the Legislature voted in favour of removing a tax from electricity bills, which would be the first time in recent memory that bills will have actually gone down. It's unfortunate that the other members voted against that and, in fact, voted in favour of bills going up for Nova Scotians.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Well what we voted against was smoke and mirrors, that's what we voted against. We voted against a shell game, when you promise one thing and produce another.

So trying to stick to the question at hand, though, smart group technologies enable ratepayers to better understand their energy consumption and save money. They can also better promote time-of-day billing and put less of a strain on the electricity system.

My question is, can the minister provide details on his discussions regarding smart grid technologies with Nova Scotia Power and the potential benefits that an upgraded grid could have for ratepayers?

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, that answer would probably take the rest of the Question Period. What I will say is that I find it interesting that the member is suggesting moving to a smart grid technology when, in fact, the people who would have to pay for that are ratepayers and in every jurisdiction that that has moved to, ratepayers have actually had a charge on their bills, which has increased their rates to pay for the new meters and the new grid infrastructure and so forth.

The reality is, as I said earlier, it is under review; it is being studied to see where there are benefits but let's not assume that it automatically will result in net savings to ratepayers because the experience in most jurisdictions, quite frankly because of the time of day that most people work and most people use electricity, there aren't that many people getting up at 2:00 a.m. to do their laundry to take advantage of the cheaper overnight rates, means that in most cases bills actually go up.

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

PREM.: STRIKING NURSES - DISCIPLINARY ACTION

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Premier. All members of the House heard from many nurses as they came to the Legislature through Law Amendments Committee to speak up against Bill No. 37, and it took a lot of courage for many of them. They came here and they tried to explain to government members what the conditions were they were working in and really advocating for their patients. Many of them now are facing discipline - disciplinary hearings are scheduled to begin next week for over 170 of these nurses.

So I would like to ask through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier is, why does the Premier think it's appropriate for these nurses to be disciplined when they were only standing up for their rights but, more importantly, the rights of their patients?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I know the honourable member would know that this is something between the nurses and their employer.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I could take that as an answer, but the Premier has made comments about this. The Premier and his government have hit nurses time and time again since taking office. First they took away their rights to a fair collective bargaining process through Bill No. 37, and then they cut the Graduate Retention Tax Rebate for young nursing grads, which many of them have contacted us and said they benefited from that program.

Now, I know his comments from earlier really supported, I think, Capital Health's position around punishing nurses and having disciplinary action put against them. I would like to ask the Premier, what is the Premier's plan to re-establish good relations with the nurses of Capital Health and really around the province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question, and I want to remind the honourable member that it was this government that protected the right to strike for health care workers. It was the former New Democratic Party that stripped that right away from paramedics across this province - we remember that, it wasn't all that long ago. We also remember that every union leader supported the NDP's decision to strip the right to strike away from paramedics.

We believe we did right, which was bringing in essential services legislation which would protect essential services and at the same time allowing health care providers to exercise their right to strike.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I know the over 170 nurses who took job action to try to protest against Bill No. 37 were doing the right thing. They were trying to advocate not only for themselves, but more importantly for the patients that they serve. One presenter after another told about conditions that they work under and that things

needed to change. Morale is low at Capital Health and with Bill No. 37, I think you'll see that morale go even lower across the province.

I would like to ask the Premier, why won't the Premier accept that the treatment of nurses has been unfair and begin to give nurses the respect they so richly deserve, and support them in calling off Capital Health on the disciplinary action that's going to take place next week?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Health and Wellness has made it very clear that nurses make tremendous contributions in the health care system and without them, quite frankly, it couldn't function - and we know that.

The Minister of Health and Wellness has also listened to nurses when they were here, he has already engaged Capital Health to look at the staffing issues that were brought up not only in Capital Health but, indeed, across the province. There are some challenges. Those are not things that belong in the collective agreement, they are going to be solved by the Minister of Health and Wellness, who has finally paid attention to the issues that nurses have been talking about now for a couple of years.

And I know the honourable member is not suggesting that illegal job action should be tolerated by anyone in this province, is he?

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

EECD: EDUC. INVESTMENT - PROMISES EXPLAIN

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Prior to and during the election, the Liberals promised to invest in education to the tune of \$65 million. The Liberals promised this investment would happen immediately and I have *The Chronicle Herald* article which clearly states - and I will table that - that as of February 19th of this year, the minister is claiming that was "never the case."

So my question, through you Mr. Speaker to the minister is, why did she tell Nova Scotians the investment would be made immediately if that was never her intention?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have that question raised in the House today because I'm very proud of the budget that we've been able to build that will, over the course of our mandate, reinvest \$65 million back into the public system.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I guess there are different definitions of "immediately". About a year ago, on January 30, 2013, *The Chronicle Herald* published another article about the Liberal commitment to Education. It says, ". . . the entire amount would be restored in the first full year of a mandate, which is typically four years." So the

difference between definitions, I guess, of “immediate”. My question is, how long will Nova Scotians have to wait before the investment of \$65 million is made?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat that the commitment that I have made as minister in the budget-building process that I began this year is reinvesting \$65 million in the public schools of this province over the course of our mandate.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Once again, Mr. Speaker, in this House and during Budget Estimates, I asked the minister to provide budget details outlining where \$65 million was actually removed from the budget in previous years. The minister hasn’t produced that evidence yet because I know - we all know - that evidence does not exist. My question is, why should Nova Scotians have any faith the minister will keep her promise to invest the \$65 million at all when she has a track record of not being forthright with them?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I’d like to remind the honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret’s that implying that the honourable member opposite has a poor track record is unparliamentary. Would you please retract that statement? Forthright, pardon me.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: I will retract that.

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I do want to respond to comments that have just been made by the member opposite. During estimates, after a lengthy debate, the member opposite asked that the evidence to support the \$65 million cut to public schools be tabled. As minister, I tabled that. I’m surprised that this member has not looked at that.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

AGRIC.: GRASS FED BEEF IND. - PRIORITY CONFIRM

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture is taking an initiative to promote local grass-fed beef in our province. Nova Scotia is an ideal place to encourage this as forage land represents 65 per cent of the total crop land province-wide. My question is, can the minister confirm that the grass-fed beef industry is still a priority for this new government?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: We are presently reviewing that policy and as it appears at the present time, we are going to possibly be funding some more activities in that area.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I’d like to thank the minister for that response. Many rural areas in our province are facing issues with the lack of provincially inspected meat processing facilities. Farmers are being forced to travel as far as P.E.I. because many facilities do not have space. While in Opposition, the now-Minister of Health and Wellness told reporters, “Smaller processing plants serving local markets may be the answer for the

beef industry.” He further pointed out that “The province is promoting local grass-fed beef, but many areas don’t have the kill-floor capacity. A local beef plant is a necessary component of developing that part of the industry.” I will table those comments from the now-Minister of Health and Wellness. Does the minister agree with his Cabinet colleague?

MR. COLWELL: I thank the honourable member for that question. A very important part of the agriculture industry is processing. The unfortunate thing of it is, it has to be a Canadian Food Inspection Agency that inspects it. We have provincially inspected facilities that work very well but unfortunately, if we’re going to ship outside of Nova Scotia, we need Canadian food inspection certified facilities. It’s very expensive. We have to have a certain mass of product to put through the facility so that it runs on a continuous basis and unfortunately we don’t have that volume at the present time in Nova Scotia.

I look forward to the day when we do have that volume and we do have the provincially and federally inspected facility here so we can sell our product outside of Nova Scotia - that’s in the beef industry. We do have a facility that’s very nearly ready to move forward in the sheep industry, so we’re working very hard on that one.

MR. LOHR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the minister’s response and I would like to say that yes I recognize that volume is an issue in this question and so are federal and provincial inspections.

In that same article the now-Minister of Health and Wellness went on to say that the Liberal plan favours a beef industry initiative comparable to the orchard renewal program because the industry is going to need some investment. My question to the minister is, what plan can the minister deliver to the beef industry in Nova Scotia and when can we expect the details?

MR. COLWELL: Again, I’d like to thank the member for that very important question. It’s a very important part of our industry. We are presently working with the beef industry to see what we can do, as we are in all sectors of agriculture, to see if we can increase the productivity, also the profitability of the organizations because if they are not profitable, this won’t work. We’re working towards that and there are some initiatives that we will be taking in the future, which I can’t discuss today because we’re not ready to announce them.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

HEALTH & WELLNESS - ARISTOSPAN: MARKET REMOVAL - DETAILS

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. A drug that helps juvenile arthritis in remission is no longer available. Aristospan is an injection that helps juvenile arthritis patients with their pain and their inflammation. Valeo Pharma, the company which distributes this drug in Nova Scotia

and elsewhere, says the decision to take the drug off the market came from a third party manufacturer. My question for the minister, can the minister inform the House today whether he or officials in his department have been in contact with the third party manufacturer to find out why they have taken the drug off the market?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I'm aware of this important drug that has served some patients in Nova Scotians very well. I have not determined as to why it has been taken off the market. I do know that there are a number of other medications that have now been developed and have come forward, and hopefully those will accomplish the same benefits to our patients suffering from arthritis.

MR. PORTER: Doctor Suzanne Ramsey, Pediatric Rheumatologist at the IWK, refers to Aristospan as the gold standard medication saying that there isn't a substitute medication better than this one. Unfortunately 1,000 children in this province suffer from juvenile arthritis. Can the minister tell children suffering from juvenile arthritis in Nova Scotia what the department's plan might be for their treatment?

MR. GLAVINE: The first plan is to look at how we can go about obtaining, through Health Canada, another manufacturer from which this Aristospan can be procured. That process is being investigated and we hope that we can get a satisfactory result.

MR. PORTER: Dr. Peter Dent, a professor emeritus of pediatrics at McMaster University and the head of the division of pediatric rheumatology and immunology at McMaster Children's Hospital said he believes a profit motive may have been at the root of this problem. The Executive Director of the Canadian Arthritis Society for the Maritimes, Susan Tilley-Russell, says that the drug is a life changer for those children who need it.

My final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister, when will the minister be able to confirm whether he has any details about the current supply of this drug and how much longer will Nova Scotia children be without it and maybe elaborate on the plan that he just spoke of by way of what might come next?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite now is realizing, and more and more Canadians, is that some of the medications and the pharmaceuticals that we relied on to be manufactured here in Canada, we're finding now that they are letting go of that because just as he suggested, profit margins, amounts of sales, are, in fact, for just limited quantities.

So this is really part of that bigger picture of looking at future procurement, not just here in Nova Scotia but right across the country. We're hoping that the Pan-Canadian drug alliance and through Health Canada that we can find other companies that will provide this. This is an area that the Department of Health and Wellness has already started to look into.

I know the work of Dr. Ramsey at the IWK and as a rheumatologist. She is a strong advocate of this medication. We'll do all we can to keep it in the hands of Nova Scotians.

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

TIR - FERRY WEST RD. & LOCKES ISLAND RD.: REPAIRS - TIMETABLE

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. In last week's edition of the *Shelburne Coast Guard*, residents expressed concern over the condition of the Ferry West Road and Locke's Island Road. What is the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal's timetable on when repairs will be completed for the Ferry West Road and Locke's Island Road?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure exactly the specific details of the roads that the honourable member is referring to. I could certainly have the staff, who are very committed and do a great job down in that region of the province, to have a look and provide me some update and some details on the assessment for that road, but I obviously don't have those specifics in front of me at this time.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, while tough winter weather will always add to the list of local roads in need of repair, a multi-year local roads plan would provide more transparency in the Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal budget.

Mr. Speaker, when will the minister review the research the department prepared for the last government that showed a multi-year roads plan will, indeed, be possible?

MR. MACLELLAN: Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. With respect to the local roads plan, I honestly don't see any merit in establishing a long-term five-year plan for local roads because the dynamics of the roads, and there's many of them across the province - over 20,000 kilometres of roads that we service as a provincial government; 9,000 kilometres of those are unpaved.

I think that doing the local roads year over year provides us with that flexibility. As an example for his first question, if there are immediate repairs required for that road and it wasn't in the plan, then we wouldn't have the ability to respond and make those changes. For us, it provides us with that leniency and that flexibility to react to the most pressing issues in all regions of the province and establish our priorities, based on road safety and based on what is needed at that specific time.

I think the fact that we do local roads year over year is a testament to the fact that we need flexibility. We'll make changes as they come up, in the immediate term, to make sure that Nova Scotians are safe. Thank you.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, this minister has admitted that the previous government's five-year road plan has taken the politics out of paving. He has explained that he does not think he would or should have a multi-year road plan because of weather, saying - and I will table this from Hansard - "Things deteriorate quickly, and that becomes our priority."

Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind this minister that the very first hours of this government, he sold a paving plant, he's looking at reviewing options of turning paved roads. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask the members opposite to save the applause, because I'm not through my question yet. I really appreciate the interest.

In the very first hours, sold the paving plant, reviewing options, this minister reviewing options of turning paved roads back into gravel, has no five-year plan, and I may suggest that this minister is no more than a speed bump, and a very large speed bump. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I would like the honourable member for Queens-Shelburne to retract that unparliamentary comment about the minister.

MR. BELLIVEAU: I'll retract that statement.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, sir.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, my question: Can the minister tell us in the interests of transparency, because I believe every Nova Scotian can see through this government, what local roads have been identified for this year and are not on his one-year road plan?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, first of all with the question, again the local roads plan is done on an annual basis based on the need for Nova Scotians and the need of the regions within this great province - and the member is right, we don't apply politics to these decisions. I'm not sure if he's referring to a specific road, but I can tell you that I have complete faith, and our government has complete faith, in the system that has been established by the experts within TIR who make these decisions and we take their lead with respect to the local roads that are being done.

I also want to address the fact that, Mr. Speaker, we've had many decisions, some are tough and some vary along that spectrum in terms of difficult decisions, but I can tell you the paving plant was a very easy one for this government, both on a philosophical level and of course on a numerical level - we made the right decision for Nova Scotians and we stick with that. We're doing the best we can; obviously, the member should understand as a former Cabinet Minister that we're doing the right things with the limited budget that we have and we're making good decisions on behalf of the people of Nova Scotia.

I'm certainly no speed bump. I'm learning as I go and I'm making good decisions and am very proud of our government and the steps we've taken to make Nova Scotians safe in this province. (Applause)

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

NAT. RES. - DONKIN MINE: SALE - UPDATE

MR. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I have to agree that the minister is not a "speed bump," he's only a little blimp. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Ten years ago announcements were made about the planned opening of the Donkin Mine. Recently Xstrata said that they are not going to move forward and are looking for a buyer - I wonder, could the minister tell us if there has been any success in identifying some potential buyers and where that whole process stands are this time?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the Donkin Mine I will say that this government knows the importance of that mine for the economy of Cape Breton, and we will do all in our power to support the operations of that mine. Of course, the mine becoming operational is dependent on market forces, primarily the international price point of coal. However, what we're hearing from experts in the industry is that market is starting to turn around and I believe fully, and have hope, that will lead to a situation where a commercial agreement between Glencore and another company will be highly possible.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for that answer because he's right, it would be important to Cape Breton. Actually the mine development will be important to all Nova Scotians because we would get a good quality coal, produced locally, bought in Canadian dollars, and that would help stabilize power prices for people right across the province, not just Cape Breton.

With that in mind I wonder, could the minister tell us just how recently he and the Minister of Energy have had discussions about where the Donkin Mine project is? I know there may be some things he can't release in the House, but there are many people in our area and around the province who are really wondering where this project is going. They are interested in being able to work at home instead of away. It could create 300 direct jobs and I would just hope that the minister could tell us if he and the Minister of Energy have had any discussions recently.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, our government has been in continuous conversations with the folks from Glencore and internally, within the government, on the situation there. I will say that there are few proponents of that mine greater than the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. He has been a vocal advocate of

Cape Breton since I've known him, and has done a great job ensuring that our government understands the importance of Donkin and that our government is doing the very best we can to ensure that, once the market allows for a commercial agreement to take place, we facilitate that process for happening.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the minister for that answer and I agree that the Minister of TIR is a strong advocate and I would hope that in your Cabinet discussions that you will sit down and really work on him about fixing the road going into Donkin so that when the time comes for the mine to start, we'll actually have a good road to drive on and we'll be able to get the materials in there.

The last part of what I am going to say to you is that this development is important for the economy of the Province of Nova Scotia. We've heard many of you on that side talk about wanting to move the economy forward; we all do in our own different ways. I would encourage you and your Cabinet colleagues to do whatever you can to move this project forward because there are many people who are looking for it and depending on it. I hope I can get the commitment of the Minister of Natural Resources that he will do everything in his power to make this project move forward.

MR. CHURCHILL: Thank you and I appreciate the importance of Donkin to the folks of Cape Breton and the impact it can have on the economy and perhaps energy prices in the province as well.

I do offer my commitment and the commitment of this government to do all in our power to support the Donkin project. I will say, however, this is a private enterprise and it's going to be primarily dependent on market factors. But when the time comes, I believe those factors will help us lead to a commercial agreement and the operation being reopened at the Donkin Mine.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**AGRIC. - LAND DEV. PROGS.: AGRIC. DEPT./AGRICULTURE CAN.
- COST-SHARING AGREEMENTS**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. The Ivany report indicated that our traditional industries, including agriculture, need to be key economic drivers of our economy in Nova Scotia. The Department of Agriculture has programs related to land development, which are key to expanding agriculture production and have been some of the most popular programs the Department of Agriculture has had.

The land development programs are jointly cost shared between the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Agriculture Canada. Will the minister inform this House of the details of these cost-sharing agreements with Ottawa and will he supply a detailed list of the work scheduled to be done in the coming year?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member is absolutely right. It's very important that we grow the economy and agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture in the Province of Nova Scotia. The rural jobs are very important jobs and the information that was requested - as soon as I can release it, I will release the information to the Legislature.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the minister for that answer. When new farmland is being developed, there is nothing more important than tile drainage ditching and land clearing. These are essential programs. Nova Scotians understand there has been a general loss in productive farmland to other forms of land development. My question to the minister is, will the minister confirm his department's commitment to expanding the actual land base of agriculture in the province?

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, that's another very important question for all Nova Scotians and indeed the whole country. The preservation of agricultural land in this province is critical. We have seen a lot of the land being built into subdivisions, which is not acceptable, and we are now working on a strategy to ensure that doesn't continue and ensure we can bring back into production some of the lands that have been taken out of production because of other issues and other opportunities that people have pursued.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for the answer to that question. We live in a province which obliges us as farmers to invest in both irrigation and drainage. The drainage programs and ditching programs have been some of the most popular programs the department has had and demand for these programs far outstrips the funding available. Is the minister attempting or working to sign new agreements with Ottawa to increase funding for these programs?

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, yes, we are. We are in the process now of finishing off some programs that are in place. We intend to pursue more programs that will help the industry. As I said earlier, it's critically important with the looming shortage of food supply in the next 20 to 40 years that we preserve our land, our agricultural land. Even if we get all our land back in production, which won't be practical because of some of the things that have happened to it in the meantime, we're still not going to be able to meet the demand.

Just to add to that, we only produce 20 per cent of the food we consume in Nova Scotia. Most Nova Scotians don't realize that. We're going to do everything we can to get that number up and also to increase our exports and help our economy.

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

AGRIC. - COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED AGRIC.: MEETINGS - MIN. ADVISE

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question through you today is also for the Minister of Agriculture, a very popular gentleman today. Community-supported agriculture is a way for all of us - even if we live in urban areas - to support small-scale, local producers and enjoy farm-fresh food. Better known as CSA, this process engages community members as shareholders in farms and there are now over 30 farms operating under this model in Nova Scotia.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, could the minister please advise us of how many meetings he has had so far with the CSA community since taking over as Minister of Agriculture?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, this is a very important part of agriculture in our province and we will continue to work with those organizations to ensure that they grow and prosper as time moves forward.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I take it from that answer that perhaps the minister has not had a chance to meet with those organizations yet. I hope that he does so in the future.

In 2013, Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party told Nova Scotians that if elected, they would “. . . make certain local products are present in our academic and health care facilities.” I will table that. But they have yet to tell us how they are going to do that.

My final question through you to the minister, will the minister please tell this House when he will follow through on this election promise and how much it will cost? Sorry, that's my second question.

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, again it's a very important question. We are presently working with many institutions in the province to ensure we have the maximum amount of locally-grown products in their facilities and we're getting a very good response. I know the Department of Health and Wellness has set a standard in their facilities for doing this and we're going to follow the model they have. We're working very closely with some other organizations in that regard, including the Ecology Action Centre.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, and yes, this is my final supplementary. Thank you for that response, through you to the minister. In 2013, the Department of Agriculture announced that \$220,000 would actually be available this fiscal year for provincial CSAs. This money was going towards helping Nova Scotia's existing operations to better market themselves, as well as undertaking new research into sustainable farming practices.

My final question, Mr. Speaker, through you, is, can the minister please explain how and when this \$220,000 will be distributed?

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, we are presently working on all the programs we have in the province and towards sustainable agriculture and to ensure that the industry is profitable and grows.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - MED. GRADUATES:
OUT-OF-PROV. TRAINING - RETURN TRANSITION**

MS. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, my question today through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Recently I had the opportunity to speak to a young man who approached me on behalf of himself and a few other students who are from Nova Scotia but are attending medical school outside the country. Their intent is to practice family medicine and they'd like to be back here in the province working, and want to know specifically what the province is doing to make that transition for residency easier for them to return back to us.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, to my colleague, the member for Fairview-Clayton Park, one of the most important questions that has been asked in the House this session. I know it's one that the Premier and I and many others and former Ministers of Health have been very, very frustrated by when we have so many very capable medical graduates who train outside of Nova Scotia and who can't get back here for residency and to practise. It is one of the areas that I have asked the committee dealing with the recruitment and retention of doctors to take a look at. It's one that I will join B.C. at the national ministers' conference in the Fall, to change the way that the current practice operates.

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

TIR - HWY. NOS. 101 & 103: COMPLETION - PLANS

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. First of all, I just want to say that with the traffic that will be coming down Highway No. 103 and Highway No. 101, once the new ferry starts coming through, I want to underline that there are a number of deficiencies along a couple of those highways that need to be addressed.

The first one that I will underline is the completion of those two highways. Of course, with Highway No. 103 there is some work going on through Port Mouton, and of course, there's the issue of everything down Highway No. 101, as you go down through Weymouth. I'm just wondering, where in the department's world is the completion of Highway No. 101 and Highway No. 103 on its radar?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, first of all, with both projects the reality is - and I know the member is very aware of this, and all members of the House are - these are massive investments on behalf of the people of Nova Scotia, and we truly do require the partnership with the federal government, which has been outstanding to this point in my tenure, and long before me.

The Building Canada Fund is currently in negotiations, and we're working with our federal counterparts. There are components of those highway upgrades that are part of that. With Highway No. 103, the Ingramport interchange is a key piece of infrastructure that we are currently proceeding with, with the intent that we would build the twinning from metro and meet up with that interchange. That is an important section of Highway No. 103. The threshold for full twinning is about 10,000 vehicles per day, and that section of Highway No. 103 meets that criteria. We are moving aggressively with that, building the Ingramport interchange with the hope that the feds will partner with us on that specific portion.

With respect to Highway No. 101, there are a number of pieces along the entire Highway No. 101 which we are engaging with our federal counterparts as well. There are some short-term measures that we can take to improve safety, and we're working with members from all sides of the House on some of those short-term measures, but with respect to the long-term measures, that again will be subject to the discussion with the federal members. I would like to acknowledge the MLA for Digby, who has been very strong in representing his community on those issues. Again, we're working on those as best we can.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the member for Clare-Digby has been doing yet, but I know the previous member for Digby would have spoken really passionately about Highway No. 101, with completing Highway No. 101. He would have spoken about alders, as well, but I'm sure this one is important to him too. I hope the new member takes that up with you as well.

The issue I do want to talk about specifically is the intersection to the Pubnicos. I know the Minister of Natural Resources knows it well. As you come down that highway, there are a lot of level crossings, and probably the most fishing product, the highest value of fishing product in all of Canada comes out of the port in Lower West Pubnico. A lot of those trucks are turning off the highway onto Highway No. 103 and causing a bit of a problem. If you can imagine that kind of traffic hitting a flat intersection, it's very difficult.

So I just wanted to ask you the question that maybe in your discussions there can be an ask of the federal government or of others that we look at an intersection for that specific intersection, a real intersection with a bridge intersection and all, because it is getting quite dangerous and I'm getting a lot of phone calls about it.

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, when we travelled down the South Shore and we took Highway No. 101 down and took Highway No. 103 back to the city, that was a

particular area that was of very significant interest to both the deputy minister, Paul LaFleche and chief engineer, Bruce Fitzner. They pointed out the inherent dangers in that area, particularly when there's heavy volume using that corridor and certainly that intersection.

I think that is a conversation that we'll continue to have. Again, as the member understands and as pointed out, that is certainly something that will take a significant investment. For us, that could be on the table as the MLAs in the area offer their opinions on what should be the focus, we certainly take that seriously. Of course, the input from the Members of Parliament from that way, the regional minister, Peter MacKay, and the federal counterparts that would have some influence over that money.

Certainly, for us, again, I've said it many times but I'll repeat it, this is all about road safety and the priorities that make sense and keep people safe, keep the economy going and keep commuting happening in Nova Scotia. For us, we'll take all the advice from the experts and we'll invest those limited funds that we have to make sense and make sure people are as safe as possible when they use our highways.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: You know, if I'm talking about that intersection, I should talk about the Argyle intersection as well, which is, I think, an engineering nightmare. How engineers can design something and forget about another road, and basically that's what happened in that area. I know the minister knows it well. As well, as they put a turning lane for one, they impeded themselves on the access to another. So you have people turning one way to go to Nakile Home for Special Care and you have people turning the other way to go to the high school. It needs to be redesigned once again, be addressed because there are far too many almost-accidents - thank goodness there's not accidents happening, but we've come close a whole bunch of times. I hope the department does address that when they can.

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

Just before we move on to the next item of business, we're going to do a couple of introductions here.

I'll start the show off. I'd like to draw your attention to the Speaker's Gallery. We have with us today - that's unparliamentary, I must mention though. (Laughter)

AN HON. MEMBER: Don't be too hard on her, okay?

ANOTHER HON. MEMBER: You have to remember, she's the Speaker at home.

MR. SPEAKER: That's true. (Laughter)

Just as we come to the closing days of this particular session, I know all members are aware that while we are in this House, we're not in our own homes and there are great sacrifices made on behalf of all of our spouses, partners, and our families back home. I do want to take a moment to introduce my beautiful wife Stephanie and my two lovely children, Jackson and Rachael. (Applause) I'll do that on behalf of all members in the House and all members' families as we acknowledge them back at home as they wait for us.

The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a moment to draw the members' attention to the east gallery. I noticed a constituent of mine, a very active member in the community, particularly in the area of mental health awareness in the community.

He speaks passionately in and around the community, and he's actually in the city today participating in some workshops and discussions on that matter leading into Mental Health Awareness Week coming up shortly. I would ask Dexter Nyuurnibe to please stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to make an introduction. I draw your attention to the east gallery. Mr. Bob Taylor, who is the mayor of the Municipality of Colchester, a long-serving public official and committed to the well-being of rural Nova Scotia and the community at large, so I want to take this opportunity to thank him for his service and ask the members of the House to recognize Mr. Taylor. (Applause)

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: I don't know what this is with "leader" in here the last couple of days.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 36.

Bill No. 36 - Economic Growth Goals Act.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: It's my pleasure to follow the House Leader for the Official Opposition who called government business a minute ago - get it all straight who does what around here.

Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 36 is an opportunity for all of us in this House to do something today, now, that is a recommendation of the Ivany report, and that is to enact the economic, demographic, fiscal, and governance goals, in Statutes, so that we can all work together to make them happen. In fact, as the days of this session wind down, every day is an opportunity lost for this House, from all sides, to show leadership, to come together, and to take the words of the Ivany report title, *Now or Never*, and choose now.

Mr. Speaker, the Ivany report was very clear that it wants the Parties to come together on these goals. They were very clear that they want a new kind of politics where we focus on implementing these goals as opposed to debating and taking sides. Once in a while that's the right thing to do, this is one of those times. The best way that members of the Legislature on all sides can show that we're serious about change, that we're serious about turning the economy around, that we're serious about turning this province around, is to do more than just talk in warm and fuzzy terms about the Ivany report, but instead to actually do what we were sent here to do and to vote to put them in law.

But as this session winds down, with all the problems that the Ivany report outlined - our financial situation, the out-migration of young people, the lack of sufficient immigration to grow our population, all those problems and others - they get worse instead of better, Mr. Speaker. That's why the report was titled *Now or Never*, and I say with some regret that so far the government, in refusing to take action other than study things again, studying the study, if you will, appears to be choosing never instead of now.

This bill, Mr. Speaker, is our attempt to take the 19 Ivany goals, bring them to the floor of the Legislature where they rightly belong, and to invite all Parties to vote together, in common, for something positive, which is to enshrine those goals in law and then get to work on how we're going to achieve them.

This is exactly what the Ivany committee has asked us to do. You know the Ivany committee asked lots of different people in the province, whether they're in the private sector, the university sector, or in the volunteer sector, to take action, but this is what they asked of us, as members of the Legislature, that we too take action as one and that's exactly what this bill does. The first recommendation of the Ivany report that could actually be accomplished will be accomplished today, if every member of this House votes in favour of this bill and puts those goals into common law, common to all of us.

Mr. Speaker, for all those who say it can't be done, let me just point out that only a few short years ago, it was done. The Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act took real goals to clean up our environment, to protect land, to reduce emissions into our atmosphere, and other environment goals, and real economic development goals as well - that's the other side of that Act - and put them in law, and all Parties supported it at the time. This Legislature then became the place of leadership where all of those who need to take responsibility for achieving those goals can report.

Mr. Speaker, as we know, our emissions have gone down, our renewable energy percentage has gone up, and land has been protected. One can only wonder whether those things would have been achieved if there never had been an Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act. I am sure at that time there were people who said it can't be done, that you can't legislate a cleaner environment, that you can't legislate a better economy with the goals that were in that bill at that time.

Probably the most dismal, negative thing that could be said about that bill, the same as this bill on our economy, is that it can't be done. Well, Mr. Speaker, for all of those who want to be hopeful and optimistic and positive, the way to show it is by doing, today, what the House of Assembly of that time did, and vote for the goals that are incorporated in the Ivany report, because what we do now will send a signal, a strong signal to all Nova Scotians - and we want that to be a good signal and not a bad one.

There are ways to send bad signals to Nova Scotians about where we're going as a province - letting our energy rates, our electricity bills continue to go up is one big way; telling Nova Scotians that the efficiency charge will be paid by Nova Scotia Power shareholders but then allowing it to flow right back into our electricity rates anyway sends a bad signal to Nova Scotians, and that is why our small businesses, 68 per cent of them, say electricity costs are their biggest issue; and leaving our taxes at the highest in the country, whether it's the HST or income tax or our business taxes or even in many cases our property taxes, that sends a bad signal to all Nova Scotians about how serious our government is about truly trying to turn the economy around.

Mr. Speaker, the Ivany report says we actually have to show leadership at the government level in the way that we balance our own books and stop the growth in our own debt, but bringing a budget into this House which adds another \$500 million to our debt sends a very bad signal, particularly bad to our youngest Nova Scotians who know they will eventually be called upon to pay the bill - that sends a bad signal - the very ones who had their taxes jacked up by this government, the young graduates who are looking for a reason to stay.

Mr. Speaker, what is done is done on the Graduate Retention Rebate unfortunately, with nothing to replace it. But here is something that can replace it - a common, legislated commitment to getting going on the Ivany goals would send a better signal to young graduates than taking that rebate away with nothing to replace it.

So after all those bad signals which hurt our economy and hold us back, one good one can be accomplished here today, Mr. Speaker. That leads to the question of who ultimately is responsible for seeing that the Ivany goals get reached. We've heard the Premier say well that's really the job of the private sector or that's really the job of the universities or, even today, that that's the responsibility of the Ivany commissioners themselves.

Who is missing from the Premier's analysis of who is responsible? The Premier himself, and his government, is missing. He is quick to point the fingers at everybody else, but Nova Scotians did not elect us to come to this House at this time with these problems and then turn around and tell them it's their problem. Real leadership, Mr. Speaker, real competent leadership means taking ownership of the challenges our province faces.

One can only wonder, given the reluctance to actually do the right thing and put those goals in law, what the Premier and what the government is afraid of - what are they afraid of? Why are they so against doing what worked before, except this time with Ivany, Mr. Speaker? Is it that they don't think they can do it; is it that they're not sure they have the competence or the ability to get these goals done?

Mr. Speaker, that's pretty sad because Nova Scotians have already said they want to see the Ivany report implemented. It is our best hope to turn the economy around and create real jobs and give young people hope. For a government to say we're not going to try, we're not going to hold ourselves to account for achieving those goals, it really does make you question the competence of the government on the most important questions before Nova Scotians today.

Mr. Speaker, let me just conclude in my last little bit of time by pointing out that the Ivany report contained a very optimistic message, between all of the analysis of what's wrong. The Ivany report says very clearly: Nova Scotia has all it takes to be great. We have all of the natural resources, all of the human resources, all of the schools and universities that we need to be a top performer and create jobs. With a great trading location on the planet and a new free trade agreement with Europe, we should be the best situated to take advantage of.

What has held us back, Mr. Speaker, is not the inherent potential wealth of this province, what has held us back, time and time and time again, is a lack of government leadership to bring it all together and make it happen. There may be critics of the Ivany report, there may be those who are timid or afraid to hold themselves to account for achieving it, but I will point out, it is the one report we have; it is the one set of 19 goals that has been put forward, and for that reason, I think now it's time for competent leadership. Now it's time for all of us to choose now, and not never, by actually voting today to put this bill, and all those goals, into law together.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

MR. IAIN RANKIN: It's a privilege to rise in my place to speak about this issue. I do agree with the Leader of the Official Opposition that it is indeed the most important issue in front of us. All Parties in this Legislature have now expressed a common interest in the Ivany commission and making sure we take steps to move Nova Scotia closer to the ambitious goals laid out for us. It is great to see that there is that level of agreement because together is the only way we can turn our economy around.

Nova Scotians have told us clearly and loudly that they want change. They want the government to approach economic development differently and they want us to be more accountable and transparent about those decisions. The days of clandestine deals involving government money are finally over.

Nova Scotians want investment decisions to be arm's length from government. We are going to leave those decisions to a board of non-partisan and broadly skilled individuals. Through the Invest Nova Scotia Board Act, the Accountability in Economic Development Assistance Act, and a full review of taxes, fees and regulations, we are setting the framework to act. Mr. Speaker, there is no need to pre-empt these initiatives by entrenching the Ivany report goals into law. Mr. Ivany hasn't suggested that as the way forward.

Legislating goals and aspirations could restrict flexibility to act quickly and what most business people know, they all know, is that more government is rarely the solution to a problem. Economic development cannot be legislated and I'm going to quote Page 47 of the report that says, "To set the process in motion the Commission is proposing the following goals to guide the development of a ten-year action plan for economic transformation and renewal in Nova Scotia. It is assumed that more in-depth analysis, consultation and refinement will be required before they are formally adopted." Well legislation is about as formal as it gets, Mr. Speaker.

This report represents 15 months of hard work that articulates many of the challenges and opportunities facing us in the province. Nova Scotians from all areas of the province took the time to present this to the commission, attend public meetings, and engage in a dialogue about the future of Nova Scotia. This report represents their views and aspirations for our economy.

However, Mr. Speaker, the Ivany report was not written to create new laws or increase the government's role in the economy. It is a report to Nova Scotians, not to government alone. It is a call to action for everyone, to the private sector, community leaders, educators, universities and colleges, and all levels of government to work together.

I submit that because we are all part of the creation of this problem, and that's all three Parties, historically, we are all part of the solution therefore.

We will use the Ivany report as a blueprint for the province's future and this government will lead a culture shift in Nova Scotia. We need a culture that celebrates regional and business success rather than a culture that questions the motives behind decisions. Many Nova Scotians are already embracing this cultural shift and they are doing great things from one end of the province to the other. We need more of that kind of alacrity, optimism, and hard work.

Beyond the cultural shift the Ivany report makes us face many other hard facts, facts that may not always, possibly, be easy, politically, to address. For instance, Nova Scotia has the tools to succeed but they're not being used properly. The Maritime region is a relatively small economy in itself and Nova Scotia is smaller within this economy. Looking closely at regional co-operation I believe is absolutely critical. We have the infrastructure but we need to use it more efficiently and effectively. We need to achieve better utilization within everything that the government is involved in.

The Ivany report made it clear that increasing immigration is part of improving our economy and I couldn't agree more. We need more immigrants to come, work and raise families in this province. The last significant growth period was post-World War II precisely because of immigration - the Dutch, the Germans, the Greeks and all the rest.

This government will continue to work collaboratively with the federal government to grow the Nova Scotia Nominee Program, including an entrepreneurial stream. We will continue to work with all our partners to help Nova Scotia attract, employ, and retain immigrants.

We know we have an aging and shrinking workforce. Our population is declining and our economy isn't growing quickly. Our young people are moving away but did this start on October 8th? I think the Opposition should take a close look at their policy outcomes in the last 10 years. While private sector growth was looming around 5 per cent, the public sector growth approached almost 30 per cent between 2002 and 2012.

We also need to support all the province's universities as they make connections between research and development and the private sector. We need to be analytical as we review our business and sector development tools. Fishing, agriculture, forestry and mining will be part of our economy in the next 100 years. We need to celebrate our strengths in these sectors for the sustainability of our rural regions. We're good at these things and there are opportunities there. Businesses do that, too, they celebrate their successes openly.

But government is just one partner in turning our economy around. We will do our part by making it more fertile for businesses to start, grow and prosper. This report will guide our next steps. This report will now consider options and timelines for the types of programming changes we need to make, to achieve the best return on investment possible.

Status quo is not an option. We have to do things differently and we all have to work together. Ultimately the private sector must lead the way on driving the economy and creating jobs. Government will be a partner but the days of intervention policies based on short-term job strategies are over. We ought to help business access the capital and supports they need to grow, prosper and become more productive and competitive.

At no time during or after the election did our Party say we would revert to a laissez-faire economy, as suggested by the Opposition. All economists I know of do not promote this as an option, certainly not in our small province and in today's ability to move capital around so easily.

With the new accountability Act we will be the most open and transparent province in the country about assistance to businesses. With streamlined programs, clear objectives and arm's length decision-making, businesses will now know how to access support and taxpayers will be apprised of how their money is being spent.

We cannot legislate attitudes nor can we legislate who chooses to live in Nova Scotia. Changes are coming but there are no easy answers and creating this legislation won't make it so. We have an unprecedented opportunity to do better for Nova Scotia and we have to succeed. Mr. Speaker, we should all collectively look forward to this challenge. Thank you.

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

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to rise in my place to join in the debate on Bill No. 36. Bill No. 36 is an Act Respecting the Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy. It is very similar to Bill No. 39, which is similarly named - not entirely identical but pretty similarly named - that I had introduced and essentially it aims to do the same thing. Both of these bills are bills that set out to put into legislation the goals that have been recommended to be put into legislation by the Ivany Commission.

I listened to the government member very intently - a very lovely, articulate, well-thought-out speech. It was nice to have him join in the debate. I'm puzzled, though. There were many things in his speech that I certainly could agree with, but there were things in his speech that I think aren't an accurate representation with respect to this bill or Bill No. 39. I know the Premier likes to say this as well - and I think it's really important to correct the representation of these bills - the Premier likes to say that you can't legislate prosperity, and I think the member made reference in his speech to the fact that you can't legislate prosperity. I don't think anybody on this side of the House is suggesting that you can. If you read the bill, there's nothing in this bill that says that this piece of legislation is a guarantee to prosperity in the Province of Nova Scotia.

The other thing I heard that is somewhat puzzling is that what we require is a change in attitude, and you can't legislate attitudes. I look at this legislation, and nowhere is there anything in this legislation about attitudes. What there is in this bill - for people who perhaps haven't read the bill with much careful attention - are a number of goals that are pretty specific and concrete and have nothing to do with attitudes and have nothing to do with this so-called legislating of prosperity.

However, if these goals were to be adopted, and if we actually did some work to achieve them, then perhaps we would have greater prosperity, and perhaps, I don't know, in the process some attitudes would have to change. The goals are pretty sensible, given what the challenges that we face are. For example, the point of this legislation is to have a 10-year action plan for economic transformation in the province and renewal of the province's economy, which we know has struggled - not this year, not last year, not for the past four years, but for 20 years. Nova Scotia has had the slowest and the least amount of economic growth of any Canadian province for more than 20 years. If this continues, then we will be in serious trouble.

So the very first goal in this legislation would be that we have a net gain of 1,000 working-age people per year. What that essentially means is that we would put in place policies that would see the number of people coming into our province and leaving our province exceeded by 1,000 people each year for 10 years. That would be very beneficial in terms of the labour market in our province - people who are working in our province, and people who can contribute to a much more prosperous province.

The Ivany report makes it crystal clear, using the StatsCan data, that we have a very significant population problem. Our population in this province is in serious decline, and we are now experiencing more people leaving the province than people who are transferring in, with a birth rate that has significantly dropped. That's something we need to change.

We also have a growing proportion of our population who are older and a shrinking portion of our population in the youth categories and young categories. That's a very serious problem that we need to address.

If you look at other regions of the world with those kinds of demographic patterns, those demographic patterns are a recipe for economic decline. So this is something that the Ivany commission says needs to be addressed and they're recommending that be one of the goals that we adopt as a goal in legislation, then we would proceed to try to find ways we would meet that particular goal.

There are goals here about increasing the number of firms in the province that are participating in export trade and that we have targets to increase our export trade by 50 per cent over the current level. Now this is a very important goal. If members were listening to a report today, I think, or possibly in *The Globe and Mail* this week, the amount of export

that Canada is doing has significantly dropped, except in the energy sector. We have become highly, highly dependent on one particular sector for exports.

It's quite dramatic. I was really surprised when I read this particular report. Economists and other people are raising the concerns that we, as a country, and Nova Scotia as a province, are caught up in part of this trend. We need to do more, to not only be exporting our natural resources, we need more manufacturing and we need more secondary value-added production as part of what it is that we do.

We just know because of the crisis, for example, in the forestry industry, in pulp and paper and the significant hit that that sector has taken in the last number of years, what that has meant in terms of a reduction in exports out of that particular segment of our economy, without being replaced by any other industry.

This is a goal and it's a laudable goal. It's one I believe that is a very achievable goal, certainly something that we should aim for.

I think one of the other really interesting findings or insights for me when I read the Ivany report was just how many people in our province are of working age who are not participating in the labour force. It's pretty significant, and it's much higher than what you will find in many other provinces. So we have a lot of working-age adults who actually are not participating in our labour force who could be participating in our labour force, with much better labour force attachment.

One of the goals in this bill that comes out of the Ivany report is that the province will have a labour force participation rate at least as high as the Canadian rate, bringing more than 25,000 Nova Scotians into permanent attachment to the labour force. That would be over a 10-year period, so we would be talking about 2,500 people on an annual basis. Now surely this is not only a laudable goal, but it's an achievable goal - it's something that we should be able to achieve.

If you think about the debate around the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, for example, we know that right now in the Province of Nova Scotia we have employers who have used this program in industries like the hotel industry, like the fast-food industry, and you have to ask yourself, why is it the case that employers have had to go offshore to get workers for these particular jobs and these businesses when we have the high numbers of people who have no attachment to our labour force, but who are of working age?

This is a goal that's in this bill. It's a laudable goal, and it's something that we should work on. I look at the province's youth unemployment rate which will be at or better than the national rate in 10 years' time. We're not saying that these are things that need to happen tomorrow, and the Ivany commission was very clear that these are goals, and they're not goals that you could realize quickly. I understand entirely when the

member for Timberlea-Prospect talks about there needing to be further analysis - yes, let's look at how you would attain these goals, absolutely.

But let's first commit to the goals, adopt the goals, and put them in legislation - have the collaboration of the three Parties which Ivany is talking about . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for the NDP comments has expired.

The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in my place this afternoon and speak to Bill No. 36, and I am even more honoured and pleased to have had the opportunity to meet Mr. Ivany and sit down and have a personal conversation with him for about 10 or 15 minutes before he made an appearance at our meeting of the Standing Committee on Economic Development. I probably learned more in that 10 or 15 minutes with regard to the efforts that were put forth by his committee in establishing this report.

The Ivany report contains important recommendations for the future of our province. As elected officials, we do not have time to waste to get our economy turned around and set this province on a different path. The Ivany commission sets out the vision, but now it's up to government to put it into action. We have to be bold if we're going to rebuild Nova Scotia's economy.

The best way to ensure these recommendations are acted upon is to put them in law, which is what Bill No. 36 does. It's good to know that the NDP agree with us on this, and it's sad to know and learn that the Leader of the NDP and our Leader reached out to the Premier to sit down, the three of them, to move this report forward, and he declined the invitation to sit down with them.

By putting these recommendations into law, we are putting Nova Scotia's interests at the forefront. We are ensuring that, regardless of political stripe, the government will be required to make economic decisions in the best interests of all Nova Scotians. It is the best way to hold all government to account. We cannot allow this important report by the Ivany commission to collect dust like so many others before it. Doing nothing in the wake of our many challenges is not good enough for Nova Scotians. They want to see leadership and they want to see that it starts at the top. They expect more and they deserve better. It is clear from the composition of the Ivany commission itself that political affiliation was not considered. It was not developed and authored based on politics, and it should not be received based on politics.

The prosperity of this province cannot be based on partisan priorities of the government. In order to be sure that this government and every successive government holds these goals above partisan decision making, enact them into law. Enacting the

recommendations and goals of the Ivany report into law is the first step. In no way does it solve the problems of our province but it goes a long way to assuring they won't be abandoned in the future. The future is, after all, what this report is about.

One of the game-changer strategies of the report is strong, cross-party political leadership. Our caucus has put forth the idea that an all-Party committee be created to achieve the economic goals outlined by the Ivany commission. The Premier once again would not support that. We have had communication with the Premier's Office about the importance of enacting these goals into law. The Premier did not support that either.

The problems of our province are bigger than that. The bill will address the *Now or Never* title of the report; passing this bill will show Nova Scotians that we believe it is now. The Liberal Government needs to finally stop talking about these issues and get to work fixing them. Change is within their control, and ours, and now is the time to get serious about urgent issues facing Nova Scotia families.

It was unfortunate to see so few of these issues addressed in the government's first budget. There were no plans for job creation, or plans to address the crippling debt in our province, no plans to keep graduates here, or attract businesses from elsewhere. In spite of that disappointment, it is not too late to get moving on addressing the real issues facing real Nova Scotians.

As the report states, we all need to think 10 years down the road and decide where we want to be. I think all members of this House agree that we want to leave this province in a better economic standing than we find ourselves right now. None of the recommendations in the report are objectionable for the government. If they want to help Nova Scotia seize the possibility of a better future, they need to accept the report as more than a paperweight. Our province will exist long after each and every member of this House, and we need to work together to make sure that we leave future generations with a province they can be proud of.

Just on a closing note, I want to mention how last night in Pictou County there were actually a number of people who came together from all over the county who are extremely excited about the Ray Ivany report. They got together at a town hall meeting and had a round table discussion. There were a lot of great ideas that came out of there and even with some of the challenges that we have going on right now in Pictou County - amalgamation, taxes, and a large decline in population - these people came together and within hours of meeting, they came home and started a Facebook page.

When you see a group of people like this taking this report so seriously and wanting to move forward, I would think that it would be up to our government to come together, to work together, and see that we can move together and make sure that we can create the winning environment to keep people here as well as attract new businesses.

I just want to say that I hope that everyone will take a few moments and really consider what type of bill we are trying to put through here that would actually make us - once again divide and concur is not the answer. All Parties here have stated that they want to work together and I hope that we can achieve that, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to add a few words here as well and echo something that the Leader of the NDP was talking about. It's a common theme from the government side as a critique of this position, that you can't legislate prosperity, and I do think that is so far misplaced. Nova Scotians are ready to work together to try and solve some of the problems facing this province and they expect their elected representatives to work together as well. We're still waiting to see that, a little bit, and I think Nova Scotians are still waiting to see that as well.

The thing is, to me this is very simple. We hear the government saying they believe in the recommendations of the Ivany commission and we believe in them, too, and I guess the challenge for the government that we're trying to lay down here, which I kind of wish they would accept, is if you believe in the recommendations and you feel strongly about them that that's the way for the province to go, then what's the issue with legislating them, enshrining them in legislation and then using them as a benchmark against our progress? If that's the benchmark, then why don't we agree to accept that as where we're trying to go?

To kind of skirt around it and stuff, I find it a little bit disingenuous, to be honest. If you feel strongly enough about something, to say that's what you want, that's what you're going towards, then you should feel confident enough to put it in legislation. That's all that Nova Scotians are asking - that the government set some criteria that it can be judged against, instead of just kind of waffling along, saying you're going to do that.

I would just sit down with those short, few words and challenge the members opposite, particularly on the government side, to maybe go back and look at the Ivany recommendations again, if you haven't looked at them - which I am fearful that some of them might not have, but I would encourage them to look at them. If you believe in them, if you honestly believe that the Ivany commission set down some recommendations for this province to try and go forward, then we should put them in legislation and then grade ourselves against them.

I actually don't understand why the government is unwilling to do that. Perhaps they don't fully agree with the recommendations, perhaps they are fearful that they are not obtainable, but if you do agree with them and you are not fearful, then let's enshrine them in legislation and let's try to work together to meet the goals, meet those recommendations and see if we can get this province turned around and put back on the right track. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, just to finish up some time here, the issue that's before us is one that if you really mean it you put it down on paper. You don't just necessarily accept the recommendations in the pretty yellow book that has been given to us by the Ivany commission. It is a really nice document that lays things out very specifically, very cohesively.

What we've been asking for from the government by way of questioning in this House of Assembly, by way of a bill, is to say put them on a hunk of paper, put them in a bill so that it becomes a law of this province to use as a benchmark to work against. How can you say we believe in . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for debate on Bill No. 36 has expired. (Interruptions) Did I get the time wrong? All right, I apologize, please proceed.

The honourable House Leader for the Official Opposition, until 5:11 - and a half.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: When the House Leader left, he left a nice sheet of paper with some numbers on it, and I'm just hoping that we keep to them as best we can, that's all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, it's to put it in a bill that all Nova Scotians can look at and say, yes, we believe in those things, we believe in prosperity in this province and this is the road map with which to get there.

Why not put it on a piece of paper? Why not put it in a bill? The reason that I think it's not a good idea, or at least why the Liberal Party thinks it's a bad idea, is because they'll be judged against it and they don't want to have a document that will judge them because you'll be able to now line it up and say, you promised this in a bill, you didn't do anything about it, and therefore you didn't meet it. That's what they're scared of at this point. I think that's why we continue to have the set document, the set speaking notes on no, no, we don't need to do this, it's up to the economy, it's up to the businesses in Nova Scotia to do this.

We don't accept that. We accept that the government has a role in setting goals for the economy of Nova Scotia. No, they're not going to be doing everything. We don't expect them to do everything, but we do expect them to do their part. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: I'll be Government House Leader eventually, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 38.

Bill 38 - Balanced Budget Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise tonight and take a few minutes to speak to Bill No. 38, the Balanced Budget Act. One of the lessons that we learn growing up is that you can't spend more than you earn in perpetuity. There is a time when you have to manage your finances and live within your means. That's one of the lessons that most Nova Scotians learn (Interruptions)

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

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I guess I would like to (Interruption) We're through getting a little history lesson here from the member for Timberlea-Prospect. It is one of the themes that is so disappointing about this government, is that they're always so quick to point to yesterday and yesterday, and all Nova Scotians want to hear about is tomorrow. What we're looking for from the government is a little bit of leadership for tomorrow, and unfortunately, what we're seeing is a repeat of history with increased debt and deficits for the next three years. So it's not good enough to say, well, you did it too. It doesn't work in the schoolyard, it doesn't work in the classrooms, and it doesn't work in this Chamber.

One of the lessons that Nova Scotians try to learn as they're growing up is to live within your means, and that's the way that most Nova Scotians run their households. They make difficult decisions every day to make sure that their chequebook balances every month. (Interruptions) I do certainly appreciate the advice from the other side about whether or not I might be able to balance a chequebook, but I can assure you I know how to balance a chequebook. It's one of the things they teach you in chartered accountancy school.

Nova Scotians know that spending more than you earn takes you down a dangerous path, and too often governments don't think that those rules apply to them. Too often, governments use taxpayers as a credit card to buy today's groceries. They buy things today and pass the bills down to our children and grandchildren. Mr. Speaker, the credit card is maxed. We can't keep accumulating debt and passing it down to future generations.

The last Auditor General called the practice of spiralling debt increases unethical. He said that deficit spending is “. . . a considerable burden for future generations,” and I agree with him. That same Auditor General highlighted that we're on an unsustainable path

with our debt and deficits. To me, that's a call to action. It is time for the government to get a grip on our finances.

I know the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board probably agrees with me. I know the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, when in Opposition, certainly agreed with the comments of the Auditor General. When the Auditor General made those comments, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board said that he "... did the right thing in pointing out that debt is a looming problem ... It is his responsibility as a servant of the legislature to tell us what the situation is and where the risks are." But that was then, that was when the Liberals were in Opposition. (Interruption) No, it's an absolutely factual comment, I agree with the comment. But I guess maybe we could call that do as I say, not as I do.

But now when the Liberals are in power, it seems to be a different story. The budget contained a \$279 million deficit. It's going to push our debt from \$13.9 billion to \$14.6 billion. Those are big numbers that are difficult to understand, but it becomes clear when you think of it this way - every man, woman and child in Nova Scotia owes about \$16,000. That's the share of the debt of every person in this province.

That's a heavy debt burden, I think it's too heavy - it's the cost of a small car. But it gets even clearer to Nova Scotians when you put it in the context of what Nova Scotians are having to give up because of the cost of servicing this debt. A billion dollars a year in debt service costs - what kind of services could we provide to Nova Scotians with an extra billion dollars?

But it didn't have to be this way. The Liberal Government could have changed things; they had choices. Governing is not supposed to be easy - it's about tough decisions, it's about establishing priorities. And we did see that it was the priority of the new government to establish a new holiday. New holidays aren't free, new holidays cost money and the decision was made - do we have a new holiday or do we decrease the HST? The decision was let's have a new holiday.

But, sadly, if the government had simply held the line on departmental spending we probably could have balanced the budget today and had a real chance at tax relief. There's \$455 million of new departmental spending in this budget - that's 5 per cent more than last year - and we have 550 new civil servants. These are choices; these are choices that the government made. In fact, as this government increases the tax burden on Nova Scotians, which is what's happening here, they make no efforts to control departmental spending.

We have the small business limit which continues to be the lowest in the country here in Nova Scotia; we're one of only two provinces that have not increased the small business limit to at least \$500,000. Here in Nova Scotia we continue to have the highest rate of personal tax in the country, and here in Nova Scotia our new Liberal Government

reversed the promised HST decrease - and that's the same as increasing taxes. We do like to consider ourselves leaders, but not in these categories.

This is not a sustainable path. I'd be very surprised if any member sitting on the other side believes it is, because it's not. You can't continually have deficits in the hundreds of millions of dollars and continue to add hundreds of millions of dollars of debt on the taxpayers of Nova Scotia and believe for one second that is sustainable. It's just not.

I'm thinking about these items also in terms of the previous bill. We have to make some changes and we have to make some bold changes and we have to start now. Deficit spending projected by the budget out three more years with a razor-thin surplus in the fourth year. I think we know how this story ends, folks - a heavy and increasing debt burden and the highest taxes in the country is not the way for us to go.

Now I was reading an article where the commentator said that the Finance and Treasury Board Minister is in budget prison. I heard the Health and Wellness Minister referring to the new prison in Pictou County there a few minutes ago but I think it was a different prison that he was referring to. Unfortunately, Nova Scotians are in prison. We're behind bars. We're shackled to an unmanageable debt and we're paying the highest taxes in the country.

This bill would put an end to that. It would mean that governments would be bound by law to balance their chequebooks, just like Nova Scotians try to do. They have a lot of obstacles in front of them in trying to balance their chequebooks, many, many obstacles. In this House we should be conscious of the obstacles that Nova Scotians are facing and we should be trying to help them. We should be trying to reduce some of those obstacles and remove them, but we're not seeing that. We owe it to them, we owe it to the people who sent us here, to try to make their lives a bit easier.

This bill would make the unethical practice of adding debt, and more debt, illegal. It would give Nova Scotians a fighting chance at meaningful tax relief and it would set Nova Scotia on a path to a better future.

We all know here, we all sit here sometimes and we have a little bit of fun heckling each other and debating what's the right way forward, but at the end of the day we can't lose track of who we are representing. Everyone in this Chamber is representing constituents who are struggling and we have to start now to make their lives a bit easier. I would suggest that this bill will hold the government accountable to doing just that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to be able to have a few words tonight in Opposition business for Bill No. 38, which is a Progressive Conservative bill called the Balanced Budget Act.

Mr. Speaker, this kind of bill is overly-simplistic and really tries to distill the work of this government down to something that really is very unrealistic and doesn't in any way represent what we do here in the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, we've talked before about bills being put into place here for philosophical reasons, or to set a tone, or to make a commitment, that are then immediately withdrawn when that hasn't come to fruition. An example would be the previous Tory Government did have a balanced budget Act of some sort, which was repealed by the NDP when they came to government - isn't that right?

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, I was able to find - just in a quick look at bills that were repealed - one that was called an Act Respecting the Reduction and Control of Operating and Capital Expenditures of the Province, which had come in, I believe, during the Liberal time, actually, in the 1990s, but was repealed in 2000 in the Financial Measures Act.

Now 2000 was when Premier Hamm was the Premier. It was a Progressive Conservative Government. So an Act that obviously wanted to control expenditures and had a similar aim was repealed by the Progressive Conservative Government. Mr. Speaker, it just shows how easily these bills can be repealed.

Now it isn't my place, in only 12 minutes to speak, to go back and cast aspersions on a Progressive Conservative Government or on their philosophy that the current Finance and Treasury Board Critic is espousing, but I think it's important to know that it is extremely overly-simplistic to consider running the Government of Nova Scotia like your balanced chequebook. We want a balanced budget, but in times of trouble there are often more people seeking social assistance, requiring help, needing job skills training, students who need help to access universities. I could go on and on; in fact I could fill more than 12 minutes, more than an hour here in the House explaining the kind of pressures that come when the economy is poor - and in 2012 the economy of this province was in a negative growth, it was below zero.

I don't want to use the word "recession," it was a very bad year and today in Question Period the very member who proposes this bill today made the point that, or his Party did, in 2013 growth was less than 1 per cent. That is not healthy robust growth in the economy, that means the gross domestic product isn't growing, that means there are less taxes coming in, less revenue, less HST revenue that we receive, and, Mr. Speaker, we have many obligations - not frills, not things that are a waste of money - we have many obligations in running the government.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite was very quick to point out that in his opinion there should be no increase in spending from year to year, but I ask him again if he is not being naive in assuming that there would be no wage pressures from a mandate of wage increases that were 2, 2.5 and 3 per cent this past year. Many of those contracts are at the 3 per cent wage increase and that means, right off the bat, we have \$150 million, in fact more than that, which are wage pressures and the additional wage-related costs. So each percentage point is worth about \$50 million in costs and again, I said in Question Period today that we have to be fair, we have to try to negotiate fairly in contracts with our Public Service, and there is a cost to that.

Again, a lot of the cost pressures we've seen in the last couple of years, not just in the last six months since we came to power, but the last couple of years have been because of a slow economy where we've seen extra stress on community services in particular. Mr. Speaker, we have an aging population and that means we have people getting older with more pressure on our health care system. Those are not things that you just turn off the tap and say no more surgeries, no more hospitals opening because I've hit the end of my revenue for this month. It's actually very annoying to hear members of this Legislature think that this is just like your household budget, because there are very few things where you can just turn off the tap. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, our job here in the governing side of the House is to make sure that we do everything we can to set the climate for growth in this province, to see where we can control our spending, yes, but do what we can to help the private sector begin to grow. We know there is wealth in the province and people in business have made commitments, are willing to take a risk, are entrepreneurial, we have many small and medium-size businesses and a few large ones, and we need to create a mood here that is optimistic, that is stable, which is one thing they want very much - they want stability and to understand what the conditions are going to be.

For that very reason we're in the midst of a tax and regulatory review that is going to lay out the kind of things that business, and academia, and other people understand the connections in the economy are going to help direct us to what taxes will actually help stimulate the economy - what are the ones that if you tweaked or changed or adjusted would actually improve the business climate? That's the emphasis because we know if we can get the business community to feel more engaged and confident that we will then have more people working, that the expansions, even small steps that we can see in business all lead to more people working, more income tax for the province - our single largest source of revenue comes from income tax. So we need more people working and contributing and earning, and enjoying life in Nova Scotia. That's our best way out of this problem, Mr. Speaker.

We also heard from the business community that regulations can be just as difficult, maybe even more so than taxes, and they have pointed out to us a number of places where we could change regulations, which would make their businesses more profitable. We

certainly know that it's an irritation to have a lot of paperwork and red tape, and we want to know where there is unnecessary duplication, and we want to know where our regulations haven't kept pace with other places in North America or in the country, so that we can make sure that we have as good a regulatory regime as anywhere in the country, that is going to encourage businesses to get on and do what they do best, which is creating jobs and creating wealth and taking those risks that we want to support them in doing.

Mr. Speaker, our budget this year brought in programs that will encourage investment like the loan guarantees through the credit union, which have now been increased to 90 per cent for people starting businesses and looking for capital, which is often a big problem.

We've made tremendous changes in the apprenticeship system, which has been really holding people back when they wanted to get into the trades. We had the longest period of time that you needed in order to become a tradesperson, to get fully qualified - seven years it was taking on average, longer by a couple of years than other provinces. We've made those changes. We've made changes that allow those apprentices to get their experience in other Atlantic provinces. If there isn't a job here and they do a block of work in New Brunswick or Newfoundland and Labrador, that will count towards their training and their certification. That's extremely important; those are really good changes. That will help make more people available for the workforce.

Before my time elapses, because it goes all too fast when we get into these debates, I want to mention that this bill before us that we are even debating - it's a silly bill, it's just silly, Mr. Speaker. There's no question that the Liberal Government has said we are working diligently for a balanced budget, but if there's anything disingenuous in this House, it is the Progressive Conservative caucus and I will tell you why. It's really galling because the Progressive Conservative Leader and the Progressive Conservative caucus constantly want us to balance the budget, cut the debt, and start servicing and getting rid of the debt, but also not to cut any programs - oh no, no programs are to be cut.

Oh, and, on the same song sheet here, Bill No. 38, it says they would like us to lower the HST to 8 per cent. They want a balanced budget and in the same breath they didn't even have the courtesy to put it in a separate bill - they put it in the same bill - that you must be balanced but by the same token you must give up \$400 million in revenue. I'll remind the members of the House and those at home, 1 per cent decrease in the HST costs \$190 million in our economy, two cents off is almost \$400 million. So it is ridiculous to assume that in the same breath, in the same bill, you would ask for both of those things to be accomplished.

I'm proud of the people of Nova Scotia who elected a Liberal Government because they knew that we told the truth about the HST. That is absolutely true. Both of the Opposition Parties sitting across from us today had the - I don't want to say anything unparliamentary so I'm going to be careful, I know you've corrected a number of things.

MR. SPEAKER: Courage, courage.

MS. WHALEN: Well, I think the Liberals had the courage, and others did not, to be honest and frank with Nova Scotians and tell them what we could not afford. What we really owe is a lot of respect to the people of Nova Scotia who saw that and looked beyond an immediate benefit to themselves and said, this is the path to get back to a balanced budget and the path back to prosperity. They understood that more than the members of the Opposition understood that.

I feel very strongly, a tremendous admiration for the constituents that I met at the door, the people who I campaigned with and for and realizing that they understood that, that they were more mature. That is why this bill is really asking for two very different things in one breath and does not deserve very much attention in this House.

As I mentioned, our government is committed to investing in the things that will stimulate this economy and help get people back to work, putting our efforts in training, education and the things that actually make for a better future and we will at the same time, while we're trying our very best to reduce costs, ask the members of the Opposition to look at those programs and items and different spending items that we have that we try to control, and try not to take the easy way out, kicking at the government, try to look at that and say, this is good for you if you were in government.

This is good for all Nova Scotians and I would ask that people look at that because it is not easy to find items that are not working, that need to be changed. We will continue to do that and we will ask for the support and yes, the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Thank you very much. (Applause) Well, to that rousing round of applause (Laughter) I'm actually going to say that there are a lot of things about this bill that I really, really like - not because of the applause. This is a bill where, in principle, there are things you could agree with.

Notwithstanding the kind of diatribe we've just heard from the minister, who on this side over and over again spoke quite harshly over and over again about decisions of previous administrations in very, very difficult economic circumstances. Suddenly she has discovered the economic realities of this province and what the economic realities of this province have been for a number of years, because on this side that member was the member who condemned the former administration for having deficits, for raising the HST, and for not extending spending to just about everything imaginable, which they are now backtracking away from in lots of ways, or sprinkling copious amounts of money around.

This is a province with some serious problems. We agree with that. (Interruption) I hear somebody over there - who won't be on their feet, I'm sure - talking about how we put them there. Well, let me be crystal clear about the scenario from the past four years. Let me talk about the shape of the pension plans in this province that required stabilization. Let me talk about the federal stimulus program that required provincial expenditure in order to get any of those federal dollars into this province and into this city. Let me talk about the \$68 million, 10-year B-FIT program for recreational facilities around the province that was spent in two and a half years.

Mr. Speaker, let me go back to this bill. This bill is essentially a bill about our province living within its means, and I fully support that. I think our province should live within its means. We should have good fiscal management. We don't have good fiscal management in the current government, if what we've seen in this budget that just passed is any indication.

I have to say, I would feel a lot happier if this bill had something in it - if it was a bill that measured our real ability to pay our debt and live within our means, if it made some requirement that governments reduce the ratio of our debt to our GDP. That is really what is important. It's not good enough to say we need to live within our means and not run deficits.

There are times - and I agree with the Finance and Treasury Board Minister - when you have to run a deficit. You cannot punish the citizens of your province by cutting programs they need, like health care and education, when we're in recessionary times or bad economic times and growth is bad. It's not the fault of the citizens that the financial markets in New York were corrupted by the kind of investment practices that were happening on Wall Street and all over the world. Why should the person working in the grocery store, or the public servant delivering health care, have to pay for that?

We don't support legislation that ties a government's hands in terms of being able to act sensibly and reasonably and I would support the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board in what she said with respect to that. However, there does need to be some greater checks and balances. There does need to be meaningful work, especially in this province, to deal with our fiscal realities and our problems and those are that we carry far too great a debt in this province. We are paying interest rates of close to \$900 million annually, which pretty much approximates the entire budget of the Department of Community Services.

What the true measurement of our ability to carry that debt would be is if you built into a piece of legislation like this the objective, the goal, the requirement that governments work toward decreasing the ratio of debt to GDP so that as your GDP grows, you have a greater capacity to manage your debt service, service your debt. But it needs to go down; it needs to be heading downward. Your GDP is the size of your economy. Really, if you have a growing economy, growing revenue, you have growing economic activity - more corporate tax, more personal income tax.

This would make, I think, more meaning and more sense. The fact of the matter is that Nova Scotia's debt to GDP has been going down. It went down under the Progressive Conservative Government and it went down under our government and we would hope that it will go down under the Liberal Government, but that remains to be seen.

The final thing I want to say that really supports what people in the Official Opposition have said earlier, in terms of their concern about the spending ways of this government in its very first budget, is that the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board gave a fiscal update in December in terms of where we were for last year's budget. If you stripped out all of the one-time expenditures there, we were heading for a deficit of about \$30 million. All of a sudden, we have a deficit budget tabled here that's \$280 million. (Interruption)

I hear the Minister of Natural Resources saying oh, my God. I was at the press conference when the media asked the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, when you stripped out all of those one-time costs, what was the actual operating deficit? The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board said, it was approximately \$80 million. I was there. The Finance Critic for the Official Opposition was there; we both heard that. We know what those numbers were.

Now we have an operating deficit this year of \$279 million. This is a government that's not demonstrating any discipline or any commitment toward managing the resources, the revenues and the expenditures of this province, in the way they would have led you to believe when they sat on this side of the House, and they condemned others from both of our Parties for not being able to manage.

I think that the minister can stand here and give a very. . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We're almost through. The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party has the floor.

MS. MACDONALD: Thank you. The minister can stand in her place and give a very passionate defence, but the numbers don't lie. The numbers are black and white, and the answers that we got in that financial forecast in December are significantly different than the revenues that we're now looking at, and they are solely responsible for those revenues. This is their budget, these are their choices, and these are their decisions.

So don't be fooled, and Nova Scotians will not be fooled. (Interruption) One minute? Yes, we do need to have some form of commitment from all of us here to manage the resources of this province properly, to have in place something that would require good financial oversight. My suggestion, Mr. Speaker, is that perhaps we adopt the objective of having a continual improvement in the province's debt-to-GDP ratio. I think that would help to restore the confidence of the business community and others in our province that Nova Scotia is headed in the right direction. Thank you.

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

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, they are teasing me about bringing it home. That's really what I want to do. In talking with people over my years in ministry, I love talking to the older folks, because the older folks lived in a time when times were tough. They relied on each other to get out of their hole. Communities were bound together to care for each other and to look after each other and respect each other, and they did a good job at that.

I guess I'm part of the problem, too, because I think we've created a generation that expects to have things now. We don't like to admit that, but I'm sure that's the case. I feel sorry for the government trying to take all the desires of the people out there and to try to meet all those desires. It's almost an impossible task, because people do expect more. They expect more with the programs and from the government, and it's hard.

My one concern is that I know a lot of things have gone down over the last number of years, such as fishing and forestry and a number of other things. They've been hurt, and I think they've been hurt because of short-term thinking - let's get what we can from our life now, and we'll let the next generations worry about what happens to them.

I guess that bothers me, to a certain extent, because I now have grandchildren. My children have jobs and they are in place, but my grandkids are not there yet, and won't be there for probably another 20 years. I do worry about what kind of province we're going to leave them when it's their turn to come out.

I'm just asking, I guess, that the government look at all the programs and to spending really carefully so that the province doesn't get more and more into trouble, that we will have a province eventually that will be able to maintain my grandkids, for instance, and I'm sure yours as well. I just want to leave that thought with you folks.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, just for clarification, how much time do I have?

MR. SPEAKER: Until 5:58 p.m.

MR. MACMASTER: Okay. Mr. Speaker, I think those are very wise words. I think of my own family. My father grew up during the Depression, and I know that has influenced his - he's very good with money. He was always very careful and it's something that I admire because when you grow up in that kind of an environment, when you don't have anything around you, and in his case - I'll try to keep this brief - in his case his father worked away for a number of years and he didn't see his father for about three years. His mother, she wanted to stay here.

My father was actually born in Ontario, in Timmins, because a lot of people were working in the mines there, but his mother wanted to get back to Cape Breton and she ran a very small little farm, as a lot of people did at the time, and that small farm fed the family and I'm sure my grandfather was sending some money home, but times were pretty tight and the practicality that's learned through those experiences is something we could do with today because we really do live in a rich society here. I know not everybody has all they need and, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure we never will have a society where everybody has everything that they do need.

Suffice it to say I think that's a good point and I think it's a challenge for the government. I think we all have a role in the Legislature here no matter what side we're on and I know most days we don't seem like we're on the same side, but it is challenging to be in government and to face the demands because really most people only care about what's affecting them, and we can't blame them for that; that's what impacts them. If they want something in the budget, well they want it, plain and simple, and it's not always easy to give it to them.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do sympathize with the government but we also have a role here in the Opposition to make sure that we hold the government to account, and when I look at the amount of debt that we've seen added in the last six years - to put it in perspective it's equivalent to another Sydney Steel worth of debt. I looked at the numbers on this and back in 1990 the debt that was added to the provincial books when that Crown Corporation, when the debt was moved to the provincial books was 22 per cent of the debt. In the last six years there has been a 22 per cent increase in the debt after this fiscal year.

We know, because I've heard from many people, and I know Sydney Steel created meaningful employment for many people for many years, but we know that it did add a lot to the debt and I know that it has even been made an election issue in years past, but the fact remains that in just six years the same thing was done.

Mr. Speaker, what is my advice to that? I really think it's so important for us to stop running deficit budgets, and that's why this legislation is put forward. If it's in law it puts an extra onus on the government to balance its budget. I think when we see the damage, I mean the number-four item in the budget now is interest on the debt - that's three times the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, and I know we all can think of a lot of roads - I'm hearing a lot about roads this Spring from my constituents. But we do have to get the budget into balance.

When you think about it we're 3 per cent out by way of the deficit right now and we're another 3 per cent out if we want to reduce the HST back down to 13 per cent, so we're about 6 per cent out. And when you think that 80 per cent of the budget is health, education, community services, and interest on the debt, we're going to require major change in this province if we're going to balance the budget and reduce that HST - major change.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

MR. SPEAKER: Fifty-eight.

MR. MACMASTER: Fifteen seconds?

MR. SPEAKER: Fifty-eight.

MR. MACMASTER: Fifty-eight seconds?

MR. SPEAKER: No, no. To 5:58 p.m., lots of time.

MR. MACMASTER: Oh, I've got lots of time, I can relax. Now that I can relax and speak for four minutes I will carry on.

So I think that's going to require a recognition from all of us on all sides of the House that there is going to need to be major change in this province, the way the government runs in this province, and we all have to play our little role in doing that. (Interruption) Yes, we should do it together; I think we have to do it together.

We have to try to be reasonable in our expectations of what people can handle. The more we expect the government to spend, of course the more we're going to have to expect the government to tax people. I know the public in this province is taxed a lot. We know from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, one of their challenges for the business owners, really the people that create jobs in the province, is the fact that there is a lot of money taken out of our economy in taxes, and when that's taken out of the economy that money can't go into businesses and into wages for the people who work there.

We all have a role to play and I think it even extends beyond this Legislature. It obviously extends into the health care and education sectors because they comprise about 60 per cent of the budget. We have to find ways to help them, other than just looking at their wages.

We heard a lot of nurses coming in and talking about their work conditions. There may be ways we can make changes in the health care system there that make life a little more bearable for them, more rewarding for them, and maybe we can make the system more efficient.

One thing I think we can do is try to get people living healthier. I know that Premier John Hamm had instituted the Department of Health Promotion years ago and it still exists. (Interruption) That was in 2003 and I believe my colleague, the member for Pictou Centre was the Minister of Health Promotion at one time. Those things can have a tremendous impact on the health budget and, of course, they can have a tremendous impact on people's quality of life too.

We also should think about trying to get everybody that we can in this province engaged in our economy. There are many people who are not engaged and many times it's through no fault of their own. There are opportunities - we talk about minimum wage and if you increase minimum wage by 50 cents or \$1 an hour, Mr. Speaker, really what difference are you making in people's lives? I would suggest not a heck of a lot. Their income is not going to increase that much. What I think we can do, though, to help those people, especially people who are in a long-term career where they need to start earning more money, to earn a better state for themselves in life, is to try to help them with training and to try to help them move themselves into a position where they can get paid more.

I know in my area it's strange, because we have a lot of unemployment but we also have employers who are struggling to find workers. I think a key theme for us to conquer in this province is to get people who are in need of work and connect them with jobs. I know some of the changes made by the federal government received a lot of criticism but I can tell you that I've not met anybody in my constituency who has been affected by the EI changes. My hope is that the government, as it is saying it is going to do - it's the federal government - is going to take more of an active role in connecting people to jobs because I think that will make a difference for those people and for our economy as well. With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll take my place.

MR. SPEAKER: The time allotted for debate on Bill No. 38 has expired.

The honourable House Leader for the Official Opposition.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, that concludes Opposition business for today. I'll call on the Deputy Government House Leader to tell us what we're doing tomorrow and what time we are supposed to be showing up for work.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House sit from 2:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. tomorrow. Following the Orders of the Day, we will call Public Bills for Third Reading, Committee of the Whole House on Bills, and third reading of Private and Local Bills.

I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow from 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

[The House rose at 5:59 p.m.]