



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/>

Second Session

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS:	
TIR: Off-highway Vehicles Act - Amend, Hon. K. Casey	790
GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 204, Fitzgerald, Hon. Walter: Death of - Tribute, The Premier	790
Vote - Affirmative	791
Res. 205, Fitzgerald, Hon. Walter: Death of - Tribute, Hon. M. MacDonald	791
Vote - Affirmative	791
Res. 206, CPA Reg. Seminar: Delegates - Welcome, Hon. M. Samson	791
Vote - Affirmative	792

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:

No. 32, Economic Growth Goals Act, Hon. J. Baillie	792
No. 33, Wills Act, Hon. S. Belliveau	792
No. 34, Living within Our Means Act, Hon. J. Baillie	792
No. 35, Next Generation Act, Hon. J. Baillie	792
No. 36, Balanced Budget Act, Mr. T. Houston.....	792

NOTICES OF MOTION:

Res. 207, Kehoe, Jessica/Dolliver, Stacia: Pumpkin Regatta - Congrats., Mr. C. Porter	793
Vote - Affirmative.....	793
Res. 208, Conway, Steven - Baseball Achievements, Hon. P. Dunn.....	793
Vote - Affirmative.....	794
Res. 209, CeaseFire Hfx. Communities: Launch - Recognize, Hon. M. MacDonald	794
Vote - Affirmative.....	795
Res. 210, Dykeland Lodge - Anniv. (40 th), Mr. C. Porter	795
Vote - Affirmative.....	795
Res. 211, Gill, Chris: Album/Charitable Contributions - Congrats., Mr. L. Harrison	796
Vote - Affirmative.....	796
Res. 212, Geizer, Joy/Carter Dist. Girl Guides: Tree Planting - Acknowledge, Hon. D. Wilson.....	796
Vote - Affirmative.....	797
Res. 213, Jordan Haley, Lisa: Pictou Co. Sports Heritage Hall of Fame - Induction, Mr. T. Houston.....	797
Vote - Affirmative.....	798
Res. 214, Nat. Res.: Firewood Suppliers - Min. Meet, Hon. S. Belliveau	798
Res. 215, Joyce, Vincent/Restoration Comm.: Westville Cenotaph - Congrats., Ms. K. MacFarlane.....	799
Vote - Affirmative.....	799
Res. 216, Levy, Phyllis - Birthday (100 th), Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	799
Vote - Affirmative.....	800
Res. 217, Toastmasters Day (10/15/14) - Recognize, Ms. L. Zann.....	800
Vote - Affirmative.....	801

Res. 218, Bayview Educ. Ctr. (Ms. Rankin's Gr. 3 Class):	
Fundraising - Applaud, Mr. A. MacMaster	801
Vote - Affirmative.....	802
Res. 219, Nat. Res.: Firewood Suppliers - Min. Meet,	
Hon. S. Belliveau	802
Res. 220, Health & Wellness - C.B. ERs: Services - Ensure,	
Mr. E. Orrell.....	802
Res. 221, Rennie, Logan: Animal Welfare/Commun. - Commitment,	
Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	803
Vote - Affirmative.....	804
Res. 222, MacDonald, Sandy: Retirement - Congrats.,	
Hon. P. Dunn.....	804
Vote - Affirmative.....	804
Res. 223, Cavanagh, Danny: Altruism - Congrats.,	
Ms. L. Zann.....	805
Vote - Affirmative.....	805
Res. 224, McNea, Carl/Hewitt, Betty: Can. 55+ Games (2014)	
- Standing Congrats., Mr. L. Harrison	805
Vote - Affirmative.....	806
Res. 225, Fauvelle, Mike: Mike's Hbr. Beach Market - Congrats.,	
Mr. T. Houston.....	806
Vote - Affirmative.....	807
Res. 226, MacLennan, Dave - Johnny Miles Marathons: 10 Wins	
- Congrats., Ms. K. MacFarlane.....	807
Vote - Affirmative.....	807
Res. 227, Shaw, Lori: Serv./Teaching Award - Congrats.,	
Mr. A. MacMaster.....	807
Vote - Affirmative.....	808
Res. 228, Young Shoots Deep Roots Garden: Vols. - Congrats.,	
Mr. E. Orrell.....	808
Vote - Affirmative.....	809
ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS:	
No. 88, Prem.: Job Losses - Statistics,	
Hon. J. Baillie	809
No. 89, Health & Wellness - Ebola: Gov't. - Screening Details,	
Hon. David Wilson	810
No. 90, Prem. - Onshore Jobs: Potential - Prem. Response,	
Hon. J. Baillie	811
No. 91, Prem.: FOIPOP's - Purpose,	
Hon. M. MacDonald	813
No. 92, Prem.: Right to Know Week (09/22 - 09/28/14) - Duration,	
Mr. T. Houston.....	815
No. 93, Health & Wellness - CEC: Lun. - Efficacy,	
Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	816

No. 94, FOI Officer: Independence - Ensure, Mr. A. MacMaster.....	817
No. 95, CCH: Oak Island - Archaeologist Position, Hon. D. Peterson-Rafuse.....	819
No. 96, FOI Min: Expense Claim - Refiling Confirm, Mr. A. MacMaster.....	820
No. 97, Health & Wellness: ER Accountability Report - ER Closures, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	821
No. 98, Health & Wellness: Lab Services - Cuts, Mr. E. Orrell.....	823
No. 99, Health & Wellness - Ebola: N.S. - Suspected Case Confirm, Hon. David Wilson	824
No. 100, Fin.: Natl. Securities Regulator System - Joining Mr. T. Houston.....	825
No. 101, Health & Wellness: Cancer Home Medication - Update, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	826
No. 102, Health & Wellness: Girls HPV Vaccination - Cost, Hon. G. Gosse	828
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:	
GOVERNMENT MOTIONS:	
Res. 1, House of Assembly: Rules - Amend, Hon. M. Samson Amendment (Hon. S. Belliveau)	
Mr. T. Houston.....	829
Mr. C. Porter	833
Hon. M. MacDonald	842
Ms. K. MacFarlane	852
Mr. J. Lohr	855
Hon. David Wilson	865
Mr. A. MacMaster.....	874
Hon. F. Corbett	879
Mr. E. Orrell.....	886
ADJOURNMENT:	
MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5):	
Fish. & Aquaculture: Lobster Levy - Ind. Consult,	
Hon. S. Belliveau	892
Hon. K. Colwell	895
Mr. J. Lohr	898
Mr. T. Houston.....	900

[GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:]

[GOVERNMENT MOTIONS:]

Res. 1, House of Assembly: Rules - Amend, Hon. M. Samson
Amendment (Hon. S. Belliveau)

Mr. E. Orrell.....	901
Mr. L. Harrison	902
Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	903

Motion to amend Resolution No. 1

Motion defeated	909
-----------------------	-----

Mr. T. Farrell.....	909
---------------------	-----

Adjourned debate	910
------------------------	-----

[PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:]

No. 6, Petroleum Resources Act

Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	910
--------------------------	-----

Mr. Gordon Wilson.....	927
------------------------	-----

Adjourned debate	927
------------------------	-----

[GOVERNMENT MOTIONS:]

Res. 1, House of Assembly: Rules - Amend, Hon. M. Samson

Hon. P. Dunn.....	927
-------------------	-----

Amendment moved.....	929
----------------------	-----

Mr. Gordon Wilson.....	929
------------------------	-----

Adjourned debate	929
------------------------	-----

[PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:]

No. 6, Petroleum Resources Act

Mr. J. Lohr	930
-------------------	-----

Adjourned debate	940
------------------------	-----

ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Wed., Oct. 15th at 12:00 noon..... 940

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):

Res. 229, AJ Smeltzer JHS: Music Prog. - C100 Radio Donation,

Hon. David Wilson	941
-------------------------	-----

Res. 230, Avon River Days: Fest. Success - Vols. Applaud,

Mr. C. Porter	941
---------------------	-----

Res. 231, Intl. Students - Mayor Savage/Coun.: Init. - Support,

Hon. L. Diab	942
--------------------	-----

Res. 232, N.S. Legal Aid: Social Justice Framework - Importance

Recognize, Hon. L. Diab.....	942
------------------------------	-----

Res. 233, Book, Bob - PSC: Long-Serv. Award (25 Yrs.) - Congrats.,

Hon. L. Diab	943
--------------------	-----

Res. 234, McKeough, Mr. Marcel - PSC: Long-Service Award

(30 Yrs.) - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab	943
---	-----

Res. 235, MacLean, Ms. Kerry - PSC: Long-Service Award

(25 Yrs.) - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab	944
---	-----

Res. 236, Richman, Elliott - PSC: Long-Service Award (25 Yrs.)

- Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	944
--------------------------------	-----



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2014

Sixty-second General Assembly

Second Session

12:00 NOON

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Margaret Miller

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Just before we begin with the daily routine, the topic for the Adjournment debate this evening, as submitted by the member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River, is:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House call on the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture to consult with the lobster industry and let them have their say on his proposed levy.

That is the topic for late debate tonight at 6:00 p.m.

We'll begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

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

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition from the North Shore ATV Club, a petition requesting amendments to the regulations to the Off-highway Vehicles Act, detailing the nature of the changes requested. The operative clause reads: We request amendments to the Off-highway Vehicles Act Regulations.

There are 300 names on the petition, Mr. Speaker, and I have affixed mine to that.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 204

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas former Mayor of Halifax and HRM, and former Cabinet Minister, Walter Fitzgerald passed away on October 11th; and

Whereas Mr. Fitzgerald served as Mayor of Halifax from 1971 to 1974, and again from 1994 to 1996, and was the first mayor of the amalgamated Halifax Regional Municipality from 1996 to 2000; and

Whereas Mr. Fitzgerald was elected to the provincial Legislature in 1974, serving as a Cabinet Minister in the Government of the Honourable Gerald Regan;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly honour Mr. Fitzgerald's dedication to his community, city, and province, and his ability to do so throughout time with compassion, a smile, and a great sense of humour.

Mr. Speaker, with the indulgence of the House, I would ask for a moment of silence, but before we do that, I would ask the House to allow the Interim Leader of the New Democratic Party to also read a resolution that she has pertaining to Mr. Fitzgerald.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

The honourable Interim Leader of the New Democratic Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 205

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

Whereas Walter Fitzgerald, who passed away on October 11, 2014, was known for his love and dedication to the City of Halifax and its residents; and

Whereas Walter Fitzgerald had an impressive community-minded career, beginning as a teacher, then MLA, minister, a municipal councillor, and the Mayor of both the old City of Halifax and the first Mayor of the Halifax Regional Municipality;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly extend their condolences to the Fitzgerald family, and remember the many contributions made by Walter Fitzgerald to the Province of Nova Scotia, the City of Halifax and the people who call it home.

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.

Would all members please rise and observe a moment of silence in honour of the passing of Walter Fitzgerald.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Government House Leader.

RESOLUTION NO. 206

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

Whereas on October 17th the Province of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Legislature will host the annual regional seminar of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association; and

Whereas conference attendees include representatives from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nunavut, Yukon, and the House of Commons; and

Whereas the conference helps to advance expertise and understanding of parliamentary best practices and procedures for Parliaments across Canada and the Commonwealth;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly welcome our parliamentary counterparts and guests from across Canada, and invite them to utilize and enjoy our Legislature this Friday, October 17th.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 32 - Entitled an Act Respecting the Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy. (Hon. Jamie Baillie)

Bill No. 33 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 505 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Wills Act. (Hon. Sterling Belliveau)

Bill No. 34 - Entitled an Act to Limit Government Debt. (Hon. Jamie Baillie)

Bill No. 35 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2010. The Finance Act, Respecting Intergenerational Reporting. (Hon. Jamie Baillie)

Bill No. 36 - Entitled an Act to Require Balanced Budgets and Limit Government Spending. (Mr. Tim Houston)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 207

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

Whereas Windsor hosted its 16th Annual Pumpkin Regatta on October 12th with fun and frenzy, as approximately 50 paddlers tried their hand at paddling their personal vegetable crafts across Lake Pisiqid in front of thousands of cheering fans; and

Whereas Avon View High School students Jessica Kehoe and Stacia Dolliver paddled their pumpkin across the lake to claim first place in the doubles people-powered division; and

Whereas each year Windsor welcomes visitors and paddlers from across the province and around the globe to its world-renowned pumpkin regatta;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jessica Kehoe and Stacia Dolliver on their precision pumpkin-paddling abilities and wish them all the best in future regattas.

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. 208

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

Whereas New Glasgow native Steven Conway grew up playing ball in the New Glasgow Kinsmen baseball program; and

Whereas Steven, along with 17 other fellow Nova Scotians, made up the Provincial Nova Scotia Junior AAA team; and

Whereas Steven and his teammates represented our province in the Canada Cup held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in August;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Steven Conway for the years of hard work that got him to the top of his game in our province and for being the only player chosen from our area to attain this honour.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Interim Leader of the New Democratic Party.

RESOLUTION NO. 209

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

Whereas CeaseFire Halifax is committed to preventing violence in North End Halifax and other high-risk communities by providing non-violent solutions and raising public awareness of violent acts; and

Whereas CeaseFire Halifax is based on a program model that has shown success in reducing violence in communities like Chicago; and

Whereas CeaseFire Halifax celebrated its program launch this summer;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the launch of CeaseFire Halifax, and offer the organization its praise and encouragement in its goal to prevent violence in our province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Hants West.

RESOLUTION NO. 210

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

Whereas Dykland Lodge is a residence for senior citizens located in the picturesque community of Windsor, Hants County; and

Whereas the first resident moved into the 75-bed facility on December 4, 1974, which also included five independent one-bedroom apartments for seniors and expanded in 1990 when a 35-bed addition was constructed; and

Whereas with a full calendar of events each month the residents are free to enjoy bus trips, fitness classes, card parties, music, bingo, bowling, and so much more;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Dykeland Lodge on celebrating 40 years of caring and wish them all the best for many more years to come.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

RESOLUTION NO. 211

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

Whereas Valley resident Chris Gill has released his third album, entitled *Gone*; and

Whereas a portion of the proceeds from Chris' album are being donated to Make-A-Wish Atlantic Provinces; and

Whereas the mission of the Make-A-Wish Atlantic Provinces is to grant the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength, and joy;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly commend Chris Gill for his charitable contributions and commitments, and wish him success with his latest album, *Gone*.

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. 212

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

Whereas Girl Guides of Canada, Carter District, includes members from Lower Sackville, Middle and Upper Sackville, Beaver Bank, Mount Uniacke, and part of Lucasville; and

Whereas Carter District guider Joy Geizer spearheaded grant applications for Carter District units, raising \$2,500 for the purchase of trees for Lower Sackville's Acadia Park; and

Whereas a tree-planting and carnival day is scheduled for October 19th, with up to 300 Girl Guides from the Carter District participating in the planting of 12 trees and 8 shrubs at Acadia Park;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge the efforts of Joy Geizer and the Carter District Girl Guides on their effort to plant trees and shrubs for Lower Sackville's Acadia Park, and provide a beautiful space for all residents to enjoy.

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. 213

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

Whereas Westville's own Lisa Jordan Haley helped coach the Canadian women's hockey team to Olympic Gold in Sochi; and

Whereas this achievement, plus coaching and playing on other award-winning teams, has led to Lisa being inducted into the Pictou County Sports Heritage Hall of Fame; and

Whereas Lisa always says she comes from Westville and she will be coming home to Westville for the ceremony, where she will be inducted as a builder;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Lisa on this wonderful recognition, and thank her for her contributions and dedication to the sport of hockey.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

RESOLUTION NO. 214

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

Whereas the Minister of Natural Resources stated on October 9, 2014, that firewood used by Nova Scotians does not qualify as an emergency or energy source; and

Whereas the Liberal Government promised in their election campaign to keep energy costs down; and

Whereas many Nova Scotians, especially in rural Nova Scotia, use wood to heat their homes to reduce their power bills;

Therefore be it resolved that the Minister of Agriculture encourage the Minister of Natural Resources to meet with firewood suppliers to get a better understanding of how the use of firewood can heat a home and reduce power bills.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Pictou West.

RESOLUTION NO. 215

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

Whereas Vincent Joyce chaired the committee responsible for the restoration of the Westville cenotaph, honouring those who served during the First World War; and

Whereas the sculpture, made of the highest quality materials, was crafted by Emanuel Hahn, with a design that is replicated across the country; and

Whereas the names, etched in stone, had faded over the years but now look as they originally did at its unveiling in 1921;

Therefore be it resolved that all Members of the Legislative Assembly congratulate Vincent Joyce and the restoration committee on its fine work, ensuring that the sacrifice of those who served our country will not be forgotten.

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. 216

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 birthdays are an occasion for family and friends to gather to celebrate the life of an individual; and

Whereas on November 1, 2014, Mrs. Phyllis Levy of Chester, Nova Scotia, will celebrate her 100th birthday; and

Whereas to have reached 100 years of age, and continue to be active and share all the memories gathered over your lifetime with your loved ones, is a wonderful reason to celebrate;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Phyllis on reaching this milestone in her life, and wish her many more birthdays and continued good health.

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. 217

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

Whereas the ability to communicate in a clear and effective manner is a powerful and important skill that can help people overcome barriers to a measurable performance in virtually every endeavour and line of work; and

Whereas by assisting in the development of essential communication skills the Toastmasters International organization performs a valuable service for its members and for those who hear their message of opportunity, initiative, and good fellowship; and

Whereas in October 1924, Ralph Smedley held the first meeting of what would become Toastmasters International, and within nine decades Toastmasters International has grown to more than 14,650 clubs and 313,000 members in 126 countries worldwide, with more than 480 members in the Province of Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia House of Assembly recognize October 15, 2014, as Toastmasters Day and encourage Nova Scotians to recognize the many accomplishments of this organization.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 218

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

Whereas Bayview Education Centre students and staff recently raised more than \$600 for a recently paralyzed young man from the community; and

Whereas the students of Ms. Rankin's Grade 3 class made bracelets to increase the total; and

Whereas these 8- and 9-year-olds were able to make a \$150 donation of their own after selling their bracelet creations to their fellow schoolmates;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly applaud Ms. Rankin's Grade 3 class for their kind efforts to help others.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

RESOLUTION NO. 219

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

Whereas the Minister of Natural Resources stated on October 9, 2014, that firewood used by Nova Scotians does not quality as an energy source; and

Whereas the Liberal Government promised in their election campaign to keep energy costs down; and

Whereas many Nova Scotians, especially in rural Nova Scotia, use wood to heat their homes to reduce their power bills;

Therefore be it resolved that the Minister of Environment encourage the Minister of Natural Resources to meet with firewood suppliers to get a better understanding of how the use of firewood can heat a home and reduce power bills.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

RESOLUTION NO. 220

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

Whereas the Emergency Room Accountability Report, tabled Friday, revealed that emergency rooms were unexpectedly closed in Nova Scotia for a total of seven months in the last fiscal year; and

Whereas the overwhelming majority, 72 per cent of the emergency room closures, occurred in Cape Breton; and

Whereas nurses at the Northside General Hospital are instructed to call 911 if a patient has an emergency because there is no doctor working overnight;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly urge the Minister of Health and Wellness to ensure Cape Bretoners get the same emergency room services as other Nova Scotians and move quickly to keep Cape Breton emergency rooms open.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

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

RESOLUTION NO. 221

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 Logan Rennie from Simms Settlement is a young Nova Scotian who is a dedicated pet owner, animal lover, and community member; and

Whereas at just 13 years old, Logan works part-time at a local dog boarding facility and saved his own money to spay and neuter his dog Spike and his cat Miskit, as well as look after stray neighborhood cats; and

Whereas Logan regularly visits local businesses in his area and is very well known for his love of animals in the Hubbards community and surrounding area;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Nova Scotia Legislature applaud Logan for his commitment to animal welfare and his community at such a young age.

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. 222

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

Whereas Stellarton native Sandy MacDonald has retired from his position at Stellarton Post Office after 36 years of devoted service; and

Whereas Mr. MacDonald has been a valuable and involved individual in his community, spending his days seeing familiar faces at the post office and donating his time to causes such as Big Brothers Big Sisters; and

Whereas the type of devotion Sandy has given to all Stellarton residents is a rare thing these days, and he will be sorely missed;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Sandy MacDonald on his retirement and wish him well with his plans to continue to give even more time to worthwhile causes in 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 Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River.

RESOLUTION NO. 223

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

Whereas Truro area resident Danny Cavanagh is the current president of CUPE Nova Scotia, and also sits on CUPE's national executive board; and

Whereas Danny donated a new lift chair to his lifelong friend Joey Shipley, and is challenging all members of CUPE to support ALS fundraising events; and

Whereas Danny has requested that people that have equipment not being used in their homes donate this equipment to people in their communities living with ALS;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate Danny Cavanagh for his altruism and his desire to help others through his connection with the CUPE union members.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

RESOLUTION NO. 224

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 2014 Canada 55+ Games occurred in August in Strathcona County, Alberta; and

Whereas representatives from Nova Scotia earned a total of 57 medals; and

Whereas Carl McNea and Betty Hewitt, representing Stewiacke, placed fifth of 28 in the cribbage tournament;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Carl McNea and Betty Hewitt for their excellent standing at the 2014 Canada 55+ Games.

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. 225

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

Whereas the closure of a business created a huge void for residents and tourists in Little Harbour, on the way to the beautiful Melmerby Beach; and

Whereas the void was filled by Mike Fauvelle when he changed his career path and became a small business owner/operator, and brought back the services and conveniences that complement rural living; and

Whereas Mike's Harbour Beach Market meets and exceeds the expectations of a corner store;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mike for his vision and courage to create his own business and serve 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 Pictou West.

RESOLUTION NO. 226

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

Whereas Dave MacLennan of Scotsburn won his 10th Johnny Miles Marathon on June 15, 2014; and

Whereas Dave was also awarded the Dr. Johnny Miles Williston Character Award and was inducted into the Glenn “Big Dog” Chenell Runners Hall of Fame; and

Whereas since the age of 15, Dave has run 55 marathons;

Therefore be it resolved that all Members of the Legislative Assembly congratulate Dave on winning 10 Johnny Miles Marathons and recognize his remarkably long running career.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Inverness.

RESOLUTION NO. 227

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

Whereas Lori Shaw is a physical education teacher at Whycomagh Education Centre; and

Whereas Lori has long been praised for her teaching excellence, as well as her community commitment to causes such as the Terry Fox Run; and

Whereas Lori was recently awarded the Physical Education Teaching Excellence Award for her outstanding performance as teacher, mentor, motivator, and role model;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Lori for her wonderful service and congratulate her on her most recent award.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

RESOLUTION NO. 228

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

Whereas Joanne MacNeil and Kelly Carter were proud to officially open the Young Shoots and Deep Roots garden this September, next to the Northside Community Guest Home; and

Whereas this therapeutic garden was a community project involving many groups and individuals such as individuals: horticulturalist therapist Janice Morrison; Northside Kiwanis Golden K; the Northside Community Guest Home and its foundation; the North Sydney Garden Club; CBRM; students of Munro Academy; and New Horizons; and

Whereas residents of the home, walkers and families, can enjoy this partnership in caring for years to come along the walking track next to the Northside Community Guest Home, showcasing Munro Park;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate this community effort and the many volunteers who made Young Shoots Deep Roots garden a reality.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The time is now 12:37 p.m., we'll conclude at 1:37 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: JOB LOSSES - STATISTICS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. We now know that Nova Scotia lost another 8,700 jobs in the past year - and I'll table the report that shows that - that is 8,700 jobs less this September than a year ago September.

September is interesting, Mr. Speaker, because that is the same month that the government announced a ban on new ways to create new jobs in our province - shale gas development, estimated to create at least 1,500 new jobs.

My question to the Premier is, what does the Premier have to say to those 8,700 Nova Scotians who lost their job and wonder why he is saying no to new ones?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to tell all members of this House that there is no ban on creating jobs in this province. The private sector will continue to drive economic growth in this province and this government will do everything we can to support them.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, as all Nova Scotians know, there is one new way to create real new jobs, possibly 1,500 new jobs, and there is a bill before this House by the Liberal Government to ban that one new way of creating new jobs. Last year Cape Breton lost 3,100 jobs, in the north shore of Nova Scotia the number is 2,900 fewer jobs, even in Halifax, 1,400 fewer jobs from September 2013 to this September 2014, a consistent trend over the past year. Meanwhile, the government has found a way to ban one of the few new ways of creating new jobs in our province.

My question to the Premier is, how can you justify banning a new way of creating jobs when so many job losses keep piling up?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to again tell this House that this province has not banned opportunity in this province; as a matter of fact we're going to continue to work with the private sector to provide good economic opportunities in this province, good jobs in this province - and I want to remind all members of this House that it is the private sector that will drive job growth.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, it is the private sector that creates jobs, but they can't do that when they have a government that actually bans new ways of creating new jobs. The Premier might say they are working on a jobs plan, but that's cold comfort to the 8,700 Nova Scotians who went backwards and lost their jobs in the past year.

What is ironic is that in the country as a whole, Canada gained 150,000 jobs in the past year while Nova Scotia lost 8,700; Canada's labour force increased by 123,000 people while Nova Scotia's went backward by 8,700. The country is growing while Nova Scotia stays still. What we do have is a government that bans new ways of creating jobs while the rest of the country goes ahead.

My question to the Premier is, how many job losses in Nova Scotia will it take before he stops saying no to one of the few new ways to create jobs?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all members of the private sector who are believing in this province despite what the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party says, who are making investments in their businesses and their communities. I want to thank them for joining in partnership with the province to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities to keep young people home. I want to thank them for providing research opportunities for our young Nova Scotians right here at home.

We used to drive them to other provinces to get that opportunity, and they're now getting that chance to do it here in this province. I want to assure every member of the private sector that this government will continue to work with them side by side to make sure that we continue to grow this great province.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS - EBOLA: GOV'T. - SCREENING DETAILS

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Late last month, the first case of Ebola was confirmed in North America. While the risk to the general public in our province is extremely low, it is important for those responsible for our health care system and public safety to be acutely aware of what's going on outside our borders.

My question is, how is the government currently screening for high-risk individuals coming into our province?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. This is one of those issues that continues to grow in concern on the minds of all Canadians - in fact, all North Americans. Here in Nova Scotia, while we don't have any direct flights from Africa, we can have flights within Canada of those that transfer into Nova Scotia. The first line of screening happens at the Halifax airport, and that now is taking on a greater sense of urgency. I know that our plan is like that of six other international airports.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, in Belleville, Ontario, hospital staff were able to identify and isolate an individual suspected of having Ebola within five minutes of their arriving at the ER. A doctor cited Ontario's updated strict infection prevention and control measures as a reason why this was handled so quickly. I'd like to ask the minister, in the rare case that an infected individual arrives in Nova Scotia, what protocols has the minister put into place to ensure that they are quarantined immediately?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I know our medical officer is in constant contact with colleagues and Health Canada each week. I think that has now stepped up because of a suspected case here in Nova Scotia - even a suspected case will go into quarantine at the QEII. Those protocols are in place right across the country. We here in Nova Scotia would have the same type of ability to screen somebody at the QEII.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, sadly, other than family members, it is front-line health care workers who are most at risk when someone is diagnosed with and subsequently treated for Ebola. My final question to the minister is, what are the minister and his government doing to train and protect health care workers from threats like Ebola?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the former Minister of Health and Wellness does raise a really important point. We have seen now what has happened in the United States in dealing with a recent case. I know that when it comes to having quarantine protocols, it is not just having the space available. It is also having staff trained to deal with it with the latest precautionary measures. In fact, we'll have Dr. Strang providing an update on all of the measures in relation to Ebola or any other serious medical incidents.

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

PREM. - ONSHORE JOBS: POTENTIAL - PREM. RESPONSE

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, with 8,700 jobs lost in the last year, the government has turned its nose up on over 1,500 new jobs that could come from shale gas development. They justify this based on an 11-year-old estimate of 650 billion cubic feet of gas alone. The Wheeler report itself, published just this year, estimates that the Windsor-Kennetcook Basin alone contains between 17 and 69

trillion cubic feet of natural gas, 26 to 100 times more than the old numbers, and I will table that from the Wheeler report. My question to the Premier is, with so many potential jobs at stake, why is he trying to downgrade the onshore jobs potential?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we continue to work with the private sector. We continue to work with industries in all sectors to provide the good opportunities in this province and we will continue to do so.

MR. BAILLIE: Of course it's great that the government wants to thank the private sector and congratulate the private sector, we all do that. What we need is a government that actually listens to the employers of the province when they speak up and say they want the opportunity to develop this resource, Mr. Speaker. That is what is missing, actually listening to what employers in Nova Scotia, the ones that create these jobs, have to say.

When Dr. Wheeler himself was asked about his estimate of the potential job creation from onshore he said, "We have a nationally-leading petroleum geologist who has looked at the latest mapping and evidence on potential resources in unconventional gas in the province." They have estimated that one block alone could have 17 to 69 trillion cubic feet of gas, create well over 1,500 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, those are the words of Dr. Wheeler and his panelist but still the Premier says no to a new way to create new jobs in this province, so my question to the Premier is why does he disagree with Dr. Wheeler and his expert panelist when they say this is a real chance to create jobs?

THE PREMIER: Actually what Dr. Wheeler said is that there needs to be more science, there needs to be more study and that's exactly what the Minister of Energy is doing through the Department of Energy, Mr. Speaker. We're going down the road to ensuring that we actually have that resource in this province and we're going to continue to have a conversation with Nova Scotians and we're going to continue to listen to all Nova Scotians, unlike the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party who only wants to listen to those who share his view of the world.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, that is a little rich coming from a Premier who is banning one of the new ways to create jobs in this province because he doesn't agree with all of those voices out there, whether they're unemployed Nova Scotians, or Nova Scotians working away, or Nova Scotians who want to invest and create jobs when they say don't ban a new way to create jobs, he is the one who only listens to people who share his point of view when he says no to such an obvious new way to create jobs.

We have an example in our own offshore of how this can be done right. The Sable Offshore Energy Project was estimated at 3 trillion cubic feet when it was first discovered. It wasn't banned; it was developed. We have responsible regulations that are safe and sustainable in place and the jobs that go with it, Mr. Speaker, but this ban - let's be clear - it

does the opposite. There will be no research, no science, no drilling unless the government proposes to borrow the money and do it itself, as long as there is a ban on resource development.

That is why Julie Hebert, Chair of the Maritimes Energy Association, wrote to the government and said that announcing a ban puts a closed sign on Nova Scotia's door. So my question to the Premier, who values listening, will he listen to the people who actually want to create jobs in Nova Scotia instead of putting up a closed for business sign.

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

HON. ANDREW YOUNGER: You know, Mr. Speaker, it is not closed for business. There is a lot of onshore development going on.

Mr. Speaker, the estimates that the Leader of the Official Opposition talked about actually come from a 2013 study and were published and stood by then. They used the exact same data that was used by Mr. Hayes with the Wheeler commission. They both used that same data and came to radically different conclusions, which is why they also said it's important to do the science necessary and the onshore atlas, which this government is doing.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that Mr. Hayes and every single panellist said that hydraulic fracturing should not proceed at this time because the social licence does not exist in this province at this time, and that is what this decision is about. If these characters want to allow processes when the social licence does not exist, then that's fine, but this government is going to be responsible. We are going to manage our resources responsibly and we are going to ensure that Nova Scotians are the primary beneficiaries of them.

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

PREM.: FOIPOPS - PURPOSE

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Premier. For the past 20 years members of Executive Council have made their expenses available to the public on a monthly basis, as directed by the Guidelines for Monthly Reporting of Ministerial Expenses, and I'll table that.

In Oral Question Period last week the Minister responsible for the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Office said that recent FOIPOPs into his ministerial expenses for the year, along with his executive assistant and his deputy minister, were simply nothing more than a "fishing expedition."

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is this, does he agree with his minister that requesting this information is nothing more than a fishing expedition?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians have the right to know how my expenses are related to the role I have as Premier. I've always believed that if I spend it, I should defend it. I've said that for a very long time. My expenses are available and I will continue to make them available as long as the people of this province give me the opportunity to hold this position.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Premier. Perhaps if the minister had followed the guidelines, it wouldn't have been necessary to file a freedom of information application for his expenses.

Mr. Speaker, it is standard practice that a department's minister is never privy to the records going out from a freedom of information request but the minister stated last week, ". . . I got a stack of documents on my desk which I had to review to make sure they were factual . . ." I'll table that Hansard.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier explain that if it is now going to be the practice of his government that when a department is FOIPOPped that the minister and not the FOIPOP administrator will review what information will be provided?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. We will respect the FOIPOP officer of this province and we will do, as every previous government has done, Mr. Speaker, and ensure that the information required is made available.

MS. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, that wasn't my question but nevertheless, my final question is to the Minister responsible for the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Officer. In Oral Question Period the minister said he had to review his expense claim for the last year to ensure accuracy.

My question to the minister is really quite simple, why was he reviewing his expense claim for accuracy after he received a FOIPOP request, instead of at the time when he filed these expense claims?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member opposite that all of my expense claims are reviewed by me and signed off by me. The reason I would review a FOIPOP request, which is specifically on my expense reports, is very simple. There have been mistakes made by other FOIPOP requests. We had one where previous ministers' expenses were accidentally handed out as the current minister's expense and I was just ensuring that the same wasn't going to happen. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

PREM.: RIGHT TO KNOW WEEK (09/22 - 09/28/14) - DURATION

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Premier. Less than a month ago a proclamation was issued by the Premier declaring September 22nd to September 28th the Right to Know Week in Nova Scotia. According to the proclamation, the Government of Nova Scotia has adopted the principles of openness, transparency, and accountability. I'll table that. Last week we asked the Premier to make the FOIPOP Review Officer independent of government. He said, "I don't see any reason for it." I can table that too.

My question for the Premier is, when he made September 22nd to September 28th Right to Know Week, did he in fact mean only that week?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I really do appreciate the question. It shows how desperate that Party is, and clearly shows why Nova Scotians are turning away from them.

My point is that we will continue to respect FOIPOP officers. We will continue to provide the information that the FOIPOP officers will give all Nova Scotians that they request.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, last week our caucus revealed that we received a FOIPOP fee estimate of almost \$15,000 from the Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Department in response to a request for information about the Nova Star ferry. *The Chronicle Herald* reported that they made a fairly similar request and received a fee estimate of \$175. I'll table that.

My question today is, can the Premier please explain such a startling discrepancy?

THE PREMIER: The FOIPOP officers have independence. What more do they want?

MR. HOUSTON: Oh, I think the issue is that that has been called into a bit of a question here today. So between the Premier's comments today and his comments last week that he's too busy to take freedom of information requests seriously, the Minister of Internal Services' glib remarks in Question Period last week, the overwhelmingly large discrepancy in fee estimates, and the multitude of other issues associated with access to information in this province, Nova Scotians are rightly concerned.

My question is, when will the Premier finally take Nova Scotians' concerns about access to information seriously, and start by making the FOIPOP review commissioner an officer of the Legislature, independent of his government? Will he do that, yes or no?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what I said is that, as a government, we were dealing with the issues that Nova Scotians are bringing to us - the ones that matter to them and their

families and communities across this province. Outside of the Progressive Conservative Party, no one brings up the FOIPOP officer to the Premier when I'm travelling.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS - CEC: LUN. - EFFICACY

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness.

We've heard many different positions coming from this minister in regard to his stance on Collaborative Emergency Centres, especially the one announced for Lunenburg. In May of this year, the minister told *South Shore Now* that the CEC version is looking like what will best serve Lunenburg, and I will table that.

My question through you to the minister is, does the minister still feel that the CEC model is what will best serve people in the Lunenburg area?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member opposite, we know that the current model needs some change in Lunenburg to deal with hours of closure. We are awaiting Mary Jane Hampton's report before we put a final model in place, along with going to Lunenburg to meet with medical staff and clinicians at Fishermen's Memorial.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, it was another story when my colleague asked the minister about the Lunenburg CEC in Question Period. He suggested that he was leaning toward a family practice offering instead of the proven Collaborative Emergency Centre model, and I will table that.

My question through you to the minister is, why does he keep changing his mind?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, as we all know, those who are following the CEC development, there are different versions that have already been put in place across Nova Scotia. We have some with an advanced care paramedic - the vast number, however, are primary care paramedics - and we have some shortened hours in some locations.

We are talking about the family practice concept that would be part of a CEC model going forward as soon as we get the report from Mary Jane Hampton.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: I thank the minister for his answer, Mr. Speaker. Not only is the minister backpeddling on opening the Lunenburg CEC, but he also told us last week that he was looking at the family practice model as opposed to keeping their emergency room open.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you is, when is the minister planning to close the ER at Fishermen's Memorial Hospital?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member opposite, and all the good people of Lunenburg and area, that we will not be closing the emergency department at Fishermen's Memorial Hospital.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

FOI OFFICER: INDEPENDENCE - ENSURE

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

I think we have all in this Legislature been in agreement, although it seems usually it's when we're in Opposition, that the freedom of information officer should be someone who is independent, and the Premier has just stated that there is a feeling that that position is independent.

The reality, Mr. Speaker, is that we have a recent request from our caucus office going into government, a response that the bill is almost \$15,000 to supply the information, and a similar request made by *The Chronicle Herald* and the price of that request is \$175. (Interruption)

The member for Richmond says have I seen them both? I'd like to see them both but I'm going to tell you this, wouldn't it make sense - and I'll let the minister answer - wouldn't it make sense for it to be an independent person reporting to this Legislature so that we could all trust, whether we're in government or whether we're in Opposition, that the freedom of information process has integrity?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I can assure all members of this House and all Nova Scotians that the freedom of information person within all our departments is independent of government. If the member from across the aisle would like me to look into why his Party's request was \$15,000, I can do so. Thank you.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I think, again, that having an independent officer of the Legislature would create a great deal more trust by Opposition Parties. I'm going to table documents that show that even government members had concerns about this process in the past, when they were in Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I know the minister himself, when he was questioned about his own expenses, he had reviewed them. I think that's something all of us would want to do, but the point is that we shouldn't be part of that and I don't think the minister is supposed to be part of that review process - it should be independent. Perhaps the department made a

mistake and made the minister aware that the request has come in. Doesn't this highlight the reason why freedom of information requests should be managed by an independent officer of this Legislature?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, the reason freedom of information is independent of government, which it is - for example I'll give you the request that the Progressive Conservatives are talking about, \$15,000, I have no clue about it, but the request that was done for my expense reports I was made aware of because it was an actual, specific request to my expense reports.

I did review them and actually what I did find in there was a dinner that was not on my expense reports - and it was actually an expense report from further back, to the tune of a couple of hundred dollars. It surprised me quite a bit because I had never eaten at daMaurizio's and expensed it to the government. So I'm very grateful that I did look at the expense reports that were about to go out, because they were not factual.

I know everything I've expensed the government; I know that the total of it is only a couple of hundred dollars and when I saw one dinner for a couple of hundred dollars in there I knew it was a mistake and it did not go out as factually wrong. Thank you.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I don't think this is giving Nova Scotians more confidence about how this system is run. We know that it's not just political Parties that make these requests - Nova Scotians make these requests as well.

I know we all do expenses in this Legislature, and I don't know about the rest of you, I know it's a bit of a pain sometimes to say the least but we have to be accountable. It's not our money; it's Nova Scotians' money. I think we owe it to Nova Scotians, that's why we've taken this position in Opposition, but we're also willing to stand by it should we form a government.

We have members of the government revealing that they are able to review their own expenses for accuracy prior to those expenses being released and we have different fees being charged for the same requests. How many more examples do we need of this before the government will accept that we should all be supportive of having an independent officer at the Legislature responsible for freedom of information requests?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, as I've stated before, the officers are already currently independent. I will also follow up with, if I am going to be FOIPOP-ed, I will look at what is the request and I will ensure that it is 100 per cent accurate and I will also ensure that every part of the request is answered completely and factually. Thank you.

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

CCH: OAK ISLAND - ARCHAEOLOGIST POSITION

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

Preserving the mystery of Oak Island also simultaneously protects future tourism opportunities for the South Shore region. I raised the issue with the minister in person and in Question Period last April and introduced a bill in the Spring session that called on an archeologist to be present during exploration. Now I've received a copy of a letter from the minister - which I thank him for and I will table that - that was sent to the individuals removing items from Oak Island dated August 2014. The letter acknowledges valuable items are being removed from the site and suggests they have an archeologist present.

Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister is, with all the evidence that warrants an archeologist being present to monitor all future work, why has the minister only suggested an archeologist be present, instead of making it mandatory?

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, as I've stated in the past, the Special Places Protection Act is working, it is doing what it is intended to do. I say that because those licensees who are working on Oak Island have co-operated with us, they have been sending in artifacts and items that have been of some interest to the province.

That being said, I do not have any other control on that particular site - that goes to the Minister of Natural Resources because it is the Oak Island Treasure Act. I am responsible for the Special Places Protection Act.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, that's the issue at hand - we don't know for sure if all the items are coming to our province. We have no mandatory archeologist onsite to be able to preserve and handle them properly. As mentioned, there's still no onsite monitoring on Oak Island despite the fact that the exploration continues. The island's artifacts are not protected either by the Treasure Trove Act or the Special Places Protection Act. Nearly five months have gone by since I raised this issue with the minister - an archeologist should already be mandatory and appointed by the government.

So my question is, Mr. Speaker, why was an archeologist not hired this summer when it was clear that it was needed?

MR. INCE: Mr. Speaker, an archeologist was suggested by my department. It is incumbent upon the licensees if they are going to have an archeologist on-site to hire one.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the minister's answer. That's the issue here - it should be mandatory. There is absolutely no protection. I know that I spoke to one of the treasure hunters last year and asked if they had the professional

skills of an archeologist and they said no, and so just the suggestion and not making mandatory is the issue.

The proposed Oak Island Bill No. 68 would actually define - and here is another issue, Mr. Speaker - the difference between a treasure and an historical artifact. That is the problem and it would actually place those definitions under the Special Places Protection Act. My question to the minister is, why is the minister not bringing forward legislation to ensure all historical artifacts on Oak Island are protected and won't leave our province forever?

MR. INCE: As I've said, Mr. Speaker, the licensees have been co-operating. That does not give me any reason to want to enforce, as I said. First of all I cannot enforce an archeologist being on-site; that is with the Department of Natural Resources, the licence goes under them. In terms of everything else under the Special Places Protection Act, everything is being covered. The Act is doing what it should do, and as I've mentioned to the member opposite, we will sit down later on today to talk about some of the concerns that she has with that particular Act. As I've said, the licensees are co-operating. They have given me no reason to want to try to enforce anything on them with regard to the Special Places Protection Act. Everything else is under the Oak Island Treasure Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

FOI MIN: EXPENSE CLAIM - REFILING CONFIRM

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. It sounded like he had changed his - and I'll ask the minister - did he refile his expense claim for the date that he had referenced, removing the \$200 bill from the restaurant that he had referenced, daMaurizio, I believe? The question is, in the expenses that he referenced, did the minister refile the expense claim to correct the previous error that he referenced?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, there was nothing to refile. The expense wasn't mine. There was actually a piece of paper there that was from a previous expensive from the previous minister, predating when I was even sworn into government. It was back from the summertime and that was the part that would not go out because it wasn't my expense and it wasn't under my name.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, the fact that the minister is involved in the process where he controlled the information that went out - and in this case we give the minister the benefit of the doubt - it was correct.

You know it's funny, Mr. Speaker, the government finds this unbelievable, yet in Opposition they found it unbelievable that we didn't have an independent freedom of information officer. So my question to the minister is, doesn't this highlight the problem

with the process, the fact that the minister had a chance to examine the documents before they went out and made a change to what the officer was going to send out in reply to a request of freedom of information?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, this shows the process is working. There was no change done because the actual information that was put in there by accident was not part of the request. Why am I going to reveal what the previous minister had spent when that wasn't the request? If the Opposition would like to know what the previous government was spending and their ministers, they can FOIPOP that too.

MR. MACMASTER: I think at the end of the day we're going to have to agree to disagree. I think what this brings into question is what other pieces of information are being reviewed before packages are sent out to people who request information, not just us but Nova Scotians are making these requests, too, from time to time. How can he address that point that still within this process, ministers are reviewing the information before it goes out to the public?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I review no information that goes out other than what pertains directly to me, which are my own expense reports. That is why when the Opposition had FOIPOP-ed the Nova Star ferry I knew nothing about it.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: ER ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT - ER CLOSURES

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the Accountability Report on Emergency Departments was released late last week, and in the report Nova Scotians learned that emergency rooms were closed unexpectedly in our province for the equivalent of 216 days and nights last year.

So my question to the minister is, does the minister think that Nova Scotians were well served if ERs were closed for the equivalent of seven months last year?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering, first of all, if that's the seven months that the former minister was occupying the office, because of course the year that the statistics speak to is 2013-14. That is an unacceptable number of hours that our ERs have been closed. Fortunately many are scheduled hours; also, as the former minister realizes, there are the unexpected and the anomalies that show up in that report.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my apologies to the member for Sackville-Cobequid as well.

As I mentioned, ERs in Nova Scotia were closed for 5,200 hours, or 216 days, or 7.2 months last year. Cape Breton emergency rooms accounted for 72 per cent of those closures - that's 156 nights and days, five months.

My question to the minister is, why is the minister allowing access to emergency rooms in Cape Breton to be far below the standard for the rest of the province?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, perhaps some of the closures can be attributed to the way in which politics interfered with Dr. Ross's work - I can assure the member opposite that that won't happen with this government.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I guess we'll have to watch that one as time goes on.

We know that three hospitals in the province have established regular hours of operation for the ERs or less than (Interruption) Do you want to ask a question, too? (Laughter) I'll ask later if she wants to rewrite them, but there you go.

I'll start again - three hospitals in the province have established regular hours of operations for their ERs of less than 24/7. One of the facilities was New Waterford Consolidated Hospital. The reasons for not providing overnight care include core staffing, nurse issues, instability from the public's perspective of when the emergency room would be open, and the difficulty meeting the needs of the community in which the facility was located. With so many unscheduled closures in Cape Breton, surely those facilities are facing more challenges.

How many more emergency rooms in Cape Breton is the minister going to move to scheduled hours of closure and how many Cape Breton communities will lose their overnight emergency hours, maybe like Glace Bay?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the member for Argyle-Barrington has asked a very, very important question. We know that the Cape Breton numbers are certainly not acceptable. I believe the new CEC model for New Waterford, with the component of an ambulance with an advanced care paramedic and nurse is starting to, I think, deliver very, very strong results.

However, in relation to all three hospitals and what the future will look like, I've already conferred with Dr. Ross on what should be the model for the future. As soon as the Fall session ends, along with the deputy minister's and Dr. Ross' input, we will take a look at what is best for Cape Breton.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: LAB SERVICES - CUTS

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Minister of Health and Wellness.

The Northside General Hospital is in dire need of the attention of this government. Frequent ER closures, overcrowding, diminishing services are taking their toll on the residents in the Northside.

Dr. Amanda Woodhouse spoke out about the problems facing the hospital and said the latest cut to lab services is another in a long list that could lead to the death of the Northside General Hospital. Dr. Woodhouse cites short-staffing in lab services, along with the installation of new blood testing machines that she indicates will increase costs and reduce the number of tests as a serious problem. Mr. Speaker, I'll table that document.

My question to the minister is, why is the minister allowing important lab services to be depleted at this hospital?

MR. GLAVINE: I know that Northside has been experiencing a number of issues over the last number of months. We also know that there is a new model of care in regard to diagnostic work. Some of that is taking place right across the province. The hope is, obviously, that it doesn't impact on good diagnostic work, or on staffing levels. That will be one of the issues when we visit Cape Breton in November.

MR. ORRELL: As stated earlier, the Northside General Hospital had the second-highest ER closures in the past year. The hospital has lost its maternity and paediatric wards and its intermediate critical care unit, and very soon lab services will be impacted, which will then affect the surgical unit. On top of that, there's overcrowding and understaffing.

Twenty doctors signed a letter to the minister last week outlining their concerns about what is happening in this hospital. Has the minister responded to the doctors, and will he table his response to the House this week?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, that correspondence has not come forward at this point, but I thank the member for raising an area that has multiple concerns. I know several of them can be addressed and will be addressed, and I look forward to a full exploration of Northside General.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, the people of Cape Breton, especially the people of the Northside, feel they deserve better than this. The hospital services a huge population, and health care needs to be available for people when they need it. With all the problems plaguing the hospital, Dr. Woodhouse says our biggest problem - our biggest concern - is, at what point do we start compromising patient safety, and are we already on that slippery

slope? This is coming from a doctor on the front lines of our health care system. This is unacceptable, and the government must take action.

So my question to the minister is, why is the minister allowing patient safety at the Northside General Hospital to be put in jeopardy, and what urgent action will he take right now to help remedy this situation?

MR. GLAVINE: I thank the member for bringing forth that issue. As we all know, that is great up-to-date information, and I will certainly respond to the doctors and clinicians who have raised issues. When I go to Cape Breton in November, I will certainly ask the member opposite to be part of those meetings as well.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS - EBOLA: N.S. - SUSPECTED CASE CONFIRM

HON. DAVID WILSON: I want to return to an answer I got from the minister on a previous question. Just for some clarification, can the Minister of Health and Wellness clarify in his response that he gave me that there was a suspected case of Ebola here in our province? Was that a correct comment from the Minister of Health and Wellness?

MR. GLAVINE: I certainly made no reference to a suspected case. I know there was a little bit of wonderment, maybe, earlier today, but I do have confirmation that there is no suspected case in Nova Scotia.

MR. DAVID WILSON: I thank the minister for that clarification, because it wasn't clear when you answered a previous question. One of the things I would like to know is, what steps are currently happening at the airport in Halifax to ensure that Nova Scotians are protected, and what involvement did the minister have with our federal counterparts to ensure that the proper procedures are in place at the airport today for the pre-screening of suspected Ebola cases?

MR. GLAVINE: This is an area that I have been referring to Dr. Strang, Chief Medical Officer. This is his area of expertise. He's in constant contact with national protocols that are being developed. We know that at airports there has been an additional stage of requirement now for anybody who has had any contact with these West African nations. I hope to get an update, in fact, later today from Dr. Strang on what is taking place, and I believe he is also presenting some additional information to the media today.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, we know the impact Ebola has on an individual and their family but more importantly on health care workers. I am wondering if the minister could confirm if there have been any alerts given out to all the hospitals and health care workers, paramedics, front-line health care individuals, men and women who might find themselves in contact with someone who might be able to get

through the screening process, because it's not a fail-safe test. I wonder if the minister could confirm that has taken place.

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, again the member opposite raises a great point because we know that there can be many different entry points into the province. Certainly at the present time, all information has been going out to the medical community on what to look for but obviously contact with people from the West African nations or having visited there, is the primary question that is being asked. Later today Dr. Strang will give additional information on the issue.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

FIN.: NATL. SECURITIES REGULATOR SYSTEM - JOINING

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan are the most recent provinces to become part of the National Securities Regulatory System. Concerns with the provincial system of securities regulation has led to repeated calls for a complete national securities system in Canada. My question today for the minister is, is Nova Scotia considering becoming part of the National Securities Regulatory System?

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. This is certainly a topical issue and one we're very interested in. We have not closed the door on any steps to join in the current movement towards the National Securities Regulator, but at this time we have not made any commitment to do so.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, a National Securities Regulatory System will provide better and more consistent protection for investors across Canada. It will also provide improved regulatory and criminal enforcement to better fight securities-related crime. Faster policy responses are expected from emerging market trends with a single national regulator. So my question for the minister is, does the minister not agree that there are many benefits to a National Regulatory System?

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, this is certainly an issue that I've taken a lot of time to look into and to learn more about. More recently, in June, I held a round table with about 20 people who were stakeholders of the securities commission, both large employers, CEDIFs, and lawyers that use the securities commission. They are very satisfied with the service that they get, the personalized service, the availability of a quick turnaround for their questions and needs, and overall very happy with the current system.

I would also say that the passport system that has been in place for the last 10 years has provided great coordination between all provinces. It has greatly changed the whole dialogue on what was previously a disconnected system. That's not the case anymore. I do

not believe that we have a system that is any way inferior to what the Opposition is suggesting.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, there are many benefits to a national system for both investors and for companies that are looking to raise money. I appreciate that the minister hasn't closed the door and I appreciate that the minister is doing some work on that issue. I wonder if the minister can tell this House when her department will come to a decision on whether to join on with the national system or not.

MS. WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, as I said, this is an issue that I've spent time on, that we have discussions on regularly. I would mention to the member opposite, and I'm sure he knows, all members of the House should know, we receive about \$15 million a year in revenue from having our own Nova Scotia Securities Commission and that's very significant at this point in time. At this point in time we need to look at whether or not there are benefits to joining into the national system and we have to weigh that against the cost of lost revenue in the future.

That's a big part of it; we certainly have the door open. We are having discussions at a number of levels, both staff level and political level, so we have not closed the door on that and we are certainly going to look at what's best for Nova Scotians.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: CANCER HOME MEDICATION - UPDATE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I think this is my question - no one wrote it for me.

Last week the minister was asked about the province's plan to design a more supportive and consistent plan around at-home medications for cancer care rather than going through the intravenous system for chemotherapy. He indicated the department was looking into it and would have an update soon. We know the challenge for many of the loved ones that we have that have to go through chemotherapy or cancer treatment and we know the time it takes to be at the hospital and go through that, as many of us have gone through - I spent a lot of time with Mum when she was getting her services.

Now that the minister has had a little bit of time to consult, I hope he had a little bit of time to ask that question back to his department - can he provide us with any more information on which direction his department is planning on taking?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I sincerely thank the member for bringing this question forward. It's always a very difficult time when any citizen of our province is informed of a cancer diagnosis, and even more concerning if they're not on an insurance

program, Seniors' Pharmacare, or private insurance that will look after paying for oral cancer medication.

So it is one now that the department is taking a look at and get, I guess, some kind of determination on how it can be addressed. We know that it's very unfortunate when a patient has to wait, perhaps in some cases, a couple of weeks before they can start their treatment, whereas if they were on IV chemotherapy they could literally go down the hallway or within a day or two they would be able to start their treatment.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: The CanCertainty Coalition has been very forthcoming with information about the hardship that so many Nova Scotians face with regard to the treatment outside the hospital, and you look at it and it doesn't make a whole lot of sense. If you have cancer, you're picked for a certain run of chemotherapy, you're going to go into that hospital, receive that intravenously without any real question and at a cost to the province. There is a cost to all these treatments - there is an overhead, there's space and heat and lights and nursing that goes along with this. If we had a pill and they could go home with it, what better way to be able to be with your family and be at home during this very tough time of cancer treatment?

Given that there are so many experts in this area with valid suggestions, will the minister guarantee that he will allow input from these experts as the department moves forward with policy changes?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, in fact I was very surprised that this issue hadn't been brought forward - I certainly, as minister, did not know that in fact there wasn't the kind of coverage for IV chemo. We've already had a couple of oncologists, Mary Lou Robertson as well, we've had a very preliminary meeting with, but certainly a number of stakeholders that can provide the best information, best suggestions, on how to deal with this issue is certainly part of the department's plan.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, quite honestly this one also falls into the issue of catastrophic drug coverage because by all indication many of these drugs are extremely expensive as they go home. It goes to the oddity of our health system that if you're in the hospital you get to receive all those drugs and treatments for free, supposedly, but if you go home you have to pay for them. We need to find a better way to do that.

Our province should be in place with modern technology to make sure that Nova Scotians receive the care that they need in the most appropriate environment, and this should be a top priority for this government and all governments across Canada. Will the minister provide a date for the completion of the cost analysis - I know that these are just getting going in his department, but can he maybe give us an idea how long that might take and when he will make that information public as soon as he has information as well?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, it is quite an oddity, if you wish, in our system. However, we're not alone. Only provinces west of Ontario are currently covering oral cancer treatments. It is an area now that we will explore.

I am pleased to say that at the present time about \$10 million a year does go into providing oral cancer treatments for Nova Scotians. Really the big gap is the timeline after diagnosis that people are identified as being on some plan. Because of the nature of the disease, we actually have some of the pharmaceutical companies that also have a plan to support treatments.

At the present time we are doing the exploration. We're also fortunate to be taking a look with other Maritime Provinces as well, so after the meeting in late October with the other Maritime Provinces, we will be able to have some better information to inform the House and all Nova Scotians.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS: GIRLS HPV VACCINATION - COST

HON. GORDIE GOSSE: On the 15th question of the day, Mr. Speaker. My question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Would the Minister of Health and Wellness be able to tell us here today what is the cost of the HPV vaccination for girls in the Province of Nova Scotia?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I'll have to get back to the good member opposite with that information tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. The time allotted for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers has expired.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Resolution No. 1

Res. No. 1, House of Assembly Rules - Amend - notice given Sept. 26/14 - (Hon. M. Samson)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East, who has 20 minutes left.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise today and continue with a few words on this Resolution No. 1 around House Rules and House operation. I think everyone in this Chamber accepts that we need to find ways for this House to operate more effectively, and in fact we should all be doing that all the time. I know people in businesses are always looking internally saying how can we do that a little smoother, how can we do that a little more effectively? We probably do that in our personal lives with things we have to do and say what's the best and most effective way to do that?

The business that is done in this House is very important business because it impacts every Nova Scotian. The decisions made on the floor of this House of Assembly impact every Nova Scotian, or have the potential to impact every Nova Scotian, there is no question about that, so they are very important decisions.

I know as MLAs we have work we do in our constituencies and we have work we do here in the Legislature and they are both very important to all the people we impact. Mr. Speaker, when we look at the work that is done here, we can't say it's more important or less important than the work done in our constituencies because a decision that is made here can change the life of somebody out in our constituency, can change the way things happen in our constituency, so they're both important. I agree we should look for ways to do things here more effectively, just like we do in our constituencies.

Maybe doing things more effectively means different things to different people. To me, doing something more effectively means working a little smarter, working a little better, but it doesn't mean working less. So when we talk about the hours of this House or the days that this House is in operation, just saying in isolation, well, let's work fewer days, that doesn't do it for me, Mr. Speaker, and that doesn't do it for Nova Scotians because we shouldn't be looking at how we spend less time here. We should certainly be looking at how we spend our time here more effectively, but we shouldn't be looking at how we spend less time here.

It's not about working more or working less. It's about getting the work that is important to Nova Scotians done, and that's all we're doing here. We're all trying to find a way to make the lives of Nova Scotians a little bit better in our own special way, in our own way that we have the power to make change. That's what we're trying to do.

We should be in here bringing a voice to Nova Scotians. The work that's done in this Chamber can only be done here. The work that's done in this Chamber should be done fairly, and it should be done methodically, and it should be done to get the results that Nova Scotians need and that Nova Scotians deserve.

What we need to do is find ways to give people more time to stand up in this Chamber and bring the voices of their constituents to the floor of this House for consideration. That's what we really should be doing. We're all representing our constituents, and we all need to be able to bring their voices forward.

We just went through Question Period. I asked the question about the national securities regulator and that system. I don't know how long my question was, how long I had for my question, but I'm going to say it was probably three or four minutes back and forth that we had a little chat about the national securities regulator. Well, we understand that that's a type of a decision that the department is looking at, is having some meetings with stakeholders and are talking to people. I didn't know that. I'm sure the average Nova Scotian didn't know that. There are a lot of stockbrokers around the province.

If you're a stockbroker here in Halifax and you have a client who is from Ontario or somewhere else, we have to register with all those different provincial bodies now, and there are fees associated with all that. I wonder if all those stockbrokers know that there is discussion about that and how the government is feeling about that. Maybe that's something they have some valuable information on. In the absence of Nova Scotians getting to speak directly to the government, they want to turn to their representatives to speak to the government on their behalf. We need more of that, not less of that.

Just on that issue of the national securities regulator, the Finance and Treasury Board Minister said that the province raises \$50 million a year from that program. Well, that raises a couple of questions. But before we get into the issues of the costs and the benefits - the \$50 million is a benefit to the province, but what's the cost of getting that benefit? There is always a cost and a benefit, but we know that the \$50 million comes from somewhere. Do we know where it comes from? Well, it comes from the job creators. The job creators are the ones that are paying that fee of \$50 million to the province.

It's a tax, Madam Speaker, so if we look at that tax and we say the job creators are paying a \$50 million tax for the privilege of doing business here, then we need to figure out what the cost of that is.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. The member for Pictou East may have missed the memo, but we're currently speaking on an amendment to Resolution No. 1. I don't believe I've heard him even make mention to that amendment - which should be the primary focus of his debate in the House today, not securities regulation in this province.

I would hope you would guide him a bit toward what he should actually be focusing on, which is the amendment proposed to Resolution No. 1.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: I would recommend that all members of the House speak to the amendment on the resolution.

The honourable member for Pictou East has the floor.

MR. HOUSTON: Madam Speaker, I do thank the honourable Government House Leader for that guidance. I do always appreciate guidance that is so well placed.

The issue we are talking about here is what happens in this House: what happens in this House in the time we have available in this House to talk about things, how the House operates, what are the rules that we are governed by in this House? The point I'm trying to make is there is lots of business to bring forward to this floor. There are lots of things we should be talking about so when I talk about some of the things that we should be talking about, I do feel that I am talking directly to the amendment and the rules that we're governed by in here.

I think of many things that my constituents would like me to bring forward, and would like me to talk about, and a change of the rules has the potential to impede that. I don't want to put anything in my way that gives any member of this House the opportunity to speak about things on this floor that are important to Nova Scotians. I would encourage more discussion in this Chamber and not less. That's what I am talking about and I hope you will see the importance of that discussion and also the relevance of that discussion.

We could be talking about important matters of job creation in here, of matters of balancing the budget. We know the government has had a couple of kicks at the can of getting expenses in line. We heard before that they are going to reel in expenses, departmental spending by 5 per cent. Well, that didn't work. That is something I would have liked to talk about on the floor of this Chamber at great length because just because you're elected - I think every member here would agree with this - just because you're elected, it doesn't mean you have all the answers. I know there are people who stop their MLA all across the province to say tell me about this or what about this? Quite often it's something we just don't know about, but we go and find out and we come back to our constituents with an answer but on the spot, maybe we just don't have it.

There are possibly some career politicians amongst us who may be familiar with all those different ins and outs of different programs and stuff but for the most part it's new to us in many ways. So just because you're elected, it doesn't mean you have all the answers and just because you're elected to government, that certainly doesn't mean you have all the answers. Every member in this Chamber has ideas on things and they have constituents who have ideas on things. There are over 900,000 idea-generators across the province who are funnelling ideas down to their MLA and asking them to bring them forward. At this stage, in this province, we should be given more opportunity for those ideas to be discussed in here, not less.

We need more time for discussion and a nice little by-product of more discussion might be a smidgen more listening. If we could have people listen to some of the ideas maybe they'll say, you know what? That's not a bad idea. That's in the interests of Nova

Scotians. That's the issue here - how do we give voice to the ordinary Nova Scotian? Nova Scotians are looking to their government for leadership, but they are looking to their government for compassion and understanding as well so that's the part where we bring something forward. We have a number of bills on the docket here to be discussed and I know there are a couple of them that I had constituents specifically say to me, has that bill come up for reading? Did you have this? This is why I'm interested in that. Do you have some comments on that?

I listen to them and I take notes down and I look them in the eye and I say, if I get a chance, I will bring your concerns on this bill forward. I'll talk about them right on the floor of the House. It's amazing what that means to Nova Scotians, to think that somebody is listening to them and will take their concern right to the floor.

I want more opportunity to do that, Madam Speaker, not less, so if we're going to look at how this House operates - I think everyone is in agreement that we can do better here, that we should do better, and that we owe it to Nova Scotians to try to do better on some things. There is some agreement on some of the things that can make it better. And on the other issues, well, what I'd rather see, Madam Speaker, is instead of just throwing your hands up in the air and saying, well, if I don't get my way then we get nothing - well, that's not progress. I'd rather see some effort at understanding why it is that you feel so strongly about that. What is it? Is there somewhere in the middle where we can have a win-win? It doesn't always have to be win-lose. It can be win-win.

In my short time that I've had here, I've been quite surprised at some of the ways this House operates. I've been quite surprised to see some of the things that I've seen rammed through here without any consideration for the concerns of average Nova Scotians.

If you give somebody an opportunity to talk and you don't agree with them, well, just tell them you don't agree with them. But to say, I'm not even going to give you time to talk, I'm not even going to give your thoughts one millisecond of consideration, well, that's offensive. We need to find the opportunity to let Nova Scotians have their voices heard through this House of Assembly - which is their House of Assembly. It's the people's House, they say.

Madam Speaker, I'm in favour of many things that help make it run a little more smoothly. I would love to see - I remember on my first day in this Chamber, the member for Dartmouth South, I believe, gave a very impassioned Address in Reply speech his first time around. The second time around was equally impassioned, but I think the Communications department had scripted a lot of notes in there for him. But one of the comments that stuck with me from his first one was about how a good idea is a good idea, no matter where it comes from. I think that that is the point: a good idea is a good idea, no matter where it comes from, and we need to listen to ideas in this House. (Interruption)

Well, the Minister of Natural Resources, having sat for some time in Opposition and having sat under a different Leader, has an idea as to how things operate, but I have a different idea of how things operate, Madam Speaker. My experiences in my short time here - maybe I'm naïve, but the point is that we should be letting members speak to issues, we should be listening to what they say, and we should be evaluating.

We've had lots of opportunity for the government to show that they are willing to do that, but they've been unwilling to. So I don't think we should let this be another situation where something just gets rammed through and things change. I mean, changing the operation and the rules, changing the way that this House operates, that's pretty significant, Madam Speaker. That's pretty significant, because it does impact everything that happens in here. I'd like to see more time for discussion on issues, and if we want to fine-tune the ways and make the House work more effectively, well, then maybe that opens up more time for discussion.

I don't want to see that time just wiped away. I would rather see that time - that we've now done things better, we have more time, let's talk about more things. Let's talk about more things that are important to Nova Scotians. Let's not find ways to talk about fewer things. Let's find ways to talk about things better, things that matter to people. Because there are lots of things that matter to Nova Scotians that never even come close to this floor, never even come close, and the reason is that there is no time. There's no time to talk about those things. Well, let's make the rules more effective and let's have a by-product of that be to create more time that we can use to discuss things that matter to Nova Scotians. So with those few short words, in my limited amount of time, Madam Speaker, I would thank you for your indulgence this morning.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: I wasn't sure if I was going to speak to this resolution or not. I've been listening for the last few days and I don't really know where to begin, there's so much stuff I've heard. I'm trying to think, where do I start? I heard a great story the other day that the honourable member for Queens-Shelburne gave, on time. Well, there is something to be said for time, there's no question. I hear a lot about time and the last speaker, the member for Pictou East was up talking and almost made us want to believe, in this House, that we did not have time to get on our feet to speak.

Madam Speaker, I've been here eight-plus years now, a few months, and I don't recall one time that I wasn't able to stand in my place and speak to any bill, any resolution or any topic at all in this House, including the days when I was in government in 2006, 2007, 2008. I would get up at the end of late debate when there were only one or two minutes. My job, really, was to make sure that the clock was fulfilled. Some people might think that doesn't happen in here. Well, I can assure you, in certain situations, maybe more in the minority situation, things do happen in here and the House does run differently. That's okay too.

But there was no time, ever that I can recall, not being able to get up and have a few words on something, for five minutes or for 55 minutes, or whatever I wanted. We do that on behalf of all of those people that send us here. Nobody has ever said to me, sit down. And I may have heard that chirped across in the hotter moments in this place, from time to time - but you know what? In all honesty and in all sincerity, I don't think that anyone, ever, was told that they couldn't have a say.

So, we talk about time in this House - and again, I've been here for eight-plus years and some now, and through all, when the Tories sat over there and I was part of that team, and when the NDP sat over there and I was not part of that team, and now that the Liberals are sitting over there, and probably years before I ever entered these doors, we could talk about Mondays. I've seen everything from 20 minutes to two hours, to an hour and a half. It doesn't matter who's over on that side. I want to be very clear to the people that are listening today, that has not mattered in the time that I've been here, and I'm not saying that that is right, or that is wrong. I have not seen one member - very seldom have I seen one member - get up an hour into a Monday night, other than to leave, and go Aye to the motion to move to tomorrow - that being Tuesday - many, many times from many different Parties, all three Parties out of my time, sat on the government side of that House - that has been done, rightly or wrongly.

When I look at the Rules of this House, they have been discussed for a long time. Changes have been talked about quietly behind the scenes between House Leaders of all governments and Opposition Parties. This is reality in this place in this province, Madam Speaker. Let's not kid ourselves. It's time to get it done. Something has to change in the way we operate, whether it's Monday in, or Monday out, or whatever it might be. This has gone on for far too long. And you need only talk to the people where we live to say, what are you doing? Some people know we're here - very few, in all honesty. They ask if you're in session, or not. Some will ask it in July, perhaps thinking, maybe, we're here.

Some will ask it now, if they're watching the news, they see that we're around, or in the Spring when the budget is on, more likely to know that we're here in the House in Halifax, and how things are going, and so on. That's all good. Not one person has ever said to me that it matters how many days, or what days of the week they are, or how many hours it is. I'll tell you what Nova Scotians care about, from the people that I talk to, and I ask the questions, because this has been debated now for years and each time that it comes up we sort of put feelers out and say, what do people think? And most recently, we've done the same.

Here's what the people that I've talked to think - some of it, I probably couldn't repeat in here. I wouldn't be parliamentary. Others who are involved and who are watching expect us to come here and make decisions and policy and legislation and resolutions, and whatever our business might be in an effort to better this province and the people in it. That's what they expect. Nobody has said, oh you should only work four days or three days or five days - nobody has ever said that - or seven days.

We look at other opportunities throughout the country on a national level - Ottawa sits, I think, two weeks on, a week off, something like that. The reason they do that is that they need to get work done at home in their constituencies, in their ridings. Now for people in Nova Scotia, I think the farthest is five and half, six hours away, that's probably Glace Bay - I'm looking at the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal over there who is likely one of the farthest drives. And Yarmouth would be another one. They're all long, some days, they're all long.

There is a required time. The business at home in our constituencies, just in case anybody doesn't realize this, does not stop when the doors of this House open, whether it is Spring or Fall or summer or whenever it is. People expect us to be present; they expect us to look after the issues as we always do. I don't think, again, that it matters to them so long as they're being looked after in an efficient way and in an accountable way.

You need only look at what it might cost to open the doors to come in here on a Monday evening and it would probably scare you if you had taken the time to do that. Whether we're here for an hour, two hours, three hours, whatever it might be, there's an associated cost that goes along with that. It would be a rare occurrence, and I've not gone back through the Hansard - perhaps I should have - but from memory the amount of times I've sat in this House on a Monday night from 4:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m., or 7:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m., unless there was a major debate going on, and that has happened in the past and even if the Mondays went away or went to committee or whatever is being suggested here, there would be an opportunity to still come back to work here on Monday nights if need be for debate, or if there was something important on the go.

The government has the ability anytime they want, and we've seen that over the years, whether it be July in a strike issue or the paramedics or whatever the date might be. I remember coming into this House for the first time in the Spring - summer, I should say, in the hot summer of 2006 after that election. My first time in here was in July. There's nothing saying we have to sit however many days. I guess there is, but the tradition has continued - what are we? - for 255 years in this historical Chamber now or so, thereabouts.

We do have to think about the people we represent. We do have to think about doing the right thing on their behalf whether that's Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, whatever that is, if there's a certain number of hours that is required, and certainly there has been a number put forward by the government that they would like to see. I listened to the last speaker, and the more I listened, I thought time, time, time. Well, okay, time on Tuesday, time on Monday, time on Wednesday, there's a substantial amount, there's 24 hours in every one of those days and I guess most recently some of us have sat here near that in past months, and that's okay too - if that's what it takes to get the people's business done in that House and in the right way, fine and dandy, let's do that. (Interruption)

So I'm being asked questions on the side here, that's all right, people are free to get up and ask questions if they so like, and perhaps those are questions that should get asked. Nothing wrong with that, anybody can stand up when they get the time and they haven't expended their hour. Maybe that question was asked. Bills do go through this House, but you know what? I've seen bills go through this House in seconds, minutes, not one person who has by the way - all 51 members have an hour on each part of that, through every section of the bill.

Second reading, third reading, Committee the Whole, you could all stand for an hour and talk away if it's important to you. Get up and talk on behalf of your people - make your points. Nothing wrong with that. How often we have seen - and I'll speak, I won't even say "we," I'll say "me," I'll tell you this, the one thing that we don't see very often is people getting up to speak to bills at length, on occasion, when they are important to people and they are controversial, as we've seen in the past, so be it, they should get up and they should talk.

It doesn't matter how, you don't have to talk an hour, you can talk 10 minutes and be very effective in the message that you are delivering on behalf of the people you represent. An hour has nothing to do with it, but you do have the ability to get up for an hour and speak on every one of those second, third, Committee the Whole. There are other means, as we've seen recently, to move that time out farther. There are things like hoist. Know the Rule Book, grab it, read it if you haven't. I would recommend that to everybody.

I learned by fire coming into this place. At the time we came in here I was the Deputy House Leader for the government and knew nothing. You had to learn in a hurry because if the deputy or the House Leader wasn't here, they were looking at you, Madam Speaker, and I can relate to those who have done that job, sometimes not so much fun, and if you're going to do it right you had better know the Rules of this House and how it operates. You had better know what the team wants, what bills are going to be called, and how long people can speak to them.

I've not once, but many, many times I have seen bill after bill go through this House, resolution after resolution go through this House, and not one person get up and talk to it. I'm not saying that's right, Madam Speaker, because it's not. Those are bills that are of some value.

We would like to think, as would all Nova Scotians who sent us here, that every bill that goes through this House is of some value in one way, shape or form. Even if there are only a few words changing in a bill, a piece of legislation that may have been around for many years, decades, you may be changing a sentence, there could be a great amount of value in that. There could be a lot to talk about in that, believe it or not, but we tend not to or we tend to talk very little. That is our own ability, our own doing, if we so choose, and our fault if we don't. A bill goes through here and you can stand up all you want afterward and

you can complain about that, if you like, to no avail because it's gone; you had the opportunity.

I struggle with hearing people talk about not enough time, not enough time. Well I heard the member for Argyle-Barrington speak on Friday and he talked about the optic of how this place works - let's call it what it is, the optic of how this place works. He talked about October, November - September, coming in the last week and it will make it look like we were here for three months. Well, you know, let's just call it what it is, Madam Speaker, for anybody who wants to go there.

I've been here eight years and three months and 25 days or something like that now, I have seen the same thing every time. Whether it's Spring or Fall, we come in and we present an optic that we're going to be here for months. Sometimes we have been here weeks and we all know it. So the number of days in that week, if you're working four instead of five - if you want to call it working - if you come in here to debate the people's business four days instead of five, perhaps you are extended out now instead of seven or eight or nine weeks to 10 or 12 weeks, whatever it might be.

There are all kinds of things you could look at by way of reform, Madam Speaker. It doesn't necessarily just have to be what's currently written in the resolution; there are all kinds of options. I know at one point in this House the government sat once a year. I'm not sure how that went, it was before my time. Obviously there was a need to see it sit twice. Some people might want it to sit six months at a minimum, seven months, or eight months.

Some people think - and I know what the fear is of those who have stood - some people think if you're not in Halifax in the House, you are not working. Well anyone who has ever come into your office, Madam Speaker - and I can't speak for what your office is like or anyone else's, I'll only speak for mine - we're busy. Times have been tough the last few years. People are coming in and they are looking for anything and everything by way of assistance, help, whether it's a job, trying to find a place to live, seniors looking for housing, and I could go on. We all know what those issues are. They are daily and you don't have to book appointments; they are one after the other walking into your office some days. You don't have to book any appointments, you can stay busy.

As I said early on in this part of my talk this morning, this afternoon, whatever it is now, people expect us to be available to look after those needs, whether it's Monday, Wednesday, Friday, or Saturday. Saturday is my busiest day of the week, in all honesty, and it has been since I've been elected. I don't know what other members do, Madam Speaker, I don't know what you do on Saturdays. I know that for the most part, Saturday, every week, every month, is my busiest day of the week.

Add that on top of all the constituency work that you'll do during your day - I do home visits sometimes in the evenings because people can't get out. I don't know what

other members do; I only know what I do, as I said, Madam Speaker. You work that in around everything else because that is what our job is.

Now I heard others talk in this place, maybe not knowing what their job is. Perhaps there should be a handbook. Maybe somebody could write one on how to be an MLA in the Province of Nova Scotia. When I was first elected, Ron had retired. When I walked into the office after election night he said - meet me tomorrow morning and it's still my office - meet me tomorrow morning in my office at eight o'clock. One hour later Ron was gone. I had three names of regulars who would come in, and phone numbers, that was it. We had no: here's what you do in this situation or that situation or any other kind of situation for that matter. It would have been nice but learn by trial and error, I guess, as you go along - sometimes by a little fire too. But it's not really that difficult to be able to help people out. That's why we all came here. That was the gist of it in the beginning, at least.

Whether the Rules in this House are Monday to Friday, so many hours a day, whether they're Tuesday to Friday, Wednesday to Friday - I never heard one person, Madam Speaker, complain about having yesterday off. It was Monday. I haven't heard one person raise the issue of having Friday this week, where there is a parliamentary conference. Not one person has raised that issue in any of the debate that we've had.

Are you saying that because we had Monday - Thanksgiving Day - off and Friday off for the parliamentary conference, we cannot get the people's work done in this House this week? Is that what we're saying? Perhaps that's why the hours are extended until 10 o'clock this evening. I don't know. Maybe they'll be extended on Thursday as well. That's fine.

If we need to extend the hours in this House, whether they're on Monday, Friday, Thursday - we've seen it at all days, Madam Speaker, around the clock here. We can come back any day or any night to do the business that needs to be done, if there is that urgency. If it's not urgent, great, carry it on for more weeks. There is nothing saying that I have to be out of here on November 1st or November 10th - or December 1st, for that matter.

AN HON. MEMBER: How many bills have you put in?

MR. PORTER: How many bills did I put in?

AN HON. MEMBER: This session.

MR. PORTER: This session I have put in four bills.

AN HON. MEMBER: How many did we discuss?

MR. PORTER: We haven't discussed any as of yet. Is there hope (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The member for Hants West has the floor.

MR. PORTER: I guess I'm upsetting someone. He wants to know how many bills have been - well, I'll put it to the honourable member this way. I'm hopeful. I'm actually hopeful of having some debate on bills that I do put forward in this Legislature, because I take the time to do the research and I talk to the people, and those bills are all reflective of the people that I represent.

That's what those bills are, Madam Speaker. What other members do, I can't speak to. He can heckle all he wants about that stuff, but I know, because I've been here, how it does work and how it should work.

There is a reason that I have been here three times around. It's because you are working for the people. That's what they want. You need only go and talk to them, whether it's at home, coffee shops, your constituency office, or on the street. It's not that hard. When you're putting forward resolutions on behalf of people, it's one of the best parts of my job. People ask me, they'll call me after they get a copy of that, and they're amazed that we would actually come in here and do something like that - and we've heard talk about resolutions and how non-important some people think they are, perhaps.

Actually, they're taken very, very sincerely. People love those things. It's a great honour to be able to come in here - and I tell them that - to put forward a bit of recognition for the great people working hard in our communities. That's what those are about. Now, if that changes, that process, I'm not opposed to that, other than if you're not going to get up and read them or you can read a few or they're all put forward and passed the same way. It's the same piece whether I table them or I stand in my place and I read them. There are quite a few at times, Madam Speaker, through sessions here, that I have put through. It has had nothing to do with actually reading them all. Sometimes there isn't time. Sometimes they're long, and the Clerk will be looking at you, or the Speaker, saying that's more than the one minute allocated.

I actually look forward to doing something a little different, like the Statements by Members, if we actually go there. There may be something in that. Maybe it's a different opportunity, but we're afraid of opportunity sometimes, I guess, or we're afraid of change, or we're afraid for our political skins, Madam Speaker. There you go. Might as well call it what it is. We're all worried about what people are going to think at home. Ask around, and you'll soon find out what people at home think.

In between sessions, you know, we sit in Spring here - I never counted the weeks in the Spring, how long we sat, and I haven't counted Fall, how long we'll sit. Past years I probably haven't counted either. But again, it's not about just being here. There is a job outside of this House, as well, that must get done, and does get done, and can get done while we're sitting in this Legislature, and it can get done well also.

We have good CAs who are helping us out back at home in our offices all over the province. People want to do more than just talk to them on the phone. They want to see you. Monday may be that opportunity - may very well be that opportunity, if this passes.

So I would ask people to think about the time. If they're not happy with the hours that have been set, maybe, in the Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, or whatever the balance of days might be, then let's talk about the hours set for debate. Would I like to extend the hours to talk about the bills that I put forward? You bet. I'll be here; just tell me. No question around that. Perhaps we should be talking about altering it or amending it that way, as opposed to being concerned with the number of days.

There is a lot of important business that the Opposition has put forward by way of bills. I don't think anyone would argue that. I think that there are a lot of good bills that go forward from members that stand in their place. I would certainly love to - and I've said this all along, this would not be new to anyone either - I've said it would be nice for Opposition members to be able to get bills through this House.

Over the years we have seen Opposition members get bills through this House, although not the norm, as we all know, it doesn't happen near what it could happen. Perhaps there is too much politics involved in that and I've said in past statements, perhaps taking the politics out of this historic Chamber you might actually get something done for Nova Scotians in this House. Maybe not, maybe the theme would be the same but I would think there's an opportunity there for change.

Change can sometimes be a good thing. I know that people are often hesitant, it's just our nature, we're all human; it's our nature to be worried about change and what it might bring. People, they all worry, it doesn't matter who you talk to but change can sometimes be a good thing, a positive thing. At least looking at it can be a positive change. Maybe we should be saying to the government and to the Government House Leader in what he's putting forward, let's try it and if it doesn't work, maybe we should look at something else. I've not heard anyone say that.

It's just, no, can't do it because we're worried about Monday. (Interruption) Well, maybe he would, I don't know. Oh, really, I think I've heard a lot of worries about Monday in the optic - that's what I keep hearing. (Interruptions) If the hours are the issue then, why are we not talking about the days of the week because the days of the week seem to be a problem here. You can't have it both ways, member, with all due respect, you can't have it both ways.

You can't get up and say we're not going to let the change happen and we're going to - come on, let's get back to reality here and let's talk about the 21st Century and looking after Nova Scotians in our constituencies in the time that's allocated during the House sitting and the time that's needed. It needs to be done. They want to see you. Is it enough time? Some weeks it might be, some weeks it probably isn't, actually, I know it isn't

because we put them out until the next Monday when we might have an opportunity to be there.

I guess that having said what I've said, most people would say I guess he's supporting the resolution. Well, I'm going to tell you straight up, yes, I'm supporting this resolution, there's no question. I believe it's time for a change in this House and that we should take advantage of an opportunity to see what it might be. We may find that it just doesn't work, we may find that the hours continue to get extended through Tuesdays and Thursdays, and maybe we should come back to Monday.

The other option is, the Government House Leader has the option not to call Monday nights if he really didn't want to. He could leave here Friday and call Tuesday if it mattered that much, those options could be considered, I think you can do that within the rules. You could run any number of weeks that you wanted to. If there is business to be done, then let's be here to do it; if there's not business to be done, then people would ask then why are you there?

As I said, I didn't really plan to get up and say too much, I wasn't sure if I was going to speak to this resolution or not. I'm sure that there will be others who will get up and they can be as critical as they like of my comments, I'm okay with that, that wouldn't be the first time that's happened either, in all honesty. That's just the way it is in here and that's okay because that's their right to speak on their behalf and the people they represent and to share their opinions and to take the time. But I want to stress again that I don't recall a time when the government has ever said to us over here that we should pass on a bill, we shouldn't speak to it, or you've got five minutes.

The order paper is full of bills, you could get up and speak to anything. The Opposition has Wednesdays to call them. Maybe we should be arguing more time on Wednesdays if that's going to continue to be Opposition Day. Maybe as members of the Opposition we should be saying, great, let's extend Wednesdays to be noon to 6:00 p.m. or noon to 8:00 p.m. or extend the business of Opposition Day. I think we're wide open to debate during our time here on our feet - we might actually make a comment or two that they go, oh, never thought of that. Maybe we could.

Instead, maybe we're going to be cynical and just say we're just wasting our time, we're talking it out, it's going to get voted on, at some point it will pass anyway. That will be that. Maybe it will, maybe it will. That will have to be okay, too, because we'll have to accept that, that's the situation when you're in a minority - and I've been in here under a minority situation and the majority situation and it is a truly different place, there is no question. There are a lot of things that go different here in a minority situation. You feel like you have more opportunity sometimes, you have more say.

One thing is for certain, minority or majority, you always have an opportunity to have your say. With those few words, Madam Speaker, I will take my seat.

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I recognize the next honourable member, I'd like to just to remind that this debate is on the amendment to the resolution, not the resolution, itself.

The honourable Interim Leader of the New Democratic Party.

HON. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I rise in my place and participate in this debate with great interest. I very much enjoyed listening to the previous number of speakers on this particular motion. You know, I've been here for a while and I've sat through debates and days in this House when, I have to confess, I wished I was someplace else, and I felt I probably could have been getting a lot more done if I had been someplace else. But when I reflect back on the time that I have spent here in session, I enjoy coming to this place, I feel very honoured and privileged to have the opportunity to come here, and I value what goes on in this place.

I know that I'm probably in a minority, in some ways, in our province when I say that. There's a lot of cynicism and there's a lot of negativity, and even a lot of denigration of what goes on here in this place, and sometimes even directed at the people who are fortunate enough to be elected here and who come here and do the best that we can to represent our constituents and our province. I think it's really important that we recognize that in a democracy - especially in a democracy where you have majority governments, primarily, as a rule - the legislative process is not only important for the way that government changes legislation that has an impact on people, but it's extremely important in terms of the opportunity to hold the government to account, and to examine the choices that a government is making, in terms of the exercise of power that has a significant impact on people's lives.

In that process, the way this place works is very important because it is often the Opposition that is very limited in the tools it has available to it to exercise its responsibility to hold the government to account. For that reason, the rules of this Chamber are important.

The motion that we are debating here is a motion that would send the government's resolution for a change in the rules to an all-Party committee that would be able to take some time to study the proposal, that would be able to take some time to do a bit more background research, that would take some time to consult with the public, perhaps with some experts, some parliamentary experts, people in the political science community, perhaps members of the media. There are many, many people who have a stake in what occurs in this Chamber when we're in session.

The people of the province obviously have a great stake in whether or not there is ample opportunity for those of us who have been given the responsibility to hold the government to account, time to do that, and the way in which we do that is very important as well.

I listened to the former speaker and I think he is absolutely right, the public is more interested in the outcome than the process and so should they be. They don't have to come here and work through this process, I think it's our responsibility, as people who are actually in this place, to have a better appreciation, a greater handle on the importance of this process.

I remember when I was first elected to this Chamber, Madam Speaker. I was elected in a minority government and shortly after that we had - I think 16 months later - a majority government and the difference between those two governments was quite significant just in terms of the way things worked here in the Chamber. I can remember on many occasions in those early years when the governments were doing fairly controversial measures that were having a significant impact on the people in the province. I remember a budget, for example, an Education budget, that reduced funding to the school boards, and the streets around Province House being full of teachers and parents and students and other members of our province who were concerned about the impact of these budget changes.

All the time that this was occurring, the Opposition were using the tools available to us to hold the government to account for their decision but, frankly, to slow the process down to give the government some opportunity to meet with people and have a sober second thought in terms of the impact of that budget.

I remember a person in this Chamber whom those of us who were privileged enough to serve with her and to have had the opportunity to know this woman - Jane Purves who was the member for Halifax Citadel and the Minister of Education - I remember so clearly meeting with a group of parents whose children were deaf and hard of hearing. They had lost in that budget cut I think about \$0.5 million from the APSEA budget. As the Education Critic for the Official Opposition Party, I met with a group of about 17 parents one evening and I said to them, you need to come to the Legislature, you need to meet with the Minister of Education, you need to tell her what the impact of these changes will be on your children and your families. She is a smart woman, she is a decent woman, she is a compassionate woman, and I believe if she meets with you, she will do her best to address your concerns.

The parents said to me oh, we can't do that, we're not people who feel comfortable protesting. I said to them, you don't have to protest, you don't have to be out on the street. If that's not what you're comfortable doing, there are other ways - but because we're in the Legislature, because all the focus is on the Legislature and people are there and we know where to find them, their schedules are open, their schedules are only available for being in the Legislature at this time. It's the best time to come and meet. You really need to pursue this, and I will help you do that.

I spoke to the Minister of Education, Ms. Purves, and the parents came down. She went downstairs into one of the small meeting rooms and met with the parents. When they left that room she had given them her commitment to restore half of the money that had

been cut from the program that they were concerned about. They were absolutely thrilled. You can only imagine how happy they were at that outcome.

One of the members of that group stopped me on the stairs as I was leaving later in the afternoon, and she said to me, I want to thank you for encouraging and supporting us to come and meet with Ms. Purves and for arranging that meeting. Then she told me that she worked in a very senior administrative role in a minister's office as an executive assistant. She had worked for government in that capacity for close to 27 years. She said, I have been in this job for a long time, and I had no idea how the Legislature worked. I had no idea that when people are in debate across the floor, in a sometimes seemingly nonsensical, boring, ridiculous exchange, real work is happening that actually makes a difference in people's lives. She said, I suddenly understood that there's a lot of activity going on that you don't see, that you need to look deeper, you need to have a deeper appreciation.

I can tell many, many stories to the members in this House that are very similar to that story. When we're in debate in here, it is an important part of our process, but the process is much deeper than the debate that occurs here. As I said, the tools that the Opposition have in a democratic system are limited tools. The use of time in a debate is one of the tools that the Opposition has to allow for people, groups, and organizations to be here, in our House of Assembly, explaining to the government what the impact of their decisions is on people, explaining to the members of the Opposition why it's important for the Opposition to keep pressure on the government around a whole variety of issues.

Now, is it the case that things should just stay the same, that there should never be any change, that the rules as they currently exist are just fine? I would say no. I think we need to constantly be looking at ways to improve our process here in the House of Assembly and our caucus certainly has had discussions about the government proposal and we, like members of the Official Opposition, are prepared to make changes.

However, there are some aspects of the government's proposals that we find not palatable and that could have a really deleterious effect on the tools that the Opposition have with respect to holding the government accountable. You know, I was reading - a former member of this House, Jeremy Akerman, has written a book called *What Have You Done for Me Lately?*, I think. It's a great little read if members haven't read it. It was written quite a long time ago but I'm struck when I read it about how relevant, in many respects, that book is to the practice of politics in this House and beyond today.

He has a chapter in there that talks, in fact, about resolutions, or he makes reference in his book to resolutions and the fact that resolutions actually are a tool for the Opposition, they are a tool that the Opposition have to make points, to state a position, to draw out the contradictions between what a government says and what it does.

One of the proposals that a committee of our Legislature, an all-Party committee, could certainly examine, if we pass this motion and send it to committee, would be an

opportunity to look at the way in which we do resolutions and the ways we might modify that, I suppose.

You know, every one of us, I think, has used resolutions both in terms of the political resolutions, but also resolutions that celebrate members of our community and our constituency for significant achievements. We've had athletes - Olympic athletes and Paralympic athletes - people who have been distinguished because of their work in the arts, film. We had an academy award winner here in our gallery at one time with his Oscar, and a resolution done. We've recognized just today, a former mayor of the City of Halifax and HRM, a former member of this Chamber, someone who served in a capacity as minister, a member of the Executive Council, and a man who loved people and loved the province, loved Halifax. We recognized and honoured this individual by resolution.

When we decide as a group that we're going to alter these practices, we need to do it in a very considered way and take into account not just the tradition but the reason for the tradition, the role that that tradition has played in the work that goes on here. Certainly one of the central pieces of work that occurs during a legislative session is Question Period. It is the time when members of the Opposition have an opportunity to get members of the Cabinet, and the Premier, on their feet in this Legislature accounting for the decisions that they are taking on behalf of the people of the province. If we are seriously thinking about reducing the amount of time that the Opposition will have to look at the choices that the government is making, the decisions they're making and the impact of these decisions, as well as all of the things that need to be done that aren't being addressed, then I would respectfully say that there needs to be some quid pro quo.

If the Opposition are giving up some portion of the tools that they have to hold the government to account, which is our job, then there needs to be some other tools given to the Opposition to be able to fulfill that role. If we had an opportunity to send this to an all-Party committee of our Legislature, we could have the discussion and we could consult with political scientists; we could look at other jurisdictions and what they might have available for the Opposition. There are a variety of things, I think, that we could do and we could certainly hear from the people of the province, as well, in terms of what their suggestions might be.

I think we might be pleasantly surprised at some of the ideas that people would bring forward. I think we all get, on a regular basis, very helpful suggestions from members of the public about not only the content of our work but the way in which we go about doing our work.

Not so long ago we all received emails from a gentleman who was proposing recall legislation, not something that I necessarily subscribe to as a policy, but I wouldn't reject having a discussion about it and I think that most of my colleagues would entertain at least a discussion. I think we have to have an open mind. The Premier has talked - not recently -

but he certainly has talked very positively, very favourably, for quite a long period of time, about having set election dates, yet we haven't heard boo about that recently.

Maybe if we had an all-Party committee to look at the Rules of the House, we might also spend some time looking at this question. I understand Nova Scotia is the last jurisdiction in the country not to have a fixed election date. I understood that we would see legislation coming this Fall, actually. I believe the Premier is on record saying that he would be bringing legislation in the Fall, but here we are, it's the Fall; we haven't seen it.

My colleague, the member for Argyle-Barrington indicates there is still time and indeed there is still time. I think there is something else that we could spend some time talking about. I can recall a time in the past when, I believe, the Progressive Conservatives were in government and there were a number of women in their caucus and one of their MLAs, who was a member of Executive Council and was also the Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act, Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, initiated a bit of a process to have women from all Parties meet together, and we met at least once. I can't remember if we met more than once but I know we did meet at least once. The Finance and Treasury Board Minister was in the House, at that time in the Opposition Liberal caucus.

One of the things that we, as women, all talked about was more family-friendly hours of our Legislature that would accommodate particularly - not just women, but men and women who are parents of younger children. There are quite a number of parents. There are quite a number of members of this Legislature who have young kids. I don't know if I'm telling tales out of school, but I remember not so long ago hearing the Minister of Environment saying goodnight on the telephone out in the hallway to one of his kids, and he has probably had to do that more than once since he has been a member. It's an issue that is worth discussing.

How, then, would we accommodate that and deal with that? There are many, many different issues and many, many different pressures on members of this Chamber, and I'm not convinced that the changes that are being proposed by the government have really worked through what the objectives of these changes are. How can we ensure that if we get changes that are more favourable to government, that they are equally as favourable to the tools that the Opposition has available to them, in terms of our role in this Chamber.

I know that if we look at other Legislatures across the country we will see a range of rules and methods for operating. I have heard the Government House Leader indicate that many Chambers across the country have gone to a four-day work week, and that this is a feature that he and his Party would like to see as part of the changes that we make.

I, myself, really value the five-day work week that we have. However, I'm an inside member; I live seven minutes away from the Legislature - when there isn't road work going on - so it's not a hardship for me to leave the Chamber at 10 o'clock at night and be home in very short order. I recognize that that is not the case for other members. At

the same time, Mondays are an opportunity, once again, for the staff and the Opposition Parties to prepare the background research and the work that members of the Opposition can then use in Question Period.

We're here Monday evenings. We meet with our staff in the afternoons, and it's a great opportunity, I think, for us to organize our day and get ourselves ready for the remainder of the week. To lose Mondays will leave a bit of a scramble, especially if members are involved in committees, like the Public Accounts Committee, for example. So I'm not sure that the options that are being proposed will really work that well for members of the NDP caucus. Again, I could possibly be convinced, but I think we really need to have a working committee where we can have the discussion and we can consult more widely and look at what the alternatives might be and what the trade-offs are.

I know that one of the things I think we all are in agreement on across the various Party lines is the need to have a better defined agenda in terms of time. It's very difficult probably for our friends in the media to do their job when they don't know exactly when Question Period is going to happen - some days Question Period might start at two o'clock, some days it may not start until four o'clock. I know when I was a minister I found it very difficult to tell people who wanted to come and meet with me that I could meet with them at such and such a time, except I couldn't leave during Question Period.

So if there was a set Question Period every day that we have Question Period, I think that would be very helpful for all members of the House. It would be helpful for members of the Opposition, it would be helpful for the government members and it's something that we are in complete agreement on. But again, it's something that we could, in a working group, discuss as part of a broader package of reform to bring forward.

You know, we've just gone through a relatively rigorous - maybe "rigorous" isn't the right word, but we've gone through the process with Bill No. 1 where we saw a bill rammed through this Assembly by the government and the opportunity for members of the public to come and speak at the Law Amendments Committee curtailed. Bill No. 1 wasn't the first time we've seen this government do this, or attempt to do this.

If we had a working group, I would suggest that one of the things that needs to be examined and needs to have all-Party input on is the manner in which the Law Amendments Committee actually operates and the way in which a majority government is able to limit the opportunity for members of the public to have their voices heard in front of the Law Amendments Committee. Although this is not part of the resolution that the Government House Leader has brought forward, it seems to me that it should be part of the discussion that an all-Party committee could have.

I think it's really important that we do this, because the Law Amendments Committee here in Nova Scotia is a unique feature of our Legislature. Almost no other Legislature in the country, in fact, has this process. People in our province and outside of

our province are often in awe of the fact that we have this particular process as part of our legislation-making process. I think we need to look at ways that we can enhance that process, and an all-Party committee would certainly give us a very good opportunity to do that.

There are a whole variety of other things that we could certainly look at and be talking about. The way we examine the budget, which is probably the single most important thing that a government actually does, should also be looked at with a view to making it more effective, a more effective way of understanding the decisions that a government has reached with respect to the billions of dollars that we now spend in Nova Scotia on an annual basis.

The way the budget is presented has increasingly made it difficult to have any idea whatsoever of where expenditures are actually growing in a department and where they're being cut. If that isn't a central piece of the work that government does and then the Opposition holds the government accountable for, I can't think of what else is more important than budget making. We really have a process that now is not anywhere as close to being as effective or as functional as it needs to be. It's probably more important than ever, given the debt and operating deficit of the province, and the serious financial challenges that our province has in front of it.

We have an opportunity here to make our House function more effectively but it's not just our House that we're looking at functioning more effectively, it's our democracy that we're looking at functioning more effectively. Limiting the tools that the Opposition has to hold the government accountable and to do its work is not the right approach. If anything, we should be providing additional tools and opportunities to the Opposition to hold the government accountable, not limiting them.

That's really the problem with the proposal that has been brought forward. It erodes the opportunities that we have. It erodes our time in Question Period, and it takes away a day of work for sitting MLAs. I'm not sure that members of the public will be too happy about that. I think, in fact, people in our province recognize that when you get into these jobs, you're expected to put in a full day's work, a hard day's work and that you be here in your place working on their behalf.

While I recognize there are some disadvantages, I suppose, in some ways, I think those are disadvantages that we certainly could work to correct. We don't really have to sit on a Monday from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., we could sit on a Monday perhaps later on in the afternoon from maybe 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and we would have ample opportunity to deal with some of the business that we need to deal with in the House. (Interruption) I hear the member for Antigonish; he is very upset, he wants Monday free, however, I think it's very important that we send this to a committee and we have an opportunity to get out all the various ideas and opinions on what it is that we might be able to do.

I want to say to the Government House Leader that there is agreement across all Parties on some of the changes contained in his resolution. However, there is not unanimity. Earlier I said, you can make changes that favour the government, but there needs to be a quid pro quo. You need to ensure that if you are eroding some of the capacity of the Opposition to hold the government accountable, then that's not acceptable, and we need to find ways to bolster other tools so that the Opposition is able to do its work.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have left? Until 3:20 p.m. Thank you very much.

I know that over the last number of years there have been various proposals and various ideas for how to make these changes, and we've never really been able to move them forward. The Government House Leader has more or less decided to throw down the gauntlet and use the majority of the government to force these changes through - something that our Party was in a position to do, but chose not to do.

We chose not to do it very deliberately. We had a majority and we could have forced through, much like the government is planning to force through these changes, but we made the decision not to do that, out of respect for the Opposition Parties, out of respect for the role of the Opposition in this Chamber. We chose not to do it because we think this Chamber does not belong to one Party. It does not belong to the government alone.

This Chamber belongs to the people of the province, and the people of this province sent three different Parties into this Legislature to do the work on behalf of the people. So out of respect for the people of the province, it was our decision that it would not be respectful to use the government's majority to force rule changes that we liked, that would have been favourable for the government.

We have no control over what the government decides today or what the government members decide today, but I thought it was important, Mr. Speaker, that I point that out. We're not naive. We recognize that the government has the majority, they have the numbers, and eventually no doubt this resolution will come to a vote. We also recognize that right now the Opposition Parties are somewhat handicapped in that we have two members of our Parties who are, unfortunately, not able to participate full-time in the activities of this Chamber, and that certainly places the Opposition Parties at a distinct disadvantage if the Government House Leader and members of the government decide to take advantage of that situation, which I sincerely hope they don't. However, time will tell; that's a choice that individual members will have to make and the government will have to make that choice.

I see that my time is getting short, but I just want to talk a bit about the makeup of the committee. The committee, of course, could be made up of representatives from all of the Parties here. The committee could go beyond that, the committee could bring into its group others that have an expertise and an interest in parliamentary democracy. There's a great deal of discussion in Parliaments all over the world. Just this Friday we will have the

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association meeting here in Halifax and meeting here in this historic Chamber, and these will be delegates who are elected representatives in Legislatures of Commonwealth countries (Interruption) No? Oh, Canadian, so other Canadian provinces and possibly our federal House of Commons, as well. We often have Members of Parliament who participate as well.

Certainly that group is associated with a much larger group of parliamentarians who are members of Commonwealth countries and it's fascinating. If you ever have an opportunity, and I'm sure you will, Mr. Speaker, if you haven't already, to participate in any of the workshops and the training sessions, seminars, that are conducted on an annual basis by these parliamentary associations, both the Canadian association, but the broader Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

I have only once been able to participate, in the time that I've been here, but I have to tell you, I learned so much about the way other Houses, other legislative bodies conduct their business in the Commonwealth. It was particularly interesting to talk to elected members of the Australian state governments, the various state governments, Western Australia, and so on. They have a very interesting system, they have lots of rules that are similar to ours but also lots of rules that are different than ours. Of course, Westminster itself is a fascinating Parliament to study and to know more about how they operate.

When I was a student in the U.K., on a couple of occasions, I was able to get a pass - they're not easy to get - to go and watch Question Period in the House of Commons; this was back in the mid-1990s and John Major was the Prime Minister and Tony Blair was the Leader of the Opposition, and led the Labour Party who were a government-in-waiting. It was a very exciting and interesting time to be a student in the U.K. I have to say, not nearly as much fun as the night of the Labour Party's election which I was privileged to work on that campaign, the Blair campaign.

We could look at a lot of different Houses of Parliament around the world and we could learn about the rules that they have that help them make their democratic system work better and more effectively. There is no need for us to reinvent the wheel, Mr. Speaker. We don't only have the Commonwealth countries to look at, we certainly can look at some of the emerging democracies and also perhaps democracies that aren't part of the Commonwealth tradition - you know, the Scandinavian democracies: Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland. I'm sure that the rules that exist in many of these representative bodies would be interesting to have an opportunity to understand a little better.

I'm not sure when the last time the rules were changed in this House, I understand that the rules have not really been changed for many, many years, since maybe the mid-1990s, 1995. It would have been I guess done in 1999, it would have been done maybe when Dr. Hamm was the Premier. But I don't think there were significant and large rule changes at that time, they would have been quite minor changes. And the last significant

rule changes prior to that would have been during the Savage years in Nova Scotia, overseen by Richie Mann, who was the member for Richmond, as I understand it - and I think also at that time the Savage Government used its massive majority to force rule changes through the House that Opposition Parties opposed.

Mr. Speaker, here we are déjà vu, all over again, seeing essentially what it is that you can expect from a Liberal Government. It seems they have a tendency to pick up where they left off and repeat any number of their past behaviours.

Our members will be speaking to this resolution to move to a committee, an all-Party committee, the Government House Leader's proposal for further discussion, and I feel confident that if we were to do that we could reach some common agreement. We already have a fair amount of agreement on these changes that are being put forward but it is the case that we are not prepared to accept the change that would move us to a four-day work week and put the working of various committees, the Public Accounts Committee and other committees on that day, or to reduce the amount of time that we have for Question Period.

We quite like the idea of having a four-day Question Period and we are prepared to give up 10 minutes of our Question Period, not a half-hour of Question Period, and I think my colleague, the member for Queens-Shelburne, was very clear when he spoke earlier on this resolution that over a period of time that would see the reduction of five or six hours of Question Period for the Opposition when they get to ask questions and they get to hold the government accountable for certain decisions that they are making, and that is an important time for us. We have many groups and organizations that meet with us and they have been trying to get information out of the government. They haven't been successful in doing that and they turn to the Opposition for their help. We will have to say to the Canadian Cancer Society, or a Boys and Girls Club, or even some family in our constituency, we're sorry, we're not going to be able to raise that question because we don't have enough time and your issue will be put into a queue with a whole lot of other groups and organizations and individuals that have questions that they want asked. At the end of the day, if we allow these rule changes to come forward, there will be groups and individuals that we will have to turn away.

I don't know about you, Mr. Speaker, but I'm sure you didn't come to this Chamber to turn people away when they turn to you for your help. Most of us, all of us, I would suggest, are here because we want to make a difference and we want to help people from our constituencies. If that means standing in our place and asking questions of ministers then that's part of the job.

As I said earlier, if those tools are going to be altered and if they're going to be reduced, then what's the quid pro quo? Where is strengthening of other tools that the Opposition might have or might want or might need, in order to more effectively do our job?

It has been a privilege to be in this Chamber and do the work, even though it isn't always fun. Nobody has the market cornered on jobs that are always fun and that every moment of every day results in something tangible that you can actually see. I think most of us have been in other jobs where there are parts of those jobs that you absolutely love to do and then there are parts of those jobs that you have to make yourself do. This job is no different.

In terms of ultimately what comes out of a government, rule changes are only a very small piece of whether or not a government is successful. There are other things that a government does and there are other things that an Opposition does to reach success but without a doubt, the core of our work is here in this Chamber during the Question Periods, during the budget process. To limit the opportunities for the Opposition to hold the government to account in a democracy that is in desperate need of more accountability, not less, is in my view, not the way to go. With those few remarks, I'll take my place for now.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and my words are actually going to be very few, I'm certainly not going to speak for an hour and my words will not be as eloquent as the member for Halifax Needham, although I always truly enjoy listening to her. I will only speak for a few moments on this. I'm not in my element in here at all. I still haven't really haven't found my voice in this Chamber, or my comfort zone, but I think - I hope - that in time I will.

What I want to say at this point in time is that, as a new MLA, I think I need time to be able to speak, like the member for Halifax Needham, for an hour on a topic that, in my opinion, we should have been able to settle outside the Chamber. Smart people change their minds, and I'm hoping that by the end of all this we will be able to walk out of this Chamber and agree on a solution, and not be divided. "Divide and conquer" is not the answer for a simple topic like this.

I do like the amendment. I like the idea that there should be an all-Party committee. I'm not sure what that looks like or who that would involve, but I believe that if we go beyond this Chamber and have a group of diverse individuals come to the table, we can modify what goes on in this Chamber and we can become more effective for Nova Scotians.

We sometimes don't realize what we've got until it's gone. Whether it's having the Monday nights or working seven days a week, we need to be here in order to do what's right for Nova Scotians. How do we improve our democratic process so that we can work and improve the lives of Nova Scotians? We know that Nova Scotia is suffering. We need to collectively work together to reverse that trend. If anything, we need to be in this Chamber more - right now, anyway, during these economic difficulties. We need to prove

to Nova Scotians that there is such a thing as being stable, and sustainability will only work with a plan that can start in this Chamber.

Perhaps we could dedicate Monday nights to discussing job creation in Nova Scotia. Perhaps we could discuss the 19 goals that the Ivany report has set out for us. When we look at mapping out our economic future, we know staying positive is extremely important. It's mind over matter, and we have to recognize our strengths. We truly should be seriously considering how we can modify the procedural format in this Chamber for all Nova Scotians, so that we can ensure that we continue to be their voices.

The rules in this Chamber are very valuable. I respect them, and I always feel privileged being in this Chamber amongst all these members who I know, collectively, can help Nova Scotia move forward. I know we have our own ideas and thoughts, and I think we should have more of an opportunity to express them - especially the new MLAs, who are coming in here with fresh ideas, as well as taking the opportunity to listen to those who have been here for a long time and the wisdom that they're able to share. I think if we morph together our fresh new ideas with those that have had a lot of experience here, the end result could be very positive.

AN HON. MEMBER: Even ex-MLAs.

MS. MACFARLANE: Even ex-MLAs, exactly. We could invite them to this all-Party committee as well, and maybe even some students. Having had opportunities lately to speak to Jonathan Williams of Students Nova Scotia, I know he's a wealth of information and so energetic and bright, and believes in our province. I don't think this all-Party committee is a bad idea.

I believe that when we want to make wise decisions and choices, taking our time is probably the best thing to do. I know that we need more time - time for all of us to speak and listen, to allow our voices to be heard. What I always notice when having discussions or doing something is that people buy people. They truly don't buy what you're doing; they buy why you're doing it. I'm here and a lot of people stop and ask me about the whole transition of having two young children.

I know the member for Halifax Needham spoke about the member for Antigonish and overhearing a conversation saying good night to his children. Well we all make choices. I made a choice and you know to be honest, I saw my kids this weekend but it was two weeks that I hadn't seen them - two weeks. That is no one's problem. It's a choice I made and it's something I have to live with. What I know is I want to put every effort forth, I want to exhaust all levels of help and ideas out there to move Nova Scotia forward.

As much as I feel privileged being in this Chamber, at times I feel ineffective. I feel that I get so much more done in my own constituency. (Interruption) I know that and that's exactly my point. Maybe there's an opportunity for us to allow - and honestly, I don't like

the word backbenchers. I think it's degrading. I think it's unfair but I do believe, after talking to many of them, that they have a wealth of information and a wealth of ideas that I wish they could share with us and I wish I could share more, too.

Once again, I like this amendment, I really do. I think it would give us the time that we need to really collectively think about how we want to move together in the future for this Chamber and how we can honestly be creative and do what is best for Nova Scotians.

We all know that good solutions never result without listening to all arguments. I find that everyone in the room works extremely hard in their own constituency but sometimes they feel they don't get a chance to work in this Chamber. Maybe it's because we're limited to what opportunities and time we have to discuss those subject matters that are important to us. (Interruption) Exactly, it's very important. We have over 900,000 reasons why we should be spending as much time in this Chamber as possible - over 900,000 reasons. The people of Nova Scotia expect more and they deserve better.

We know that we're experiencing the longest economic cleansing ever in Nova Scotia. Without a full understanding of the issues, as well as allowing us to relate and discuss the different perspectives, we will never ever find those solutions. If we don't take care of something and improve upon it, eventually it comes to the point of no return. I just feel that we need to put more effort into what it is that we want to accomplish together.

Everybody knows that we're at a very dangerous level of debt. We have, in my opinion, reached that critical state. I remember in the 1980s, my parents telling me that if we were all to pay off our portion or share of the debt, it was \$100-and some dollars. Well I think we're up to about \$15,000 each. Back in the 1980s when I was in Grade 9 or whatever, I remember that conversation at my kitchen table, my parents saying oh my God, did you just read that if we each had to pay off the debt we would owe - I think it was \$120-some. It's staggering to think that today we all owe \$15,000 or more - my children, my two children who I didn't get to see for two weeks.

We are all steeped in an economic breakdown and together we can find a way out of this mess. Whether it's going to go back to having Monday nights - I really don't care when we work, I just want us to work and I want us to be effective and I want us to be efficient. I know that everyone in this Chamber has that in their heart and I know that if we can all just try to collectively come together - and truly, I do believe this all-Party committee may be the solution to this problem that we're dealing with.

We know that the debate in the Legislature gives a voice to the concerns of Nova Scotians, including everyone, but especially for the minority, even the ones who did not support this government. I just feel that we have to have an opportunity to speak more of what we all feel and I'm hoping that we will all consider this amendment.

We know that Nova Scotia has a record deficit and the government has really no plan and I know that they have ideas though and we have ideas, so let's get together and share those ideas and help Nova Scotia move forward.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Pictou West elected me and I am honoured and privileged every single day. Part of my goal is to inject hope, a realistic vision, and an open dialogue to solve the many colossal issues and problems that we are all facing - and of course it is my job to hold the government accountable.

So on that note I will take my seat and I hope that we can come to some solution here and walk out of here in unison to this debate.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure that I rise to speak on this amendment to push the resolution or the vote on Bill No. 1 further down the road, so to speak - to delay it. I believe that is something that is important that we need to do.

Mr. Speaker, when I rose to speak to the House in the Reply to the Speech from the Throne I was trying to articulate my feelings about the Rules of this House. In that I'm not sure that I adequately did so, but I have a very high opinion of the Rules of this House and the history of the House. Not only is it beautiful in architecture and in the paintings and all the history, but there is something about the Rules of the House, which are larger than us all here. Really, in reality, we only have a very short time here any one of us. Whether you're in government or in Opposition, you really only have a very short with your hand at the tiller, so to speak, but the Rules of the House are something that are going to endure, and any changes that we make will end up going in the big book that the Clerks refer to and will become part of the enduring history of British parliamentary tradition that we're part of.

I believe that we have to think very seriously about how we want to amend those rules or what the plan is, and I don't think it should be for short-term political goals but should be, I believe, that we should all be doing that in what I think would be the best interests of the House and of the British parliamentary tradition, and of democracy.

Like I said, I believe these rules are bigger than us and bigger than this moment in time. As a farmer, I have to say that having come here I have been a bit surprised that this House seems to run on farm hours sometimes too. There is occasionally on the farm that we find ourselves working at three in the morning, four in the morning, and I guess I never realized that that was true about this House.

So, when we talk about reducing the number of days that the House is going to meet, to reduce it from a five-day week to a four-day week, I guess in my farmer mind I think we're already working a four-day week in the House in that we go in on a Monday night and we're out by before noon on Friday, there is still a fair bit of Monday and still a

fair bit of Friday. I already call that four days. However it was sort of a surprise to me that this would be the attempt to shorten this.

One of the things that I noticed was I think if we were to look at the average number of hours that we've been in here in this sitting, and in the previous sitting, we're actually probably exceeding the number of hours that we're recommending going to. It seems like the Government House Leader has had a number of opportunities or moments when for whatever reason there was 24 hours, like hours going from 12:01 a.m. to 11:59 p.m., so sometimes more hours are required. If we looked at the average it's probably we used up more hours than not than even what we're talking about going to.

I would like to say, too, that I do believe that Question Period is important, and the amount of time spent in Question Period is important. I know that sometimes when we're in the House here things can be mundane. There may be moments when as I am speaking where some are only half-listening. I don't believe that that is necessarily even a bad thing. Life is like that - there are mundane moments in life. There are moments in family life when things don't happen quickly.

We live in what is called the age of entertainment. People are entertained. Likely most of your constituents have a much better idea about Tom Cruise's current marital status than what is happening in this House. The age of the trivial, you could call it too, because in my opinion that is a fairly trivial thing to be well-informed on, but that's probably true.

When we're in the House sometimes things go slow, but I believe - going back to my opinion about the rules - there's a certain brilliance to that too, if you look past them. If you can tolerate, for a moment, that there are times when it's not that interesting, there is a brilliance to it. I would like to sort of drill down into that, into why I think our time spent here is valuable, even if it isn't always riveting.

First of all, I think the value in being in the House - and I know the other speakers have all alluded to this too, or drilled down into this - it is our opportunity as Opposition to hold the government accountable. I believe in our government system - in effect, we have a very powerful government if you have a majority. If it was a large enough majority, a two-thirds majority of members on that side, maybe we wouldn't even be talking to this.

We have a system where the government has broad power to act but needs to come to this House to get bills passed. There's a certain amount of things in this House which happen. I guess if I was to think about it, I believe this is a better system than, for instance, our neighbours to the south, where the power resides in three different bodies, and they are in a perpetual state of gridlock over who gets to do what. At least here we have a powerful majority. It can act as it wants, and four years from now - four and a half, three and a half, whenever the next election is - they'll get their report card.

I do believe governments need that broad power. I believe governments need to be able to act in a nimble way and to react to the situation and follow their agenda. This is democracy. We had an election. The people looked at the platforms and, for whatever reasons, made the decisions that they made. Individuals decided on who to vote for in their own constituency.

This system gives us a powerful government, but it does call you, as the government, to be here to spend this time in the House. I believe essentially time in the House mostly favours the Opposition. The reason I believe that is it's our opportunity to hold the government accountable.

The second thing it does, which I don't think anybody has really drilled down into - as a new MLA, it's my opportunity to learn what being an MLA is all about. If I think about the time I spend in the constituency, I do believe that is valuable, but in essence, I'm learning about government and what being an MLA is all about, a lot of it, right here. In particular, I'm learning a lot about being a Cabinet Minister, as I watch the Cabinet Ministers. I'm not a Cabinet Minister, but I'm learning a lot as I watch the Cabinet Ministers across the floor.

Now, somebody told me years ago about farming - they said, John, look at all the farms in a neighbourhood and decide which one you want to emulate. I didn't get that farming advice early enough in my career to be really successful, but obviously there are different levels of success and different levels of skill. That's one thing we do as farmers. When I'm driving down a road I'm probably a little bit of a hazard on the road, because I could actually meet my wife driving her car toward me and might not even see her on the road because I'm looking at the soybeans out on the left, I'm looking at the corn on the right, I'm looking at the apple orchard (Interruption) It's a very common farmer thing.

When you look at a farm, you might see a field driving by but I see what they did. I see the plan that they're on and I'm interested in what the agenda was there on that piece of ground and I can see in an instant and I can know what the previous activities were. There are very small clues but we see them. When I'm in other countries I'm doing that too so I'm very interested.

This whole idea that as an MLA one of the things - and I believe this would be true for the backbenchers too. They get a different view of this but they are seeing the same thing too - they are learning what it means and maybe one of the Liberal backbenchers will someday be Premier. It is the opportunity for you to see, in action, the number of ministers and you would think - how would I handle that? Was that minister well prepared? You know what I mean - all these sorts of questions. You are learning as you go. This House is training ground for us, as the Opposition, on how to become a minister of the government if that opportunity presents itself, which it may or may not. You never know.

As I said, I believe that the structure of the House which promotes a very, very powerful government and yet gives us time here, not all of which is always extremely exciting, but all of which, I believe has value. It is teaching us. We are learning as we sit here about what to do, what not to do. Hopefully we're learning good habits. Maybe we're learning how not to answer questions sometimes. I believe all of those things have merit.

Another value of the time spent in this House, which I think the members of the government would recognize, is that effective use of the House will give Opposition the opportunity to roll over the government, to cause the electorate to realize that there needs to be a change. It is part of democracy that if we use our time effectively here as an Opposition we'll increase the chances of being government three and a half years from now. I think that's an important part of our time spent in the House. Again, this is why I will say that I don't think we should think that the ordinary moments, the mundane moments, the boring moments are all lost.

This might go well down to my previous comment on the fact that for the Opposition, time in the House is educational, in terms of how to operate as government, but one of the things that happens in this House, in the wee hours of the morning, is that we end up in side conversations. I'd like to comment on a couple of them.

I had the opportunity during one of those really late nights to talk to a former Minister of the Department of Community Services, from our NDP Opposition, and I gained a lot of insight as to what it was like to be a minister and she was able to tell me what sorts of things had happened. I don't think she betrayed any state secrets or anything like that but to get an idea of what that world is like or what the challenges are in that. I believe that if the time in this House was just quickly done then those opportunities would not exist. There is value in the slow moments, in the long moments.

Another conversation I had a few days ago was with the Minister of Energy and I got a great deal of insight into the sort of dilemmas about wind power. Even though I don't think there will be any question in the House coming out of it, and maybe I didn't learn anything that I couldn't have learned some other way, it was very informative for me and I really appreciated that. Likewise, I've had that type of conversation with the Minister of Health and Wellness and the Minister of TIR.

One of the things about time in this House is you begin to build a personal relationship with people on the other side of the House. One of the things that came out of that was I had a constituent a number of months ago who is a long-haul truck driver and he had an issue that when he went into the weigh scales, he would like to know the weight on each of his axles on his truck and for whatever reason the weigh scales, in the previous government the weigh scale operator - whether that was a decision of the government or just happened I don't know - had decided not to give out that information and this truck driver would travel into the U.S. and knowing the weight of each axle was important to him because in the U.S., even though his total weight could be fine, if he was overweight, if his

load balance wasn't correct he could be fined going into the U.S., into a different jurisdiction, of course, different rules on that.

So, just through conversation, just because there's this relationship in the House, I sent a message to the Minister of TIR and we got that changed and I can tell you that it's a small change, but it is very much appreciated by truckers. It sends, I think, a few signals; it does send sort of a trucker-friendly signal, if you have a trucker and he or she stops at the weigh scale and asks, they will get that information of their per axle weight and it sends a signal of friendliness to the trucker, I think, and it is extremely useful information for that trucker. As I said, as they drive and they know they are going into another jurisdiction, they're well aware of the rules in the next jurisdiction, they know, right then and there, if there is an issue.

I understand the main reason that I was given for that rule, why they were reluctant to give that information out was because you get stopped in Halifax, get your weigh scale information, drive to Amherst and have a different weight and then there would be a conflict between the two scales. The reality is scales go out of calibration easily and would seldom precisely agree, but I don't believe that would be a good enough reason to say no - there are tolerances built into those things to allow for that.

I believe that that is one of the values of time in this House, even if it is moments like this when it is mundane and you know that across the room you're not really hearing anything new on this subject - after 15 minutes I don't know if anybody can really tell anything new on a subject, but we can try.

I would like to also speak in favour of taking more time to look at this resolution. One of the things that we need to consider in this House is having set times for when we will sit and when we will rise as a House so that - and I believe there should be a calendar published that tells us the times the House will sit and rise for the next four years. We should know that. We should know that on the October 2, 2015 the House will sit, and on November 20th the House will rise, if that's what we want.

We should know the times for the Fall sitting and Spring sitting, and there are a number of reasons why we should know that. It is simply a matter of planning, and so it should not be that difficult to plan that out and if for some reason there was some emergency that required the House to sit at a different time, that could be accommodated. (Interruption)

It would also save, but I just want to speak in favour of that. One reason, very clear reason is because right now, this week, we will have the Canadian Parliamentary Association here and we're not sitting on Friday because they are going to use this House. It was the expectation that the House would go in, I think, at the normal time, which would be late October, and this CPA event was planned for this time so that it did not coincide

with the sitting of the House. As it turns out the House sat a month earlier for whatever reason.

For our own staff here in this House to plan for the Canadian Parliamentary Association to be here, it would be very advantageous if we had that type of information. So that's one very clear reason and in fact it is impacting events this week and I think it's a very good thing that we're participating in the Canadian Parliamentary Association and we're having them here, it's all terrific stuff and we need to participate in those associations, and I have always tried to do that all my life when those opportunities arise to participate in associations like that.

That is a very clear reason why we should have maybe taken more time to think about this resolution and think about putting that in. Another reason would be, simply for all of your sakes and all of our sakes, vacation planning. There are very few people who plan vacations on short notice anymore. Most of these things are planned out a year ahead and, if you're like my family, we're planning out next year's vacation now, it's mostly all booked actually, so we're basing it on (Interruption) Good luck?

Well, it is booked, and I believe that vacations are important. Now, one of the things that I have done as a farmer is very rare, but all of my farming life we always took the third week of July and went somewhere. It was the week on the farm that things didn't change. That was sort of based on the calculations of when this crop started and finished, and we had a sequence of crops, and it turned out that the third week of July was the week when everything was sort of - something new didn't start.

So I would like to speak in favour of vacations. Everybody needs a vacation. It's a very healthy thing to have, and I think there is lots of evidence for that, but I'm just saying that in terms of our lives, in planning our - most of us would like to plan a vacation out well in advance. I would like to suggest that, in terms of discussing House Rules, whether it needs to be a rule or not, there should be no reason in the world why the times the House sits and rises for the next four years couldn't just be laid out so that we would know.

I believe it would not only benefit us in the Opposition. It would obviously benefit every member of the House - not only them but the staff of the Legislature here, and the government. Even our own caucus staff would benefit from that. The benefits of that are enormous. It needs to be considered. I think it should be considered. It would be taking away the prerogative of the Government House Leader - I don't believe it takes away that opportunity to call the House to sit in case of an emergency situation, but it's just something that needs to be considered.

While I'm on that vein, obviously - and this has already been mentioned, but set election dates would likewise save our government money, save our province money, and just make planning a lot easier for the returning officers and the polling clerks and all of the people who are involved in that election process, and even our own volunteers. If I recall

correctly, during my campaign trail my campaign manager had a vacation booked, and because we didn't know when the election was going to be called - and as it was, it turned out that it was dragged out and dragged out - we actually had to have an assistant campaign manager in case the election was called during that time frame, so that the assistant campaign manager could cover.

Just having these types of things set out before would clarify a lot of that. If we knew a year before, two years before, if we knew now when the next general election would take place, it would just aid in planning for everybody - not only us as the Opposition but obviously the government, and as I said, not only that but the staff of this House, our caucus staff, all of the volunteers that we have. I think that when we talk about the Rules of the House and times of sitting, we should be considering that too.

Now, it's my understanding that some of the other Legislatures in the country do that. I understand that P.E.I. has set times when it sits and rises, and that's all known well in advance. I have a very high regard for the Islanders, and I think if they can do it, we can do it.

However, I did understand too that in terms of the length of time, we are not exceptionally long in terms of the number of days that we sit now, and there are Legislatures that sit a considerably longer time than we do. As I said, I've said for a number of reasons why I believe time in the Legislature benefits the Opposition but also benefits the backbenchers in exactly the same way it benefits the Opposition - backbenchers both - and I believe it is good for our province.

When we were talking about taking out Mondays, I heard it mentioned that maybe Monday night could be used for Opposition business if there was a lack of government. I know Monday night has been very short. There have been very short Monday night sessions, but I believe that if that's the case, when we discuss rule changes, maybe that's something that needs to be discussed. If Monday night was an opportunity for Opposition, then we would certainly be here with bells on and make sure the time was effectively used.

There are number of things that have not come up in the House that I would like to see addressed if I had an Opposition Monday night. I can tell you that, on Friday, I had a fellow farmer call me. His name is Art Woolaver, Basinview Farms in Blomidon, and Art was calling me about the fact that he believes that Quebec is dumping cabbage into the Maritimes market - so interprovincial trade. This is something near and dear to my heart because I was, most of my life, a cabbage grower, and I've easily had enough cabbage on my hands to fill this entire building, I'm sure.

AN HON. MEMBER: Me too.

MR. LOHR: I know, and you probably know Art. So this business of interprovincial trade - it looks like cabbage is coming out of Quebec for \$3.50 a bag for 50

pounds. It costs about \$1.50 to get it here for freight. I can tell you that if you think you can grow cabbage for \$3.50 a bag - the bag itself is going to set you back about 60 cents . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I have to respectfully ask the member for Kings North, what does this have to do with the amendment to the motion for the House Rules?

The honourable member for Kings North, with some focus, has the floor.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, the idea is that we can utilize Monday night for Opposition business, so if the government does not have enough business to effectively make use of Monday night, we could use Monday night for Opposition business. That is an example of Monday night's Opposition business, and that was a call that I got Friday morning of last week while I was here in the House. This is a concern that has never been raised on the floor of this House, to my knowledge - interprovincial trade and dumping.

What Quebec does is they grow cabbage for the U.S. market and if there aren't enough sales in the U.S. this area is looked upon as a dumping ground for their cabbage. We live in a very good part of the world to grow cabbage. We should be able to grow cabbage, but we can't compete with \$3.50 a bag. So this is an example of something . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Bring a bill forward on Monday nights.

MR. LOHR: Well, I would like to have this discussed on a Monday night. This is my first chance to bring this issue up, so maybe I can ask the Government House Leader to call something about this next Monday night. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Kings North has the floor, debating the amendment to Resolution No. 1.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak in favour of taking more time to give this consideration. I think that we have to recognize that there are many issues which face our province, a number of which have not come up on the floor of this House, and time spent here, as I think I've talked about, is very valuable time. Even in the moments when it's not exciting, I believe that the business that happens here is important.

The Rules of this House are important. I will say that, personally, I believe that there should be some degree of unanimity in the rule changes, simply because whatever rules we decide upon will outlive us all here, forever. Whatever rule changes we make will endure as long as this Legislature endures and lasts, and I believe they are much larger than us, so I believe that there should be a reasonable level of unanimity in the rule changes.

I just think there are a lot of uses we could put Monday night to, and that's one reason to put this amendment decision off for a period of time. I would like to speak in favour of that. I think there are an enormous number of issues that face our province that

we could make use of Monday nights for. I recognize the government is entirely able, as we are, to bring forward business on a Monday night. I will remind the House that the times that we've had very short sittings on Monday night is in the hands of the Government House Leader to call forth business and adequately make use of the time. I believe the Government House Leader can do so; should they choose to do so, there are certainly a large number of issues that we face. There are a number of Kings North issues - not only farm issues, but there are interprovincial trade issues that we could be dealing with on a Monday night. There are very local issues.

For instance, the issue I brought forward in Question Period of Joellan Huntley. I would like to see that debated further. I realize that it's a tragic situation but it calls for a larger - I think it sort of begs a larger sort of discussion about what the public policy is in this situation. On the one hand we can discuss that as what is happening specifically with Joellan Huntley, but on the other hand we can talk about in general how these situations are dealt with and what we should be doing in a situation like that. I would love to see that debated on a Monday night. I do believe that we need to be thinking about how we effectively use our time.

I guess I'm saying that I do believe in the amendment to the resolution, that this be put off and decided at a later date. It is a good amendment. I would speak to that amendment - how much time do I have, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: You have until 4:31 p.m.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I know if we were to use Monday nights for local issues, another issue that's a big concern in the Annapolis Valley is the hospice and I know the Minister of Health and Wellness has made a statement recently about the hospice when he was speaking at the Port Williams Community Centre. I think our whole health care system, there needs to be more debate and there should be time allotted for that. The hospice itself is a local issue in the Annapolis Valley. There has been fundraising done, I understand the fundraising has reached its target now and they're waiting on the government to fulfill its part of the commitment and announce the construction of this hospice. I know the actual design of the building is still in question so that might be a factor, but one of the great concerns in the Annapolis Valley all along was when this hospice was added . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I have to remind the member for Kings North that debate is on the topic of this amendment; this is not to be used as a laundry list of issues in your riding. We get that there are issues in your riding, but we're on the topic of why we want to send this amendment and this resolution to Assembly Matters.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my apologies if I have not been getting to that. The amendment to put off Resolution No. 1, I guess what I can say about Resolution No. 1 is that I am personally disappointed that this would come forward in this way. I think that in

terms of rule changes for the House, I guess in an ideal world I'd like to see that be negotiated between the three Parties and agreement reached at that negotiation. I guess in that sense I'm asking that there be unanimity at that point. I think in an ideal world that would happen and the rule changes that are brought forward would reflect that.

I guess I have drilled down into a little bit of why I believe the Rules of the House are important. As I've said, I think they are larger than any one of us and will certainly endure much longer than we will endure. In fact, generations to come will be referring to the rule changes that were made in this House as guiding their decisions and their debates. The idea that we would shorten the week and even limit Oral Question Period, both, I think, should not be done, if there isn't unanimity on those issues and I understand there isn't.

I would like to say that I appreciate this opportunity to rise to this issue and I must say, Mr. Speaker, I had a number of more local issues that I was planning to raise if I had more time, in particular issues in agriculture, which I already alluded to, one issue, also in fisheries. I know that the topic of late debate tonight is the Maritime lobster report.

It begs the question that the time in this House is important and we need to make good use of that time. As I said, I don't think it always has to be riveting or exciting. I think that we are standing in the shadow of a long history of British Parliamentary tradition and if we think that we have a better - I guess I don't feel that way - that I have a better idea of what the rules should be than that long history, that collective wisdom of hundreds of years of British Parliamentary tradition outweighs my insight into these rules. In other words, I don't believe that I personally know as much as that collective wisdom that is in our books. I think that to just simply use the majority that the government has to change the rules is not respecting the fact that there are hundreds of years of history in those books in that collected body of what constitutes democracy.

I believe the value of time in this House, as I've said, is that it is teaching us - it's an opportunity for me to go to school on how to be government. I learned both, as in school, maybe you learn what not to do just as much as you learn what to do and sometimes the "what not to do" is more instructive in life than the "what to do." I found that in my farming career, learning.

So the opportunity to learn from other people, as I've said, just driving down the road watching what other people are doing, we're learning from them and we're doing that in this House. I believe the time in this House is very valuable, even if it's mundane or boring or even if it's really not asking you to think too hard because everybody more or less knows where this is headed. I'm not likely to be able to persuade the government to do anything any different, other than to use up the amount of time that I have.

I believe that each member's right to speak in the House for the set amount of time they have on a subject is valuable, even in the opportunity to bring up issues that are -

maybe this is not the venue, I know I'm speaking to a resolution - to bring up issues that are important to my constituency is part of the history of British Parliamentary tradition that we have. I think we have to respect that; we have to realize that this is bigger than us.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that I would like to speak in favour of the amendment to push the decision on the rule changes down the road but, more importantly, I would like to speak on the idea of rule changes and say that I think that the rule changes need to be done with goodwill and unanimity among the Parties.

I do totally respect the fact that the government has the ability to govern with the majority, and even though we may speak against something, the government is going to do what it is going to do in terms of its policies and its agenda that is set out in the general election. I think that's different, Mr. Speaker. When we're talking about the rule changes there was no general election mandate given to the government to change the Rules of this House. I don't believe that ever came up in the general election.

As we all know, the level of understanding in our constituencies about the rules and what this House is about is very limited. It is very unlikely that any of us will get any comments on the Rules of the House. This is sort of a subject of very limited interest, I am sure, amongst our constituents, but I believe it's important to the British Parliamentary tradition, to democracy, that we respect the Rules of the House. As I said, despite the fact that the government has a majority, we would seek to see unanimity in the way that the rules are dealt with, and patience, which I would also believe and, again, speaking to this amendment that there be patience in the way we are dealing with these rules.

I'm not sure that I really explained my point adequately, but I would like to, with those few words, take my seat.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague who just spoke. Over time it will get a little easier to make sure that you stay on topic and don't get asked too often by the Speaker to bring your comments back to what is in front of us.

What is in front of us, Mr. Speaker, is a motion that would see this resolution move to a group of MLAs who, I believe, would have the opportunity to really look at trying to come to some consensus in the Legislature. It's no secret that any rule changes in this House need two-thirds of the House to have them passed. It's not just simply that the government with their majority can pass it, unless they have over two-thirds of the seats, which they don't. The Liberal Government today does not have enough votes to pass rule changes in this House just with their own caucus. That presents ourselves with an opportunity to make sure that rule changes going forward is something that is a consensus, is something that I believe all Parties work on.

I know there has been a process in place. We were in government, we tried to bring forward changes to the Rules of this House and we chose at that time, because I think we were close to the numbers that the current government has, with the two-thirds, we could have worked with one of the Parties to try to get those change, but we couldn't come up with a consensus at the time.

I know they tried, I know our Deputy Premier at the time worked with both House Leaders of the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives at the time, to come forward with some changes that we could see that could get the majority of the vote of this House. I think by asking for this resolution to be put to Assembly Matters - that was the motion made by the member for Queens-Shelburne, Mr. Speaker, that was the point of the motion, to move this important issue and I think it's important for us, as MLAs - I'm not too sure how important it is for those at home, those people who watch Legislative TV, and there are - I think I received some emails and some texts earlier about the discussion we're having now.

It might not matter as much to them, but it does matter to the institution that we have here. It matters to this Chamber, the rules that we follow. They are not rules that were just made up overnight, Mr. Speaker, these are rules that have come from generations, decades of a parliamentary system that has been working around the globe.

So for us to ensure that I think we meet the needs of our constituents, each individual MLA, we need to have a process that ensures we all have a voice. I know the process we followed in the last number of years, and over the last year, is that we've had our House Leaders meet to try to come up with some proposed changes, and that's what they were, Mr. Speaker. I know the Government House Leader has said everybody kind of agreed with these moving forward. It was proposed changes and each House Leader has an opportunity and a duty to go back to the caucus to bring these changes forward to see what each caucus member thinks of it and to make a decision on it.

That's exactly what happened. We were given the proposals that were possible when the Government House Leader gave them to our House Leader - I believe it was maybe two weeks prior to the House opening - and we had a discussion on it. Our caucus looked at it, and there were some good changes there that we agreed with, but there were two things that we, as a caucus, decided weren't important - or weren't something that we could support, sorry. Not that it wasn't important; it was something we couldn't support.

That was eliminating the Monday session here in the Chamber, and then also the loss of Question Period time - two areas that, I think, if given a chance to go to the Assembly Matters Committee, that that group of MLAs - and by the way, Assembly Matters is made up of all members of the House. The government still has a majority on the committee. They have four members, and I believe there are two members from each of the Opposition caucuses.

So here's a great opportunity. If the government wanted to bring it forward, here is something that they could go and talk about changes. One of the reasons we want to send it there is that the government still has control of that committee. The House Leader of the government's side knows that they could - those would come back to the caucuses, and then you could have a good discussion on it. But it's still the Rules of the House that it has to have two-thirds of the vote.

So the concerns that some of the members have been talking about today and on Friday when we were discussing this, the possibility of moving this resolution to the Assembly Matters Committee, is that there you can have a good discussion and find out what's going on around the country. We know some of what's happening, but you could really figure out the issues where we don't accept this. We have, I think, agreement on the Opposition side that we don't like the four-day session. I know that the Leader of the Progressive Conservatives came out with a news release stating that. We had indicated to the House Leader quite some time prior to that that it wasn't an area we wanted to see change. But what the Government House Leader has done is he has said no, if we can't get an agreement, this is what we want. We bring the resolution in. I looked through the resolution, and there's not agreement. There's not two-thirds agreement, unless a couple of members are absent in the House.

That's what concerns me the most about this. As we sit here, if every member is in this House, there's not enough support for the changes proposed by the Liberal Government. We will not have support of that. We know that. Our caucuses agreed that we don't support this; I know the Progressive Conservatives have said they don't support a four-day session in this House. But what's happening is the Government House Leader is looking at opportunities.

We know that there are a couple of members of the House who are ill. They're fighting to make sure that they're healthy, and I have to commend my friend and colleague, the member for Sydney-Whitney Pier, who has been in this House, I believe, every single day since we started this session. (Applause) He deserves to be congratulated for that, because it's tough. I don't know if I could do the same. It's not easy for him to be here, but he's compelled to be here. There may be times in the future that he might not be able to make the session. That's an unfortunate thing, to see if that's when this resolution is being called, when the numbers align for the government.

If a couple or three members are missing and the government have all their members, and if the independent member of the House agrees, which I believe he has - he has indicated that he agrees with the resolution - that when it was tabled, then it can pass. That's unfortunate, because that really doesn't reflect the true will of the House. That really doesn't have the two-thirds of members agreeing on changes.

That's why we made this motion. We need to put it off to try to come to an understanding and agreement. I hope that the Government House Leader recognizes that,

that let's get back to talking, trying to figure out what exactly we can agree with and move it forward and get the support of the House. I mean, if there are only two real areas of concern, and that's really what I've been hearing from our caucus and from the Progressive Conservatives, is about the loss of Question Period, Mr. Speaker, an important component of the process that we have here in the House, because that's the opportunity for us to hold the government accountable. Maybe they are afraid; maybe they don't want to be accountable - I don't know.

I know the Government House Leader stood on his feet all the time when he was in Opposition and wanted to hold the government accountable. Well that opportunity is during Question Period, Mr. Speaker, when we are allowed, as members, to ask questions. I know the Government House Leader asked many, many questions in the 11 years that I've been here and he was here prior to that, and I'm sure he asked questions in that time.

One of the concerned areas we have is we don't want to lose time. Now we agreed to limit the time over Question Period on Wednesday. I think we all agreed that an hour and a half is too long and we suggested some changes to that. We would be okay with maybe 50 minutes, but 50 minutes throughout the rest of the week and that would only lower the Question Period time by about 10 minutes, Mr. Speaker, and that's something we said was okay - we would be willing to do that.

The other thing was the Monday hours, Mr. Speaker, and we feel that with our caucus and my caucus colleagues that we couldn't support that, and for a number of reasons. I think we take criticism a lot, as an elected official, that we don't meet often, that we only work when the House is in session, and we all know that's not true; I know it's not true. We all work extremely hard. We work long hours on weekends and I'm sure this long weekend MLAs were still attending events and going to things, even though you would think it would be time off and time with your family.

What I've heard from people in my community about it, Mr. Speaker - and I would hope that what I hear and what other members hear could be broadened or talked about at Assembly Matters, when they're dealing with this - if this motion was accepted was that they don't feel that we need an extra day off through the week, and it's not an extra day off, I understand that, they're trying to work it in.

Monday evening, for the last 11 years-plus that I've been here, is an opportunity for members to stand up, hold government accountable on bills that they have, for example. You can debate those bills and it gives an opportunity for all members of the House to do that and to bring forward resolutions that may be warranted at that time. That is why I think the committee structure of Assembly Matters is there to look at that. The mandate of the committee itself is to examine rules, procedures, organizations, and facilities of the House of Assembly and may recommend changes for members. I mean that's really where this should be and if you come to an agreement there, it is recommendations it's not - well the committee agrees to this and it's just over, it's recommendations to the House.

AN HON. MEMBER: So we come back to this House . . .

MR. DAVID WILSON: We come back to the House.

AN HON. MEMBER: . . . and we do this all over again?

MR. DAVID WILSON: We do it over again, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's a wonderful idea.

MR. DAVID WILSON: So then you at least hopefully have a dialogue and it's not just one way. Right now the way this is unfolding, it is a one-way discussion. It's the government saying this is it, take it or leave it.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's a one-person discussion.

ANOTHER HON. MEMBER: That never happens.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Some say it is a one-person discussion but it's not. It can't be one way and that is why the Rules of the House are set up so that you need two-thirds agreement to make the changes of the House. What you avoid, Mr. Speaker, is every time there is a majority government they just come and tailor the Rules of the House to satisfy their agenda and move forward. That shouldn't be how it is. That is why there is that rule of two-thirds agreement of the House, so that you would have to have an overwhelmingly strong majority, and if there were not that many Opposition members, you could make any changes you wanted.

Over the last decade-plus that hasn't been the case in Nova Scotia. We have a majority government of 31 MLAs now and with the reduction of the one seat, they have a good majority but they don't have the two-thirds. It's the Opposition's ability to say listen, no, we don't agree with what government's proposing. Let's have a compromise and let's look at what we can agree on and move forward. But that's not happening now and that's why we felt the need to bring a motion forward to try to maybe allow some time for the government to come to their senses and say okay, all right, we won't take a tantrum on this, we won't just say take it or leave it, let's work together and try to come up with some rule changes. We all agree that we need some rule changes; there haven't been any rule changes in this House since 1999, I think, or the late 1990s.

The time is due to look at it, and there has been a lot of discussion, not only just with members of the Legislature, but I know staff of the Legislature, they've been talking about rule changes. I know the media who are the press gallery for the Legislature has talked about the need for changes. I think we all agree to that. Change is needed, it's how you go about doing it and that's really behind the motion that we made on Friday, that we feel and believe this should go to Assembly Matters Committee so we could come to

somewhat of an agreement, get it back to our caucuses and then bring it to the floor of the Legislature. Get the two-thirds vote that you need before you walk into the Legislature and say, okay, do we have the support? Then move forward and you know that it would be a five-minute - if that - read of the resolution, you would ask for a vote and we'd support it and it would move on and the changes would come into effect.

The way it's going right now, it's not the proper way of doing it and that's why the two-thirds of members is needed, and I think it shows why that rule is there. It's to avoid having just one single Party, one single government decide what the rules should be going forward in this Chamber.

I think we've all come to the table with different asks. I know our House Leader spoke to the Premier after the last session saying he was willing to meet throughout the summer if need be to get these changes done. But we needed to have some discussion prior to coming into the House, much more than what we had. As I said earlier it was about two or three weeks just prior to the House coming in that we were really given the paper from the Government House Leader. There had been some discussions before but nothing in writing. The Government House Leader knows that nothing was done all summer on this. It was a last-minute attempt to try to get something changed here and without support of the different caucuses.

I don't understand why the Government House Leader thinks what he's doing is okay, that it's the right way to make the changes in the House. It's not. We're more than willing to work with him, our House Leader will sit down with him and if they're willing to move. We've seen that the caucuses, the Progressive Conservatives here and . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, thank you. That's why the rule is there. No matter what the government members think, there's a reason why you need two-thirds support of this. The Government House Leader knew right before going into the session that we didn't support the changes he wanted to have come before the House. But there was no discussion, okay, well, all right, let's work this out. Let's try to figure out if you can't live with that, then can you live with this?

When you have both Parties saying they don't want to see the Monday night evening sessions get wiped off then why did he insist that needs to be there? Is the Government House Leader willing to change that? Maybe we could suspend the debate now and we'll figure that out and tomorrow we'll come back and he can introduce another resolution that takes off (Interruptions) Well, we're going to be here, I don't know how long, but if it meets the requirement of one of the caucuses here, then he would have his two-thirds support for the changes.

I don't understand why they're doing it in the manner they're doing it and why we can't have another meeting. I don't believe there has been another meeting since both caucuses said, no, we're not entertaining that. It's just a matter that the government introduced a resolution and here we are, as I said earlier, take it or leave it. That's not how it should work. Assembly Matters Committee is a committee of the House and I believe, Mr. Speaker, you're the chair of it. Those rule changes should be looked at there, and I think you could come up with a compromise, making sure that we move forward the changes that are needed. As I said earlier, we all agree that some changes need to happen in here, but we don't all agree with what was proposed when the Government House Leader introduced it - I believe it was last week, or start of the session, Mr. Speaker.

It was interesting to bring it forward in that manner, knowing that he didn't have the support of the House and the two-thirds. I know he believes that maybe with the support of the Independent, and that maybe with some people absent from the House - I know you're not supposed to refer to anybody not being in the Chamber but, at times, people are not here, due to some reason, and I had mentioned a couple of our colleagues who are fighting some illnesses and most likely will miss some time. But I think we need to make sure that the changes proposed are something that move the procedures here in the House forward, that they don't take us back or limit what has been going on for decades. And "limit" means, I think, taking rights away from members.

What's proposed currently under the government will take some of those rights away. As an Opposition member, we have a duty. We were elected to do a job in the Legislature - we were elected to represent our community, and every MLA here does that. But we also, as the makeup of the Opposition falls to us, are here to make sure that the government is accountable and, for us, those opportunities are when we're in session.

We can write a million letters to the ministers when we're not in session. We get a response in some time. I don't think there's too often that I've ever not gotten a response from a minister. In the previous years when I was in Opposition and to date, I think everything I've sent in so far - I'll have to go back and check my records - so far, I've been able to get a response from ministers and from the department. But often, you need to go one step further. When that response is, no, we're not doing anything on that, we need to take it, as Opposition members, another step further, and that is through legislation, Private Members' Bills that we introduce - and we do that on Monday evenings.

We introduce them. We bring awareness around an issue that might be important to a sector of the population. We use Monday nights for that, where we present bills and try to bring some awareness to issues that are important to so many people. We also have the opportunity to ask questions of the government. It's not always on policy - it's on the future, the road map of where the government is going to go. Especially when we get a new government, you want to know where they are going, what issues are important to them, and how they are going to affect positive change to the residents and to policy that, hopefully, supports Nova Scotians.

When we see the resolution that was brought forward, in my mind and the minds of our caucus, we're going to be limited in our ability to do that. We won't have Monday evenings to present bills, to debate bills that might be government bills, and of course there's no Question Period on Monday evenings, we know that, but Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday, we had enough time over those three days to ask questions, hold government accountable, bring up issues that are important not only to your constituents, but to us as critics. Many of us here are critics in certain areas, in certain departments, and that is an opportunity for us to bring that forward, and it's an opportunity for the government to clarify, or shine some light on what they're going to do to improve a situation, or improve the government policy, or improve legislation.

That's their opportunity to respond. If you limit that, Mr. Speaker, then in my mind you're quieting down the Opposition, which I know government members would love to do, especially the Government House Leader. But it's an opportunity for us to stand and - we'll have some rambling here in a minute from the ...

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, and I'm sure the honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid would not want to be misleading the House, but I'd ask him to reflect one second, being he has been in Opposition and in government. Why would any government want to have an extra day of Question Period? This was clearly something recommended by the Opposition Parties, which the government was prepared to accept. For him to not understand and somehow suggest that the government is silencing them by asking for an extra day of questions, which we don't currently have under the rules, just doesn't make any sense and I would hope he would realize that.

It was an Opposition proposal. We were certainly prepared to bring that forward, which we have, and it was as well their proposal to move to a 45-minute Question Period. I offered that simply in the hope that it will help the discussion taking place today.

MR. SPEAKER: I don't consider that a point of order, I consider that a disagreement of the facts.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order because in my speech I clearly pointed out that the time is being erased from this particular system. We are losing time in Oral Question Period. I suggest it was 26-some-odd hours in our four-year term, so I ask you to rule on that point of order. Thank you very much for your time.

MR. SPEAKER: This is not a point of order, it's a further disagreement of the facts.

The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I don't think it matters on how many days you ask questions. The way we're looking at it is that there is going to be less time to ask questions in this Chamber, if the proposal that is brought forward is adopted. It's less time.

If you look at the whole question of Question Period, what we're saying is that we agreed that Wednesday was long, an hour and a half. I think everybody here would agree that once you get down to those 17 or 18 questions in the hour and 25 minutes, it can be difficult at times. But I've never seen in the House, in my 11 years here, no one not ask any more questions and just give away the question time, Mr. Speaker. There are always people who are willing.

We said we don't want to lose time over the week. I think the proposal that we countered to the House Leader was that we would just lose 10 minutes, Mr. Speaker, on Question Period but the government didn't look at that. They went right back to what we originally said we wouldn't agree with, as a caucus. That's how we do things over here, I don't know how they do it there if it's just the front bench that makes the decision, I don't know if that's how they do it over there but I know that's not how we do it. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid has the floor.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Oh, Mr. Speaker, I touched a nerve there. As I was saying, on this side with this Party, if we have a decision to make, we make it collectively and we bring those back. We did that in this case, we went back to the Government House Leader and the government and said listen, this is what we don't want to see, can you come back with something different? Is there a way of getting around this so that we could come forward with an agreement that would see positive changes in here?

That hasn't happened, Mr. Speaker, it stopped. I think we need to look past that and try to move forward with getting some changes here. I think the motion we made is one that I think could be supported in the House, that we have an Assembly Matters Committee, chaired by yourself, that could look at what happens with rule changes and just as they say in their mandate, they bring that back for the House to consider.

That's not what happened here, Mr. Speaker. We think that would be an opportunity to maybe iron this out, to get past this impasse that we have where we have both Opposition Parties standing up here, trying to support a motion to move this so that we can have some good changes, I think, to the rules for consideration of the House, where I think you would get the two-thirds number.

The way that it is being presented now is not the right option. It's not the right thing to do and I think we should do as our motion says, move it off, let people just calm down a little bit. I think maybe there's a bit of ego at play on all sides and everybody is digging in now, saying no, we're not giving up this, we're not giving up that. But we have to come to a resolution. I think Assembly Matters - since that is the committee that looks at rule

changes and procedures, Mr. Speaker - would be the most appropriate way to do it. I hope that the government would think of that.

We've been here now, I think about five or six hours into the debate from Friday and today, and I think it's very clear to the government and government members that we don't support the resolution presented to the House. We shouldn't be waiting to count numbers to see who might have to step out and have a vote, it should be recognized that the House doesn't support it. You have two Opposition Parties saying they don't support it, we have both the Leaders saying they don't support it, and the caucuses don't support it, so I don't know if the government is just maybe trying to wait and see if they can pick one of us off and have a sympathetic ear and then all of a sudden they'll vote a different way? Maybe we're waiting and hopefully someone in the government caucus will realize it and they'll vote our way and then it throws it all out of whack. The two-thirds number needs to be there and it's just simply not there right now.

I think we came forward with a way of everybody saving face, saying we fought hard for what we believed in, what each caucus believed in, and what changes we wanted to see. But I think Assembly Matters can be the opportunity for all the caucuses here to have input and try to come to an agreement and not have what we see now happening in the future.

So I hope with those few words - and I know other members are going to talk on this - that the government recognizes that here's an option. We're not saying you're right, we're not saying they're right or we're right, we're saying here's an option for a motion to move this resolution to Assembly Matters - for yourself, Mr. Speaker, and the members of that committee to sit down and iron this out and come forward at a future date with positive changes that need to happen in this House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, it's my turn to comment now on this amendment to Resolution No. 1. I think about the decorum in the House and I'm feeling that things are, to be honest - I think they're at the worst point I've seen them in the time I've been elected, the last five years. (Interruptions) The member should wait, and this is a perfect example of it, you should wait because before you . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I would like to remind the honourable member for Inverness not to refer to any other member directly and I'll remind everyone else that even though the topic is sensitive, and it is about our behaviour in this Chamber, if you could please respect the members that have the floor.

The honourable member for Inverness has the floor.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I rest my case. I do. (Laughter)

To get back on track, I think we're all constricted by the system that we live with here and what we've inherited. This amendment would move the discussion towards something that's more public.

I think I and everyone else here enjoys debate, and that's probably why we all signed up for this and that's why we're all lucky enough to be here. But the spirit of debate seems to have sunk, as I've said, to a low that I haven't seen here before in this Chamber. That's just my opinion. It's not to put the blame on any one Party or one person in this Legislature. If members feel otherwise, they should express how they feel about it.

I think this is actually compromising the ability of members to work with ministers in resolving issues and that's something that really bothers me because that is a sign that what we're doing here is really interfering with doing good things for the public, and that's why we're all here. We on the Opposition side have to accept some responsibility for that obviously. I think everyone wants to be in government and perhaps everyone in here - maybe not everyone, but I'm sure a little piece of everyone in here - would like to be the Premier of the province. (Interruptions) I'm hearing several Noes. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, I guess I have to ask what is all this debate producing? I think if the spirit of debate is well intentioned, keeping in mind that we are speaking about the amendment here, but if the spirit of the debate is well intentioned and we are asking about things we care about and more importantly what the people we represent care about, then I think we would be producing a lot more in here.

I was at Celtic Colours concert last night and I really feel that coming back in here that the spirit I felt there is very much at odds with what the spirit is in here. Personally I'd rather be at the Celtic Colours concert. I was talking to people about issues there, Mr. Speaker, various issues, and one of them was even about how many days we sit in here. I don't know if we can change this. In talking about this amendment and whether it is moved over to the Committee on Assembly Matters, I think what it comes down to is we have a responsibility on the Opposition side of the House to do our best and try to keep the level of debate high and resist the urge to lash out at the government.

Of course on the government side, the challenge is to try to understand or accept that sometimes things may seem hurtful, but not everybody thinks the same way, and sometimes it is easy to interpret things as being something different especially once the spirit of debate has sunk. I respect, Mr. Speaker, you putting things back on track here when I started my remarks but I think that was a perfect example of how something gets said and immediately it is interpreted as something else because the spirit may not be where it could be.

So, enough of my moral grandstanding here, but I'm saying it because this is what I'm observing and I think that we all, including myself, maybe can do a little better. I think about the time that we sit in the Legislature here and I know the government has made

efforts to make some changes and I know we've agreed with some of those changes. I think about the times that we sit in here, Madam Speaker, it appears that as far as I understand, the times in here were based on the train schedule for people who would be travelling from all corners of the province and landing in here Monday evening and you'd come in for your sitting and come Friday . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: His father worked for them.

MR. MACMASTER: Yes, my dad worked for the railway and he probably could have told me the schedules for the trains. Of course we are living in a different day and age, Madam Speaker, so it makes sense, I think, that we look at making changes, from time to time. I think about this amendment, which would send this matter to an all-Party committee, and maybe that is the way to best resolve this in the sense that when the discussion is more public then we don't have to rely on what's happening behind the scenes because unfortunately there is less control of things that happen behind the scenes. When it's public, everybody is under the scrutiny of the public and perhaps that does something to elevate things as well.

Certainly when we speak in here, Madam Speaker, things go on the record. We have to be careful of what we say. We are held accountable, if we put something on the record, as we should be, and I think that right there is a good reason why perhaps this should move to the Committee on Assembly Matters. Let that committee come back here with a report on recommendations that can then be reviewed.

It's no different, Madam Speaker, no matter who is in government, no matter what Party is in government, the sole purpose of this Legislature for our government is to pass laws. I think most governments are not really interested in debate. I think most governments probably feel the debate ends with the election, and while they may welcome debate on some topics, we see that all governments sit in Legislatures for very short periods of time because the whole purpose is just to pass laws and once the laws are passed, the government business is done. I respect that, but I think we have to remember that part of the reason we have this institution is not just to pass laws but also to have public debate.

We have committees of the Legislature that help to achieve that throughout the remainder of the year, but when I think about the number of days we sit now, we sit about 12 weeks each year, by my estimate - it may be a bit longer than that, Madam Speaker - that's 60 days of actual sitting, without holidays. When I think about issues that may be before the public, 60 days relative to 365 days in a year is a very short time during which we can debate current issues.

I know the most contentious issue here with this resolution is the moving from five days to four days and compressing that schedule. Perhaps there could be some allowance to increase the total number of days sat per year, so that maybe we sit more frequently. If we don't sit as extensively through the length of the week and we compress that, maybe we

can sit more days throughout the year, recognizing that we should be debating matters before the public and this is the best place to do it.

We have all kinds of forms of technology today. I suppose one could make the case that we don't even need a Legislature. We can debate through Twitter, and that's certainly done. (Interruption) Somebody said "That's terrifying," and I think that's true. I think we often talk about young people looking at their electronic devices too much. We're all doing it too, for that matter. Young people are no different than us. I've heard people talk about how electronic communication has lots of good and bad, socially, but that nothing will ever replace human contact. I think the same is true for debate in our world. The best place for it to happen should be in the Legislature.

I think if we looked at sitting more days throughout the year - and I respect the recent point that was made about having more actual Oral Question Periods per week as a concession the government is giving up to offer people sitting on this side of the House in return for reducing our time here by a day each week - I think that if we do that, our 60 days would then go down to probably about 48 days over the course of the year. I don't think 48 days gives us enough breadth throughout the year to be debating current issues. It really compresses that.

I think that's something we have to keep in mind, and I think if we are thinking about best serving the public, if you are in government, one should welcome debate, and if you are in Opposition, you should certainly be wanting to debate more frequently than 48 days per year. I think that's reasonable. I'm not going to state how many days it should be, but I think that is something that maybe should be discussed publicly in a committee of the House - the Assembly Matters Committee.

I think it's very important for members opposite to realize that our job in here is to hold the government to account and maybe to give people some insight into what we're seeing. Of course, if it's done in a spirit that's very negative, I don't blame the government members for not wanting to listen to it. Hopefully we're not always putting it across in that spirit, because if we are, then we're failing.

I think it's important for us on this side of the House to be raising matters and expressing things that we're hearing. I think if we're listening and we're willing to budge a little bit on all sides, we're going to come up with better laws, better decisions. I think the public will be happier, and I think they will be less cynical of us. I certainly don't blame them for being cynical. It's because we are such a world apart in here, and I think a lot of it has to do with the structure that we live in, in here. I mean, we sit across from each other; we have a giant golden stick in the middle of the Legislature here to be used to physically restrain us from one another - I know that's more symbolic, perhaps, but I know when I look at it I wouldn't want to get a swing of that at me. I wouldn't want to get hit with that. I suppose we've come a long way from the days of the caveman, and I think we have a

great forum of democracy where we can have a debate, but I think we all realize that sometimes it becomes too combative.

Maybe it's something for us to all think about going forward, with ways that we could try to work together more, and sometimes that is, maybe, by having things more public. I also think though, maybe - and I don't want to sound wishy-washy on this, but maybe sometimes it happens better in private, when the eyes of the public aren't on us, because there's less posturing. So I don't know, perhaps I've defeated my earlier points on this. I think whether it's public or a more private discussion, the spirit is what matters.

One of the things I would like to see happen more in this House is a sincere review of Opposition bills. Some of the members on the government side have not been in Opposition long. I know there were bills brought forward that I supported, and ones I brought forward that they supported. I haven't seen them put before the House since, ever since the government took office. I hope I do see them because I think that sometimes, perhaps, Madam Speaker, members may get talked out of putting bills forward when government departments might give other points of view.

And that's fine, and sometimes that may be a good thing, but I know members in here who, when they put something on the record, they often do it because they have conviction about something. I think of the member for Pictou East who put forward a bill on Lyme disease - and I have a cousin who has Lyme disease and we had a discussion about that last night. I think of that bill as something very important that really knows no stripes. It's something that we all have people in our areas who, or at least in most areas of the province, have been affected by this. In fact, Madam Speaker, you could have somebody from the province where there may not be ticks that carry Lyme disease who may travel to another part of the province and contract the disease.

But alas, I must get back to the debate at hand. The point I'm trying to make is that there are some good Opposition bills and I think that we should be trying to do our best to ensure that we are being open to them. One of the other things that could be discussed by the Committee on Assembly Matters - and I'm not going to go too much longer, Madam Speaker, because I'm getting a bit tired myself. Perhaps my night at Celtic Colours was a bit too late last night.

But one of the things I think about is our late debates in here. I often think that most of the agenda happens at the start of the day because it's trying to make the news cycle. I often think the value on late debates has not been that great, in my mind, because many of the members, by that point in the day, have done their business and we know that not much comes of late debate. But some of the most interesting times I've spent in this Legislature have been during late debate, hearing members get up and speak. I think we should be giving that more prominence; we should be doing it at the start of the day. It gives all members a chance to show themselves in here, and also a chance to bring attention to issues that they might not be top of the charts in terms of what's important in the newsreels

but they might be something that's important to them, about something that's important in their area. I think we should be giving more credence to that debate.

With that I am going to finish by thanking the members for their attention and hopefully we can move forward and improve relations in the House here. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

HON. FRANK CORBETT: Madam Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise here tonight to speak on the amendment to send this back to Committee on Assembly Matters. I don't think I can remember that committee ever sitting during my lifetime in here - and it certainly feels like a lifetime.

It's interesting to see the inauguration of bringing Resolution No. 1 right in the middle of when we are debating Bill No. 6. That seems to me as though I'm missing something but the one thing everybody in this House agrees on is that there ought to be rule changes. It seems to be stuck at what rules should be changed. Should it be a four-day week, should it be fewer Question Period minutes, should it be a lot of things?

The idea of sending the resolution back to Committee on Assembly Matters would allow it to be vetted out there. I've listened to some of the speakers previous to me and some of the issues they said that could be decided at the Committee on Assembly Matters are things like prescribed sitting days because part of our debate is saying many of the other Legislatures have four-day weeks. What they also have are prescribed sitting dates.

The member for Kings North said earlier, whatever you're trying to schedule around that - whether it's vacation or just other things - it's an interesting thing to do. I'll give you my own perspective on that. In the course of this job I do a lot of appeals at Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal and so I was in the midst of doing a calendar up with them for about two to three appeals that were in the queue and I had to rearrange them because I'm here in Halifax and I really don't have the time to do them here - your witnesses are in another part of the province and it's not fair to ask them to come up here. Then what you did was you took times away from other people. One would have hoped that the registrar would have had those holes plugged, hopefully, that people that were waiting in the queue were able to use those dates.

That's one of the examples of prescribed sitting periods. There are many issues, I think of who we should talk to. I know when we were in government we had asked for a review across the country of some of the best practices so to speak. Heaven forbid, I can't believe this is going to cross my lips, but should we include the press gallery? These are people that cover the Legislature on an ongoing basis, they have a president and it's set up with an executive and should they be taken in and talked about best practices? That would be an interesting discussion to have at committee, to have them come in and say, some of the members have covered the House for quite a period of time and they see certain

dysfunctions of this House and maybe they could give us an unbiased eye with which to look. I would say about the clerks, while they are busy enough, I'm not going to put anything else on their plates, but they see how the House operates from day to day.

Madam Speaker, that seems to be the most appropriate place to go to resolve this. It is interesting that if we were to hold a vote tonight on Resolution No. 1, it would probably go down in defeat because it doesn't appear that it would have the requisite numbers to see it carried. We're interested and I think I can speak on behalf of the Official Opposition also, they are interested in changes. It's how we get there.

I would, quite honestly, love to see us finish our debate on Bill No. 6, a bill that was interrupted by this resolution. Bill No. 6 deals with hydraulic fracking and it's an issue, no matter what side you are on. There certainly seems to be a side. It causes much debate; it's an issue that involves the economy in many ways. It's an issue that involves the environment in many ways. I would think that would be an interesting discussion, Madam Speaker, but we're here debating rule changes.

I know the Premier's desire was to have unanimity on this, I believe, he spoke on that. A way to get unanimity is to bring it into the Committee on Assembly Matters. We're left, as an Opposition, we don't - except for Wednesdays and that's for only a very short period of time - get a chance to establish business of the House. The business of the House is established by the Government House Leader, in consultation, one would assume, with the Premier and other members of the Executive Council.

I have not seen fulsome debate from the Premier of why he wants this to fall the way it is, after saying at an earlier date that the way to proceed would be by unanimous support. I've lost something here, Madam Speaker, of why the Premier, who is not here, is standing up and saying why he has had a change of heart as it relates to this resolution.

My colleague from Queens-Shelburne spoke last week regarding the loss of time in Question Period. The whole debate is not the number of times that Question Period appears, it's the totality of it. There are other legislatures that have fewer hours, fewer moments given to Question Period. I believe in British Columbia, for instance, I don't even know if the Premier is even in the House for most of Question Period; I don't believe she is. I don't know if that's an historic thing or if that's just the way that the Premier of British Columbia does business. She is very seldom in the House for Question Period where historically in this Chamber there would be great consternation if the Premier didn't show up for Question Period at a fairly regular interval and allow us to question him and his government. The idea of when Question Period takes place is not so much as the amount that takes place. That's one of the large factors here.

The Mondays is an interesting one, because what's interesting here, as I said earlier, the government calls business, and if the government didn't want to call business for Monday, like they're not calling business for Friday for an issue that I know had been

previously booked, but it's the government's prerogative to call business when they see fit. We were prepared today to see debate in this House, or be in this House from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., now it's noon till 10. That's done on a government's prerogative.

We wonder why we're here because shortly, in less than an hour, 50 minutes or so, we'll be breaking for the moment of interruption, late debate, and then we'll see what the rest of the night brings us. The reality is that the Government House Leader could probably stand up and ask us to adjourn debate on this and get on to debate of Bill No. 6 and we could send this on to the Committee on Assembly Matters and see what happens there, where they have the majority. (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre has the floor.

MR. CORBETT: There are two guys digging holes here and throwing the dirt on me. (Laughter). Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's hard to talk with dirt in your mouth. There was chatter from the floor across the way and I don't think it's appropriate for me to identify the speaker, but I would think, as is oft as the case, that there may be a way around this through the Committee on Assembly Matters.

I would say to that person that was looking for approval for that, I would say, if I heard them correctly, I would say this to them, through you, that it would be disingenuous for me, because of things that have happened in the past, to stand on the floor and say that's what will happen without getting prior approval. I think that member understands what I'm saying.

I would be reluctant to stand on my feet and say, give that member those assurances without being able to back them up, so I would like for us to proceed though, through the Committee on Assembly Matters to have them there to come and work out a system. We're somewhere, one would believe, probably just a little south of halfway through this session, one could maybe think.

The idea of then, say halfway through this session, to change the rules, whichever they would be, would probably be better off waiting for a full session, say, in the Spring. The fact that I would give assurances for, whatever happened, that these would be ready to go in the Spring, and do it through the Committee on Assembly Matters. These are, as I said, there's many issues, right now, there is kind of a hang up on the Monday issue and the hours of Question Period issue.

There are other issues too - I know resolutions seem to be another issue. I used to have to do them as a minister, but I can't remember the last time I did a personal one. But that being said, that's where it is. Different people use them for different reasons. I remember when I came to this House in 1998, they were more political in tone and they've now kind of moved into the area of congratulatory. You know, in rule changes, would the

Legislative Clerk's Office have the power to change bills for grammar and spelling and so on, so they don't have to come back here? I know that's something, I believe, that the Chief Legislative Counsel often talked to me about. Should that be changed, rather than having to bring the whole bill back here to change a comma, or something like that? I believe that would make a lot of sense. We would give it a fulsome discussion in Committee on Assembly Matters. We could call witnesses. As I said earlier, representatives of the press gallery could be asked for their wisdom on this matter. It could be debated there. There are ways around this.

It's not to say that the Rules of this House are not important, because I would never disrespect this Chamber like that, but some of the Rules of this House aren't conducive to basic everyday operation of a House that moves things forward in a systematic way. For instance, one of the things we agree on is a set time for Question Period. It makes a lot of sense - nobody holds it up. My theory would be that you would work to that hour, whatever that hour was. You, Madam Speaker, would then call Question Period, and then we would do it for the prescribed period of time, and then we would move back to whatever government business was left, or if it was Opposition Day, we move into Opposition business after that, and so on.

The issue really seems to be in many ways a tempest in a teapot. Should we be putting in this much time in this House on these changes, or should it be held off to a committee to look at it? I would say to you that I would much prefer that the Committee on Assembly Matters look at this and come up with the appropriate changes, and if you have larger changes, they will fit there. I've opined many times about the rules around the debate on the budget. Is that really the best use of how we debate budgets? It seems to have denigrated from actually talking about line items to an inquisition of the minister for so many hours. I think of the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal - it's not really about how much you're going to spend this year, it's whose road you're going to pave a lot of times. Thanks for Union Highway, by the way. That must have been a whoops. (Interruption) No, a lot of them travel down part of Gardner Road.

Madam Speaker, I digress. That's what that is becoming and should there be some rule changes around that? I have seen, in my time in this House - and I don't know if the member for Argyle-Barrington was here then. The former Minister of - I don't know if she was Health or Education - I think it was Health at the time, was 20 hours-plus. Our Leader, one year when she was Health and Wellness Minister was 20-plus hours and that left very little time for other departments to get up. Should there be a rethink of how debate on the budget is done and we can go to committee on that? I'm not proposing that I have the solution, Madam Speaker, but I am proposing that there may be some changes needed.

I am at a place, politically anyway - there is more behind me than in front of me, in more ways than one, but Madam Speaker, that's the reality of this House. To be here for that long and not see any substantial changes - it would be fine if everything worked well, but I don't think it does. I think that any member who's been in this House for any period of

time - one session or more - realizes that the hour and a half Question Period on Wednesdays - whether you're on that side of the floor or this side of the floor, and heaven forbid, Madam Speaker, when you're sitting in your seat - is an onerous task. I think it was probably done with the best of intentions but I don't think most Parties agree with that large chunk of time.

That said, Madam Speaker, what they do is they would like a smoothing out of those hours and have them spread out over a longer period of time so you don't lose questioning of the government and the government being able to answer. I think it is a very real issue that we should be able to have those hours kept, but the hour and a half - I don't think it works well. I know it doesn't work well for any of the three Parties, whether you're the government, Official Opposition, or an Opposition Party.

At the end of the day people say that doesn't work. It's worn out by the members of the press gallery that most days in Question Period, if they're in their seats in the designated area in the gallery, they are usually cleared out of here by the first 15 minutes, maybe 20, and then they either file something or they work on the scrums that will happen after Question Period. (Interruption) No, more so. They just wonder what did you ask.

Madam Speaker, I would say that the press gallery would be one that would enjoy the extra day of Question Period. The media find Friday pretty dry and as someone who worked in that business I can see why, but nonetheless, if we move this on to Committee on Assembly Matters, these things may be worked out. You just can't do these types of changes, as they say, on the back of a napkin. We're not going to make everybody happy with the changes and there has to be a give and take here. This isn't about anybody winning or anybody losing on this resolution. It should be a wash.

There should be as many people angry as there are happy on this one, that you'll get something and so on, because as I was proven right, sooner than later, when I was House Leader, you make these rules because someday you'll be over on the other side. Sure enough, I was right, for a change, so that's why I'm against this. You realize these things, everything has to be in balance, Madam Speaker. I can understand the Government House Leader with the frustrations around these issues, I understand him completely. You'll get a sympathy card in the morning. Just give it to somebody else to open.

Madam Speaker, we would like to see some of these changes take place. It will at some point be up to the government to decide what they want to do with this resolution. I, for one, would like to see changes. It's interesting because many people have many different perspectives of what rights they have in this House and what they feel they don't have, whether it's the length of Question Period or the days we sit, that if that's taken away they feel it's a right taken away.

That's an interesting perspective and that's a reason why there are so many different people with different backgrounds, very unique individuals, why we're voted to

this House oftentimes, because of our differing opinions. The idea that even you belong, and this probably goes to what my friend from Sackville-Cobequid said before - just because you belong to the same Party you don't necessarily always agree with everything that is said.

Now there's hardy debate taken sometimes. Sometimes there's enlightenment and sometimes it's put the hammer down, and this feels like the hammer has been put down, something I'm sure that the Government House Leader understands, for some reason there's something about Liberal House Leaders from Richmond wanting to change rules. Now I said it gently, Madam Speaker, I wanted to make sure that you understood it, that he remembered. If you don't remember your past, you are bound to relive it.

These are the issues that we, as the Third Party - we want to see changes. If there was a way we could get this to the Committee on Assembly Matters and have committee members come in, look at them and find common ground, to talk about the larger issues, just don't confine it to what I would call a relatively short list because there are many things that from time to time aren't working properly. I mean if you look in the Rule Book and you know the prescribed sitting hours as they are now, as the weeks go by how you can expand on those hours and so on, which goes largely basically unabided by - the government with the majority, as we saw earlier on this session, will say, do you know what? Here's where we're going with the hours and we'll ring the bells and there will be a vote and it will carry.

If we go back to the idea that that may not be so necessary, if we went back I would believe about a prescribed sitting time that if we knew something like October 1st to December 1st, something like that. I'm not wedded to the dates, but if we knew in rough terms, whatever they were, whether they were for two months or a month or a month and a half, that's not the idea as much as the sessions in here we knew around it.

I would also say that people equate sitting in the House with you doing your job, which it is, but if we, as the 51 people in this House - when do you do most of your work? It's when the House is not in session. That's when you see most of your constituents, if you do hearings like I do, or stuff like that. That's when you have to arrange them. That's really the time. When people say, oh, my God, you only work eight or twelve weeks a year, I think most members in here laugh at it, because a lot of the heavy lifting to get re-elected is back in your constituency, and that's where you do the hand-to-hand combat.

I know it would make life a lot easier for members if they were to have that ability to know that this is the chunk of time we're going to do it in the Spring, this is the chunk of time we're going to do it in the Fall. With the exception that I had to change dates on hearings, if it were my preference I would meet in the early part of the late summer or early Fall because the travelling conditions are better, and I would say late in Spring, again, for the travelling conditions. Nonetheless, I'm being told I'm selfish. I don't want the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to ruin his budget on my behalf.

These are issues that MLAs have to deal with, especially the ones who don't live in the peninsula of Halifax or Dartmouth, that have to do a fair amount of travelling. That would make their schedule a lot easier, or at least manageable, I should say.

If we referred this resolution to the Committee on Assembly Matters, those are the things that people would bring forward, and there would be a fulsome discussion on that. I'm not going to get into a debate on how much a bag of cabbage costs. I wouldn't know it, except that the member for Kings North filled us in adequately there. (Interruption) I'm told by the member for Victoria-The Lakes that it's the same as 15 years ago. Wow.

All I know, Madam Speaker, all I'm going to say is that that member's family have a great product, and they're well supported within this. I can say for Cape Breton, we may disagree politically, but I have to say whether it's eggs, turnips, carrots, or cabbage, they do a great job.

The reality is that we would like to see some changes in this. The floor of the Legislature is the worst place in the world to do negotiations. I found that out some time ago. What we can do, I think if we can come to some sort of agreement of getting this off to the Committee of Assembly Matters and getting it there and working out where we agree.

There's an old term in interest-based bargaining, it's called Getting to Yes. That's what we should be doing with this resolution. We shouldn't be drawing heavy lines and to a point, for however we are there - there are heavy lines here. We should be trying to Get to Yes. What will work for the majority of members in this House? What can we do to change these?

I am saying that if we could agree to get this off to Assembly Matters, if we could do this, maybe through some quiet diplomacy that we could find where Yes is in Resolution No. 1, if it's to be found in the body of that resolution or if it's to be found in a more wide open discussion at Assembly Matters and then maybe for the next few hours that we have allotted in this House, we can adjourn debate on the amendment and adjourn debate on the main motion and get on to reinvigorating the debate on Bill No. 6 and get on to other government business.

It is clearly the will of the government, what they want to do here. I would hope at some point we can find our way to getting agreement on rule changes and that when someone takes it back to that caucus that they are taking it back in good faith and the caucuses agree - that's where it would be at.

Madam Speaker, in absence of anything I have said in the last couple of minutes about adjourning debate on either the main motion or the amendment that we could find our way to send this to Committee on Assembly Matters, and have it dealt with there, and that if this was to see further movement, I would think that diligent work on this through the times after the House rises and have a report back to the House ready for the Spring

session, we could start those rules from there, from day one. If there was a tutorial to be done in the House regarding the new rules that we would have the Rule Books updated so that they'd be ready to go. We could all be ready to go. There'd be no changing in midstream here. This would go forward and the members of the House would be fully satisfied with the rule changes.

I'm going to take my place. I want to thank you and I want to thank the Assembly for allowing me to say a few words on this and that I would hope I added to the debate and not subtracted from it. Thank you.

MADAME SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and it's certainly my pleasure to stand today and add to the debate on the amendment to Resolution No. 1 to send this resolution over to Assembly Matters to be debated and brought back to the House at a later date, hopefully to have a good discussion, a good group of individuals on the Assembly Matters Committee discuss this, see where it will go, see if they can come to a good agreement as to what rule changes should be made, what rule changes would be acceptable for all members of the Assembly, what rule changes would be the best fit for running this Legislature and having people have a good balance between their constituency office and their legislative life.

I know, personally, I am going to speak a little differently than some people here today and I could probably speak for a lot of the other members who are here - from Cape Breton, the member for Yarmouth, the member for Victoria-The Lakes, the member for Glace Bay - we have a good drive ahead of us every day when we leave this Legislature, and when we leave from home to come to the Legislature.

I know if the hours are changed - so we eliminate Monday night and we have to be here for noon or whatever on Tuesday morning, we still have to travel on a Monday. Madam Speaker, to get up at 5:00 a.m. or 4:00 a.m. in the morning in order to get here, have our caucus meeting so we know what we're going to deal with for that day, and to know that if I have a question I want to ask to get to the staff member to make sure that question gets into Question Period for that day, to work with the staff member, that I want to be prepared when I come here (Interruptions)

I may hear something different from somebody over there that they don't ask a question in the day, we have to get up and speak on bills - they don't get to speak on the bills, Madam Speaker. If they were willing to speak on the bills, I'd like to hear their side of what they think about this change. Does everybody agree with the change over there? If that's the case, let everybody stand, give their five minutes, every one of the other 21 members give their five minutes and let's hear what they have to say. (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. I ask that everyone please direct their comments to the Chair.

MR. ORRELL: Madam Speaker, I just heard that's why I could never hit a changeup, because I'm going after the fast ball all the time and I apologize for that.

AN HON. MEMBER: Who said that?

MR. ORRELL: Well, some member for Cape Breton Centre said that, I guess he must have seen me hit.

Anyway, Madam Speaker, if it's that important there are 21 members other than the Cabinet Ministers on that side. Through you, Madam Speaker, I'd like to hear every one of their opinions on this resolution. I know what our opinions are and we're voicing our opinions, everyone on this side is voicing their opinions. So far what I've heard is yes, we need rule changes, but you know rule changes have to fit for everybody.

I speak with these people on this side, the member for Cape Breton Centre, the member for Argyle-Barrington - most of us had to travel yesterday to be here for today. Yesterday was Thanksgiving, Madam Speaker, I could have spent as much time with my family as anyone else did but we had to be here this morning to get ready for today. So to take Monday night out of the mix and add it on to Tuesday and extend the hours, we start at two o'clock in the afternoon and extend the hours until midnight, I'm okay with that.

What are the inside members going to say when they are getting in their cars to drive home at midnight and they get home at - well, some of them are only 10, 15, 20 minutes, some people are an hour away so they get home at 1:00 a.m. and have to be back here again for 6:00 a.m. or 7:00 a.m. or 8:00 a.m., or whatever time in the morning again.

It's not really fair to them then, so eliminating that to add to that, yes, they take it away from us but what about the members who are inside now? They have to travel after midnight or after 10 o'clock or 11 o'clock and there's wildlife on the road. The member for Glace Bay and the member for Victoria-The Lakes would know that when we're travelling you have to be on your game all the time because you don't know what you're going to hit as far as weather, you don't know what you're going to hit as far as wildlife on the road, you don't know what you're going to hit as far as traffic. So if we extend the hours through the week for three, four other days, and we go late on Friday, well then you're not getting home - so either way the hours are going to be changed.

It's safer for us to travel in the daytime as compared to travel in the nighttime. If we sit late in the Fall, leaving here on a Friday at 4:30 p.m. or 5:00 p.m., we're travelling in the dark the whole way. So to them, to other people, to the people on the other side, to the people here who are inside members, for them to travel in the dark is just as dangerous. Madam Speaker, I'd hate to see that happen to anybody.

The member for Argyle-Barrington and the member for Yarmouth, the member for Clare-Digby - the member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie has quite a haul. So to have that happen to change the day, that's just one side, that's one slant on that, Madam Speaker. To extend the hours while we're here, I'm okay with that. If I'm here, I go back to an apartment all by myself in the nighttime and watch TV or study up on something for tomorrow. So I'm getting business done here and I'm okay with that. But then you've got to deal with that on the inside members, they have families to go home to every night. They get a chance to go home every night, and they get to say good night to their kids, as I heard earlier from the Minister of Environment - the inside members get that but if we have to be here on Tuesday morning and leave here late Friday, it defeats the whole purpose for any of us.

On Bill No. 1 that we had, and Bill No. 37, I think it was, during the last session, we didn't have enough time while we were here. We started Question Period one day at two o'clock in the morning. We started at 12:01 a.m. We went from eight o'clock in the evening to 12:00 midnight, started 12:01 a.m.

Obviously we didn't have enough hours, and that's the prerogative of the government, to change the hours. I'm okay with that, but if we're going to shorten the workweek and then add hours on - strange hours, to debate late - people in the province want to see what we're debating. We're here for a reason. We're here to debate the bills and make laws for the Province of Nova Scotia so that the province can run effectively.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to see all people involved in these debates. We've got 13 people on this side. We're missing a few because of illness. We're going to get to vote on a bill. These people aren't going to get to vote on this bill because they're not here. If they're here, great; if they're not here, that's fine. They might have business outside; they might be sitting here. Let everybody vote the way they want to vote on the bill.

AN HON. MEMBER: The resolution.

MR. ORRELL: The resolution, I apologize. Thank you.

Madam Speaker, we're here to debate the bills, and if we all get a chance to debate these bills . . .

ANOTHER HON. MEMBER: Resolution.

MR. ORRELL: Resolutions, bills - it's going to be bills after. This is the resolution that we're debating, so I'd like to hear everybody debate on the resolution, Madam Speaker. I hear people on the government side over there have their say with us.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. Actually, what we're discussing right now is the amendment to the resolution, so we need to try to keep on topic for that. Thank you.

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MR. ORRELL: Madam Speaker, this amendment pushes the resolution over to Assembly Matters Committee, where it should be in the first place. We're taking up debate time here on this resolution that could have been - hopefully could have been, or will be eventually - sent to Assembly Matters Committee to be discussed there and to come to a solution that is workable for everybody.

We have an order paper here that is full of bills, and full of resolutions. There are resolutions in this paper that we haven't discussed yet. They're never discussed. This order paper comes to an end at the end of the session, and all those resolutions that aren't called - we've Resolution No. 1 called here, and we're trying to move that down so that we can get a good debate on the resolution. We can make sure that that resolution gets the quality time it deserves, so that that resolution can be solved with the agreement of all Parties and we don't have to go through any of this.

When that resolution came to the floor of the Legislature, I assumed that there was almost agreement from all the House Leaders on what was going to happen with that resolution, and all of a sudden the resolution is here being debated for the last - probably we're into seven or eight hours of debate on this resolution now. Now we're into debate on the amendment to the resolution. We're going to have a vote, of course, and then hopefully that amended resolution goes down to Assembly Matters Committee, it gets discussed, and we come to a good agreement and have something that is good for everybody.

I think one of the big sticking points in this resolution that is going to cause it to be amended is the Monday evenings. Time-wise, we're saying we're going to get an extra day of Question Period. The member for Queens-Shelburne sat down and did the math on this, and although we're getting one extra day a week, we're going to lose something like 26 hours a year in Question Period.

Yes, it's great that we get an extra day, but get an extra day an hour at a time, if that's the case. I mean, we do three, three and a half hours of Question Period a week now. That's going to cut down to less than that. (Interruption)

There you go, I guess we got the answer, Madam Speaker. We all can finish now and sit down; we got our answer. We got our answer now. (Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The member for Northside-Westmount has the floor.

MR. ORRELL: I guess we're going to have that member stand and give his version of the debate on this matter. I hope this resolution goes back to the other side and they'll debate the resolution and the amendment to the resolution, and we'll hear their side other than what has been presented on this side. It would be interesting to hear what's there on

the other side. It's good to see you on the front benches. I never saw you back there very often.

We hear a lot and I'd like to hear it officially, I'd like to have the member stand and give his side of the story on this amendment. We may agree with what he has to say, but when we hear it when we're speaking, we don't hear the full debate on it. I'd love to hear that member's side of this resolution and this amendment to the resolution.

We have a lot of things we can debate in this Legislature. We hear a lot of resolutions come through, we hear resolutions on jobs, we hear lots of job losses - the province has lost something like 9,000 jobs, 8,700 jobs in the last year. We can debate that, let's put a resolution in and debate that tomorrow. We may come up with some good results for that resolution and some good ideas if everybody gets to put their ideas in there.

We heard in Question Period today some stuff about health care in the province. I know the Minister of Health and Wellness has agreed to come into my area and speak about health care and we could have that as a resolution and make it a necessity if we have to. We could make another bill, but this resolution we're talking about today is to change some of the rules of this. The amendment to this resolution, I think if we're looking at times and hours and Question Period times, if we had set times in this House that we're going to sit in this House, so we know that from the middle of October to the middle of November, first of December, we're going to be here and our hours are set, we can set our office time, we can set our life schedules, we can set all kinds of other schedules around that.

But not knowing that, we don't have that chance to set our office times around it. If we could leave here and go home every evening and set some office hours that way - that would be fine too. We can't do that, we don't have set times where we can sit in here and do that. We could debate all kinds of other issues that are in this House; I know we were talking energy, we're waiting to debate Bill No. 6 on hydraulic fracturing. Whatever side of the fence you're on, either you're for or against or you're not for or against or you're in the middle, at least if we're here debating it we can get some good ideas out there.

That works the same with this resolution. We've all had our say over here to say that we want to have a good debate, we want to come to a solution that is good for everybody in the Legislature. Nobody likes change, a lot of people think change is a bad thing, not always. (Interruptions) I'm getting heckled from my own side, they say change is good if I'm at the grocery store and I'm getting change back.

In all fairness, change is not always bad. When we can come to an agreement on change, we know we're going to need two-thirds of the people here to have this go through. From what I can understand it's a numbers game as well, but regardless of the numbers, if we can have a good solid debate on this amendment to this resolution, then at least we can come to an agreement amongst ourselves, and hopefully we don't have to turn this into what it has been turned into. When I'm home in my office and I'm dealing with important

matters in my office, the thing I get is - when are you going back to work? Some people don't understand that we get as valuable work done in the office as we do here.

I think the work that we do here is valuable. The laws that govern this province come out of this Chamber. We all have a chance to speak on those laws and resolutions, and the amendments to the resolutions, so that when we have our say, at least the people know that we are here representing them. When we went through those long sessions and we were here early mornings for Law Amendments Committee, and we were here late nights for regular House sitting hours, when we were here early mornings for House sitting hours and Question Period - what are we accomplishing by doing that? We're tired, we're not getting good debate on the bills, on the resolutions, and when that happens, sometimes we make bad decisions. We see a lot of bills and resolutions on the order paper that - if Monday night is an inconvenience for some people, let's do our own bills. Let's do Opposition bills.

We put some bills forward that we would love to see debated, moved on to the Law Amendments Committee, brought back to Committee of the Whole House and given third reading. I haven't always been one to say this, but sometimes we get good ideas from other people, and if we listen to what everybody has to say, we may be able to bring those good ideas forward. It doesn't really matter where those good ideas come from, as long as it's good for the province and good for the people of Nova Scotia. Some of my constituents will bring me information forward. I asked that of them before we came to this sitting of the Legislature, to tell me what's important to them. When it's important to them, I can bring it to the Legislature and we can put it in the form of questions; we can put it in the form of our debate.

If you listen to some of our people debate on Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, we hear a lot of personal information, a lot of personal stories, and that's because people want to hear what's going on, want to tell us what they want debated here in the Legislature, what they want changed. And that change can only happen here. When we're here, we want to make sure that everyone's having a debate with a clear head, that they're not fatigued, that we're getting all the best ideas to the floor of the Legislature, so we can make a good, informed decision on how to vote on resolutions, as this resolution we speak of today of changing some of the Rules in the House.

People in my constituency expect me to do more work. For whatever reason, they like to see me here in Halifax - probably because they don't want to see me at home. If I'm in Halifax, they figure I'm here working for them and, Madam Speaker, I am. I bring their concerns here to the Legislature. I make sure that when they voice their concerns to me, I bring them here to the Legislature, to individual ministers. We don't get the opportunity, when we're home in our offices, to come and talk to the minister directly.

Sometimes, what we have to speak about gets caught up in the bureaucracy that's down below, and doesn't get to the minister. So we really get an idea of exactly how they

feel about what may be important to members of my constituency, or members of my constituency that say - we'll use the Minister of Health and Wellness for an example. I spoke with the Minister of Health and Wellness and he has agreed to come down and speak to some things that are going on in my constituency. He has agreed to have me there while he's having these discussions so that I understand where he's at, he understands where he's at, and so do the people who work in the hospital.

That's why it's important for us to be here, working for the people in our constituency, to make sure we bring the information from them to the floor of this Legislature, to make sure that our concerns and their concerns are heard and hopefully addressed, so that we can make sure we govern the province accordingly.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. We have now reached the moment of interruption. The adjournment motion was submitted by the member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River:

“Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House call on the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture to consult with the lobster industry and let them have their say on the proposed levy.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

FISH. & AQUACULTURE: LOBSTER LEVY - IND. CONSULT

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and it's certainly an interesting topic and I am delighted to participate in the late debate tonight. I think for the members opposite and for the members on this side I just want to do a little history review concerning the lobster levy and the evolution of it.

If I can back up to 2013 - there was a large protest in Antigonish and there were roughly 1,000 to 1,500 boats from northern Nova Scotia and PEI literally tied up because of low prices. At that time I was actively involved in the sitting government as the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, and they called me to that community. Out of that discussion was the evolution of a lobster panel and the fishermen bought into it - a lobster panel formed by the three provinces of New Brunswick, PEI, and Nova Scotia, and it would come up with recommendations. If you fast-forward, the lobster panel did their work and they came up with a series of recommendations - also, the key important part of that was that the lobster panel suggested that there would be continuing consultation and a mandate would be directed from the fishing industry.

There was a change in government, we had a new Liberal Government, and in March of this year there was a lobster summit that was held on the 26th and 27th. I just want to point out that I would think it was one of the most severe winter storms that we had during our last winter, and I can tell you that I literally spent two days trying to get out of my driveway so I could get to Halifax.

That lobster session brought together all lobster sector stakeholders. Harvesters, live shippers, processors, buyers, and federal and provincial partners were at that particular summit. I want to point out, again, that this was very severe weather and there were a lot of people in the industry who could not participate.

This is very important - there were two key recommendations that came out of that summit. One was that there be more consultation - and during my discussion tonight you're going to hear that over and over. There was also a concern about the lack of representation that was not there, and the people were concerned about a proposed levy - who was going to manage this particular money and is it going to be a cash cow?

So there are deep concerns around that - who is going to collect the money that was generated by this two cent levy that was proposed by the lobster panel? Everyone knew that there had to be more consultation. During the interim when we sat in this House - we heard discussion earlier tonight how important it is to raise these important questions - and a member from the Official Opposition and myself raised the same question in March and April this year. And this was, to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, who promised, not once, but twice. So direct questions of, will there be consultations with the industry across Nova Scotia? And the reply was, yes there will be, we'll have a schedule, and bear with me. This all took place in March and April of this year.

Now, I've brought you up to date until mid-summer and what was announced by this minister is a proposed mystery group. For the life of me we haven't heard - this mystery group has not been named, the minister has gone off onto a 5 per cent proposal that he's talking with this mystery group. To me, there's a lot of confusion. The industry wants to know what this levy, this legislation, that this minister is proposing in this session that he's about ready to table - how is that going to evolve? What does it look like?

Madam Speaker, through you to the minister, my previous question in this session, I asked for a schedule of consultation, because the industry wants to know more about the details of this proposed legislation. It's so interesting to me, because not only are Nova Scotians involved in this discussion but this is a considerable amount of money - of a 2-cent levy, roughly \$1.5 million is going to be raised in the Nova Scotia portion of this.

There are also other provinces involved. Madam Speaker - do you know what P.E.I. is doing? As we speak, they are holding a province-wide vote on the basic principles that I'm talking about here. They are asking for direction from the industry. They're asking for

a mandate. They consulted, and this is what the industry said: we'll give you whatever, but you need to follow the democratic process and have a vote.

To me, that is wise. What is happening in Nova Scotia, if I could just take the time to point out - in New Brunswick and in P.E.I. and in Newfoundland and Labrador, there is an organization that is probably stronger than Nova Scotia. The difference in Nova Scotia is that we have a fiercely independent industry, and there's not as much organization as in P.E.I., particularly, where one group can probably represent the majority of the fishermen. They have spoken loud and clear. They are saying, we want to have a say in this, we want to know where this money is going, so we are going to have a vote with the industry.

Now, why I brought that up is because this is the crucial important point here. It's very interesting to note that in Nova Scotia the lobster industry lands over 60 percent of the lobsters that are landed in Canada. I'll repeat that: over 60 percent of those lobsters are landed in Nova Scotia, of the entire Atlantic Provinces, and they have been excluded from an opportunity. When they're going to talk about a levy that's going to be introduced to them, they have been excluded from a consultation which is crucial.

I can't drive this point home long enough, because the industry that lands the majority of lobsters has been excluded from a process because they are fiercely independent and they do not have all the organizations of one or two representing a province. This is crucial.

I also want to point out, if I can back up over the last year, that District No. 34 - where I fished for 38 years - the last few years, they have looked at options about reducing fishing effort, Sunday fishing, a vote in 2013 on reducing trap limits, and again, reducing fishing days. Each and every time they asked for a vote. This is crucial. They felt that is important.

Just last Fall there was a vote that was organized by the federal DFO to consider if they want to reduce their trap limit or reduce fishing days. They had a vote, and the industry spoke. They said, we want the status quo, it's important to us. I'm going to finish on this, Madam Speaker - we have a government that boasts about being open and transparent. If you are open, when you ask collectively that you're going to consult the industry - and it's in Hansard - the answer was yes.

We have not seen a schedule. We have not seen consultation with an industry that lands over 60 per cent of the lobsters in Atlantic Canada, and I think that is in the wrong direction.

It's as simple as this: we have a great industry, and the industry needs to give a mandate to this minister. He needs to take the time and go out and consult with the lobster industry. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honorable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: It's a pleasure to speak on this very important topic for Nova Scotians. Indeed I listened with great interest in the former speaker's comments on this industry and he is absolutely correct, over 60 per cent of lobster that is landed in Canada is landed in southwestern Nova Scotia and indeed in Nova Scotia, when you combine them all together. That's a very important statistic.

The lobster industry in Nova Scotia is very important to the rural economy that is shrinking because of young people leaving the province and as one industry that has done traditionally very well over the centuries and indeed today is a very important contributor to Nova Scotia's economy, and we haven't lost sight of that.

It actually accounts for \$422 million in exports, in the latest figures we received, and if you look at the total fishing industry in the Province of Nova Scotia, we're over a billion dollars in exports in the Province of Nova Scotia. I believe that is the second largest export in the province next to tires from Michelin Tire. It's a significant contributor to the industry and, indeed, they would have a lot more employees than Michelin Tire does and indeed, I believe they are the biggest employer in the whole province.

When you look at that and look at the value of that to rural Nova Scotia, it's incredibly important to us but we have to do it right. We absolutely have to do it right. There has been lots of talk about lobster. I remember years ago when I was first elected, the crisis was in the cod fishery and that was poorly handled by everybody, absolutely everybody that was involved in it and we don't want to see the lobster go the same way. We want to make sure lobster is here for a long time to come and not only that but make sure it is here with the value, the total value you can get for it.

Presently lobster is treated as a commodity and that's one reason we have such low prices on the wharf. There are all kinds of issues that are related to that and we are in the process of trying to address those issues and see if we can't get a higher price for the premium lobster in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia has premium lobster and when you look at the whole industry, we have the biggest catches of Atlantic lobster in the world so it's very important for us to really look after this industry and work with the industry, as we move forward.

We are committed to working with the industry. We have to maximize the value we get from the seafood products in Nova Scotia and there has been a lot of effort on that part by the very capable processors we have and the harvesters and the whole industry but we have to go further with that. We have to support an industry to grow and prosper; it's so critical to our economy in the province.

We are supportive of the recommendations of the Maritime Lobster Panel and we continue to work with our partners in the province to move that forward. Unfortunately

there is not a buy-in in the province that we've seen so far for the levy and indeed the industry is highly divided in that regard. To this day, if we are going to get this to work properly, we are going to have to have buy-in from industry. We've had consultations. We need to do a lot more consulting with the industry. We have to go in the right direction.

I believe we have found the solution. I am not convinced that we are there yet but we're very, very close to the solution that would engage the industry, not only in a levy process, or whatever we want to call it at the end of the day, I have no idea what it will be called at the end of the day. Hearing from some of the key people in the industry, they're not too keen on levy but they're keen on some other avenues that will achieve the same thing.

The member was correct. We figure it raises about \$1.6 million not \$1.5 million in a 2 cent levy, so it's about \$800,000, a little bit over \$800,000 for every cent of levy that's put on. I caution about using a levy. A levy was recommended in the lobster panel report; it doesn't have to be a levy to achieve the same thing. The idea is to get industry involved - industry driven and industry guided - and how this would be done and the report is critical. We have to have a better price. This crisis was caused - the former minister was correct - by really low price in the industry, where fishermen simply couldn't go fishing because they couldn't meet their expenses.

We don't want that to ever happen again and if we're going to avert that in the future, we have to look at the quality of the produce; we have to look at our marketing. We have to look at all kinds of different issues to ensure that the landed price at the wharf is high enough that, number one, the fishermen can make money and survive and prosper. Number two is to see if we can move that number up a bit, even higher, to give them added value so that they can add more money to the economy in Nova Scotia. That's what we're after.

We have a goal, according to the Ivany report, of doubling exports in the fishing industry in the next 10 years. It's a very difficult goal to achieve, but I believe it is achievable. I believe the lobster industry is going to be one of those key factors in that, but we have to think outside the box, further than we ever did before, to make that happen.

At the same time, we have to meet industry's expectations. We have to listen to them. We have to work with them. We have been listening. We have been working with them. We're hearing loud and clear that they're willing to do something - not necessarily a levy, not necessarily what was proposed, but with the same dollar value and the same results and possibly more with an industry-driven program that would put the industry in its place where it should be and add more value to rural Nova Scotia.

Rural Nova Scotia is key to this. As I said before, we see so many young people leaving the province, and it's one industry that we can work with to ensure they can have high-quality jobs, high-income jobs for people in the industry, entrepreneurs. When we

talk about the highly independent relationship with the fishermen, I've been working with fishermen for years, and I guarantee you, they're some of the best entrepreneurs in the world. Absolutely the best in the world.

Sometimes we have to work with them very closely to show them other ways they might be able to do things, and I can tell you that when we can finally come up with something that the industry would be interested in, they'll be the first ones to jump on board and really move it even beyond anything we could imagine. We will be very excited when that does happen, and it will happen.

I want to convey my personal respect and our government's personal respect for the lobster industry and all its members in this province; the harvesters, the plant workers, the processors, and all the other people in the industry who make this excellent product available for sale and export all over the world. Maine has a policy of buying Nova Scotia lobster that all of a sudden turns into Maine lobster because of the quality. It's pretty neat: they take our lobster and sell them all over the U.S. as top-quality Maine lobster, and it actually comes from Nova Scotia.

That's a compliment in one way, but it's poor for marketing for us, because we're leaving money on the table that we don't need to. We want to make sure we change that. We want to make sure we get the best possible quality in the product on the market and the best possible price for the products we put on the market. There's a large spectrum of products in the lobster industry that we can utilize to ensure that we get strong economic support and growth in the province. We see so many young men and women buying lobster licences now, up in the millions of dollars, so we want to make sure that they get a return on their investment. We want to make sure they can see a future for themselves and their families, and well out into their families hopefully taking that enterprise over.

It's not possible if we don't grow Nova Scotia's economy and get the value that the lobster really is. Lobster has been sold for so many years as a commodity instead of a luxury item, and it truly is a luxury item. You look at lobsters you buy anywhere in the province for - I've seen them in the grocery stores for up to \$10 a pound, but most of the time you can buy them from a vendor somewhere, or a fisherman, for \$6 a pound. Try to find a top-quality steak for \$6 a pound. You're looking at \$25 a pound. There's something wrong with this whole picture. We have to change that. We have to make sure that we get the maximum value.

The honourable member talked about the P.E.I. vote, all fisheries. In Prince Edward Island the whole island is organized, and the reason they're organized, according to the minister and what he told me several times, is that they threatened to take the diesel rebate away from them if they didn't organize. All of a sudden they all got organized, and I'd be interested to see what the vote will be when P.E.I. comes forward. Hopefully it's positive.

I have a great deal of respect for the minister and the department in Prince Edward Island, and we have a very close working relationship with them, as we do in New Brunswick. We hope to continue that with the new minister, as well as the relationship we've built with the federal minister, which is the first time in history - the first time in a long time, I should say - that we've had that kind of relationship. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Madam Speaker, I would like to commend the caucus to my left on this good topic for late debate. It's a very serious issue for our province and the strength and health of the lobster industry is of great concern. Just like we were talking earlier about the cabbage industry, the price of cabbage, I believe the price of lobster is of great concern to this House.

I would like to echo the disappointment of my colleague to the left that the timeline in the Maritime Lobster Panel report was not followed. The timeline called for consultation and a vote in July and August. I think the timing was deliberate in the sense that that was possibly the best time of year to get that vote done for the lobster industry. Now we're into October, and November is right around the corner, but I would like to suggest to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture that it is still not too late to get going on doing some of those recommendations in the Maritime Lobster Panel report.

It's clear that the lobster industry suffers, would get better prices possibly with better marketing. Is this the right vehicle for the lobster industry? That's the lobster industry's decision to make, but clearly the onus is on the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture to go to the lobster industry and explain the Maritime Lobster Panel report recommendations and conduct that vote.

In my opinion the lobster industry needs a better marketing vehicle and whether this is the right thing or not is another question, and that's a question for the lobster industry to decide. Even the exercise of going around and conducting those meetings and having this discussion with them, I believe, would be worthwhile, even if possibly at the end of the day they say no. The lobster industry needs to be considering this.

Furthermore, we are partners in this - as the minister has mentioned - with New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. As he mentioned, the work of conducting this vote and getting going on it has been conducted and is underway in Prince Edward Island. Madam Speaker, the minister didn't mention New Brunswick and I'm not aware of what's going on in New Brunswick in that situation either. So it's clear that this is of very great significance to our province.

The Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture has on his plate, a fair bit to do. He committed to doing this in July, or in the last sitting of the House when we asked him, and we're very disappointed that this hasn't been done.

I had visitors this summer from New Zealand and Australia, and off the coast of Tasmania they have a very similar industry and they are attracting about the \$30 a pound price for their lobster. In my opinion this is where - it isn't actually a lobster, it's a different type of crab - the prices need to be for this. This is a high-end product, this is, I think, the best lobster in the world. I believe that to get from here, from where we are right now, to there, is in large part a marketing question.

Now, in my farming career I had the opportunity to join a group of farmers and we marketed our product together. I very well remember my father saying to me, John, as long as you're in difficult times you'll all be able to work together, but when it's good times, you won't. His prediction came true, we did work together quite well through difficult times and later on we parted company. Out of that business, which was a well-known business, called Kings Produce Limited - well-known in the province - we all went our separate ways. It's in times of adversity that fishermen, I believe, will see the value of working together and we did, as farmers. I would suggest that this is the case here.

Now earlier this summer the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture brought up the 5 cent tax or levy, as you want to call it. I must say that we were very disappointed that even if he had that in the works that he would go public with that because it really muddied the water on this 2 cent levy. It really sent a wave, a shock, through the industry that maybe the industry didn't know all that was happening and kind of really, probably made it less likely that the industry would vote for this 2 cent levy. I think that is really unfortunate that that was the case, even if there is this area that the minister is working with, which is commendable if there is one particular area which the minister has not yet told us, commendable that he is working with that one area more directly. I would say that I am disappointed that he hasn't gone around to all the areas and conducted the vote, but if it was in his decision to work directly with one area and get buy-in on a higher levy from one area, I'm still astounded by that, but the fact that he went public with that really undermined the Lobster Panel Report, the possibility of getting that levy. It was a very ill-advised comment on his part, in my opinion, and it really hurt this process.

I noticed in the Throne Speech recently that we just had that it said, "As one step toward supporting growth in our resource sectors, my government will establish an industry-led Nova Scotia Lobster Industry Advisory Committee involving harvesters, processors, and buyers. This committee will provide advice and play a key role in advancing the aspirations of this important export."

This sounds a lot like life after the Maritime Lobster Panel Report recommendations, so if the Maritime Lobster Panel Report - if we had a no vote well this would be a sensible thing to do afterwards, but while we are still waiting on that vote, it sounds like a concession that is not going to happen and I'm very disappointed by that, the fact that was in there. I would have hoped that in the Throne Speech it would have said something like my government will continue to work toward conducting the vote and the recommendations of the Maritime Lobster Panel Report. That would have been the right

thing to say in the Throne Speech right now. I think it was in the last Throne Speech, I can't remember, but certainly the government said things to that effect last Spring and here we are and nothing has happened on this front.

I'm very disappointed that the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture didn't just straightforwardly go at the topic and conduct a vote and let the fishermen have their say. I realize that it's a coin toss on whether they would vote for it or against it, maybe they would vote against it, but they would still have democratic say in the process. In my opinion it would be a good thing to have them thinking about marketing and even to bring the issue before them to have the lobster industry go through the process - even if in fact they said no - it would be a good exercise for each community in the lobster industry to go through that process and have that discussion and have the opportunity to say yes or no to it. I realize that I have another minute or two but I'd just like to end my talk now.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: I think the thing is when I'm travelling around and talking to lobster fishermen, they are upset because they don't know what's going on. One of the things that this government has been priding itself on is it's no longer picking winners and losers, I think is the expression they use. But what's happening within the lobster industry is it's splintering the industry because the fishermen are afraid that they are picking winners and losers in the industry. They're saying well what's this? We haven't heard anything about a 5 cent levy. Are there some secret negotiations going on about a 5 cent levy? It is just creating some paranoia amongst the fishermen and it's completely unnecessary and it's completely the result of the government's way they rolled this out.

I do agree with my colleague from Kings North that the Lobster Panel Report is there. The other provinces are trying to work towards implementing those recommendations. Why the heck aren't we? Why don't our fishermen know that we are as well? I think that is a real shame as we should be showing the fishermen that we support them. We should be saying your opinion matters to us; we respect your opinion; we are interested in your opinion; we want your opinion. These are all things that should be said to the fishermen and instead they're picking up the newspaper and reading about a 5 cent levy in some mystery area and it's just confusing them; it's not setting them on good ground.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. The time has elapsed for late debate. I'd like to thank everybody. Also, the honourable member for Kings North, I believe you have a document that you may want to table. (Interruptions) Okay. That's fine. Thank you.

I'd like to thank everyone who has taken part in late debate this evening.

[GOVERNMENT MOTIONS]

MADAM SPEAKER: We will resume with the debate on the amendment to Resolution No. 1.

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount, and you have 39 minutes left.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: I won't take the full 39 minutes, Madam Speaker. Thank you. I didn't get a chance to officially close my debate on the amendment. Just so we realize, we know that everybody in this Legislature works hard. Every single member in here - well, except maybe the member for Cape Breton Centre, but anyway, that's neither here nor there. We know that every member in this Legislature works hard, and we know the time in our constituency is valuable. But we also know that the time here in the Legislature has to be as valuable or more valuable, because this is where rules are made, rules are passed, and we govern the province out of this historic building.

When I bring issues forward from my constituents to either alter a bill, change a bill, or create a new bill, or to speak with the members of the Third Party or members of the government, there's a purpose to it, and the purpose is to make this province a better place to be, to make this Chamber a better place to be, and make sure our residents have the ability to live in our province, and to live in a province that's a healthy province that has good laws and has good government.

You know, there's still work to do. We all know that. The change to this resolution, the amendment to this resolution to go to the Assembly Matters Committee - we think there's still work to do. We know there are changes that can be made and we know that some of the changes are good changes. We don't necessarily agree with all the changes, but we live in a democracy as well. After what we saw on Bill No. 1 where there are questions of that being changed for some of the health care workers, we want to make sure that we live within our democracy and make sure that the changes that come to this Legislature, the changes to the resolutions, the resolutions that go to Assembly Matters Committee, and the bills that go to Law Amendments Committee - that people have their say and they have their say through us.

We know that when we have our say, we hope the people are listening. We hope that maybe, on things that we don't agree with, we can change somebody's mind, or change someone's opinion to the fact that - we may not be 100 per cent right but our opinion matters. We like to think that when we speak to resolutions like we are today, that our opinion does matter. I'd like to hear everybody in the Chamber speak to the resolution, Madam Speaker, just so I can get an idea where everybody else is coming from. I know where we're coming from. I hear a lot of background - music, I will say - noise when certain parts of the resolution are brought up, and I would love to be able to sit here in my seat and listen to what everybody else has to say. That would make for good debate. I know

good debate is something we all strive for, and I'm hoping that I made my points in this debate today that there's still work to do.

We all work hard, we all work on behalf of our constituents, and we all want to see good resolutions and good bills come forward in the Legislature, to make this province a better place to live. We all want to have good conversation with the ministers and with the Opposition members, to hear their side of the story, to hear what the concerns are in their area, and hopefully we will still continue debate on this amendment to the resolution so we can come to a good conclusion, a conclusion that everybody in the Legislature can live with.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I'll take my place.

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

MR. LARRY HARRISON: I wasn't going to say very much, but I'll just take a couple of minutes. I know a lot of time could be saved if I cut down on my remarks in the run of a day.

I am used to hearing that this is where we work: here, not in the constituency. This is where we work. Of course, that information I've had now for 41 years in the ministry as well, because they said we only work one day a week there, and actually only half a day, so that really doesn't bother me too much. I'm used to that.

I must admit, though, that when I wanted to come to the House I had a dream. The dream was that there would be 51 people in here who would do their best to make decisions for the Province of Nova Scotia. I had a dream that when I walked in here I could talk to any member of this House, be taken seriously, and bring constituency matters into this House.

I had a dream that all the bills that came out of this caucus, came out of that caucus, came out of that caucus, would be heard and dealt with by all of us in this House - get all the information and make the right decision. I don't know what is best as far as changing the rules is concerned. All I know is that I am not going to lose my dream. I haven't lost it yet; I have no intentions of losing it. I still feel I can go there. I still feel we have a lot of bills coming out of these two caucuses. I just would like to maybe have more debate on what takes place, as well as more bills maybe coming through the House instead of being left to be handled in another way at another time.

I am for any change that is going to enhance what happens in this House, its debates and decisions. Having said that, we'll see what happens. I will continue to do my best to make sure my constituents are heard and that the stuff gets done here in a proper manner.

(Interruption) Keep going? Do you think I'm in church? (Interruptions) But it really is an honour to be an MLA and to be able to just listen to people.

Well, yes, you do - I was going to say that you have no idea what comes through a telephone, but you do have an idea of what comes through a telephone.

I would like to have a magic wand and go zap, zap, zap, your problem is going to get solved. I'm hoping we have a couple of magic wands in here just to do what we hope can be done. Anyway, I am done. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand and speak for a few moments on the amendment, which I hadn't had the opportunity to speak to. I do want to make sure that I thank - I had a lot of great conversations today, and of course to the member for Fairview-Clayton Park, I think she has some reasoned ideas of what things should be happening here. Quite honestly, if we go to the amendment from the NDP - I don't know what the member for Fairview-Clayton Park feels on this amendment, but I think it's one that she might want to consider at some point.

I think the amendment of putting it forward so that we can have the opportunity to talk about this in the Committee on Assembly Matters is one that's going to be thoughtful, and one we can take the issues that we don't agree on - there are a few things here that we don't agree on. It's not like we don't want change and they don't want change and they don't want change. We all have this feeling of change. I know the member for Fairview-Clayton Park really wants change in this House. She's been here for a year now and she sees the uses (Interruption) She was a Page too, so she knows how useful things here are and how not useful things are, so to be able to change the things that are not useful, I think is a good thing.

Taking this resolution and moving it forward by six months so that we can have a committee meeting - of course under your presidency, Mr. Speaker - we're able to look at the things that we don't have agreement on. Now knowing full well that at the end of the day that the members of the government are the ones that have the majority on that committee, knowing full well that they will still be bringing the issue of Monday nights forward and I think all through this process that we've been willing to say, is there a way to make that adjustment, is there a way to say committee day is one week, House sitting the next week, or what is that quid pro quo that the member for Halifax Needham, the Interim Leader of the NDP has brought forward?

What are we trading off, what are gaining on behalf? I don't think the member for Fairview-Clayton Park would want us all to come out losers. I think coming out losers is the wrong answer. I think Nova Scotians would be the winners on this - by the way I got four in. Moving it forward is one option, is one way to broach the situation. Sort of a bit of

a deadlock is what you would call it, that we can't agree on those final two points, which is that Monday night sitting. (Interruption)

We could get Dorsey to come in. Dorsey's going to be doing a great job for our health care unions and the Health and Wellness Department, so we need to see if he could actually come up with a solution for us on this one. I believe the amendment to do this is one that will allow clearer heads to prevail. Yes, we've been sitting here talking about this for the majority of today and for a big chunk of Friday because we're looking for an offer to tell everyone the honest truth.

What is going to be the give and take? What is going to be the solution to move us on to the next point in this debate? I quite think that once debate on the amendment finishes we'll of course have a vote and we'll see where the government is on that one. I haven't really gotten an indication from the government if they're supportive or not supportive. I think the member for Fairview-Clayton Park, so that's five, you know, I think she just wants to see things move on here. Maybe the member for Halifax Chebucto - I'll have to come up with it later. I come to names all of a sudden, and I know I can't use the members' names in the House, we have to remember their constituency names.

I think coming up with that solution of moving it forward is good. There are a number of other options that can be considered and which I spoke about when I spoke during the main motion, which is the issue of moving it off to committee immediately. Why don't we just accept the things that we agree on and just take those two items and shove them off and get them into that committee, have a committee meeting as soon as you can and actually continue to meet over the winter so that in the Spring we come back with a full slate of changes which has had the input of not only us House Leaders around the table - it would be nice to have other members involved in this one too.

Not that I don't like hanging out with the other House Leaders, but we do come to a head on some issues that we can't necessarily come up to a final agreement which is why we're here today. I think the Government House Leader felt that he had an agreement and we kept telling him he didn't, yet we're here debating this one here today.

It rolls down to the question of this and the next couple of hours or minutes or whatever happens here in the next bit as this resolution comes to a vote is the question of two-thirds. We keep coming to that point. Most House Rule changes in the past - not all, but most - have come with the unanimous consent of this House. Everybody around the table, whether there was 52 members at the time or 48 members at the time or 51 members today, all of them have agreed upon the rule changes as a collective because the things that we do in this House of Assembly all impact the people we represent. So of course we would all move together and actually approve, or in some cases not even bring them here because we didn't approve.

What we are looking at over the next little bit is the fact that the Government House Leader is looking for a two-thirds vote on this resolution, so it will be voted down, of course, but on the main issue itself is the issue of two-thirds.

If the government is able to get two-thirds vote on this, the motion passes because this is a rule motion. If they lose the vote, of course the Government House Leader can bring back another motion in their time, with different things, and maybe have a vote on that at some other time, but it is probably going to end up in the same place.

Do we want to actually have a situation here tonight that all the speakers are done, of course the main motion, I think, is coming to a quick close, but we're going to move on to the next thing that of course I can't speak to because I already spoke on the main motion, but we're going to come to a point where we're going to base a rule of change on a two-thirds majority.

Mr. Speaker, if we get to the point where we don't have that two-thirds majority, this resolution is shot down of course, never to be amended again, never to be brought back unless it comes under a different method, close to a different method. That's a little worrisome because it takes an opportunity, creates a bit of precedence in the House and basically blocks being able to do this again.

I would think that it would be in the best interest of the House that we find some amendments that are palatable to the government, palatable to the Government House Leader, that we are able to come to that agreement where we think we agree on a number of things - that we can do it.

Do the members want to lose the vote, is my question, and I don't think so. What I would also like to see, as I come to a close on this one, what I would also like to see is if there are ways to save this, if there are some resolutions, or some amendments, that actually are going to make sense, whether it's this one that we're talking about now or whether they are different ones as we move along - what are they? I think the House Leader for the NDP would like to know. I know I'd like to know what those amendments might be so that we can actually fully consider them, because as the member for Sackville-Cobequid has said, we make decisions as a caucus. We like to be able to see those amendments, to be able to bring them back to our caucus to say yea or nay to them, to see whether it's the direction that we want to go or not.

If there was an offer to us that said no, we're going to find a different use for Monday nights, or we're going to make an adjustment to it, we're going to sit one week as a committee, we'll sit another week as a House, or whatever the compromise might be. Whether the hours of Question Period move from 45 minutes to 50 minutes, I think we'd like to know that - that there is a change afoot. If there is a change afoot, then I'd like to have a hunk of paper that says that this is what we're willing to do and I'd be happy to

provide the Government House Leader with another letter back that says yes, we're in agreement and we'll move forward on these items.

The same thing is if we move this to the Committee on Assembly Matters, if there is a way to tune this up that all things will be binding, well so be it. I don't mind moving these things forward into a committee, under the assumption that at the end of the day whatever that debate may be, as long as the debate is just and right, that we can actually agree that when they hit the floor of this Legislature, I can assure the members that we would approve them as they are, because I know that they had the light of day, they had the opportunity to be debated, they had an opportunity to have the input of other people.

A couple of times this afternoon we talked about having the opportunity for the press gallery to be able to speak to this issue. What are their thoughts on it? Where do they see benefits for reporting - to be able to report what happens in this House of Assembly in a fair and distinct manner - what do they think on it? What do Nova Scotians think about it? Why not have an open process, which the Committee on Assembly Matters would be, to provide that input or ask for that input from our communities, to say these are the things that are palatable to us and the things that are not? I think those are all reasonable things.

I say to you again, Mr. Speaker, just a hunk of paper would be really nice, rather than hearsay. We're hearing through different people that they'd be willing to make some changes, but as a House Leader, I haven't seen any of those changes, and I don't think the House Leader for the NDP has seen any changes either. That's where we end up in a funny little circle here.

The other thing that I'm finding interesting here today is the fact that the government is letting us go on this one. It seems like they're going to continue to let us go on the main motion without any amendments or discussion. So it sort of falls into our storyline here - whether you believe it or not, it is sort of the "my way or the highway" approach to governing. I think that's an uncomfortable statement for the way these changes should be taken.

I still think, Mr. Speaker, that under your direction the Committee on Assembly Matters can meet and actually have these amendments, these changes to the House Rules, looked at and brought to fruition.

I found it interesting - as I mentioned, I was speaking to Art Donahoe just the other night, who has been a Speaker of this House, was the Speaker of this House for a long time during the 1980s. I asked him, how often did you convene the Committee on Assembly Matters? He said, we met regularly and we discussed the ongoing issues of the House in an effort to make them more efficient, to make them more transparent, to make them more accountable. They did that on a regular basis.

Again, pointing back at times where we didn't do this doesn't help either, I think. I don't remember a meeting in my 11 years here - I find it odd that I don't remember, but I think it was because there were no meetings of the Committee on Assembly Matters. I think that's a sad testament for previous governments. There's two included in that previous government side - we're there, you're there.

As I push this government to be different than the last couple, why don't they call the meeting of the Committee on Assembly Matters? What are we scared of, that we actually have that ongoing debate of House Rule changes?

The Government House Leader also said, not so long ago, what about those other things that of course were on the list of things to be debated or discussed on House Rule changes, like the way we look at estimates, like the way we look at the budget? Why do we go so long on things when the process allows a minister to speak for an hour and an Opposition member to speak for an hour and, quite honestly, not even ask a question?

I think there were a couple of times where we talked about the member for Colchester North, when I think she was Minister of Health - she went for 20 hours answering questions of the Opposition. Was there any real information provided or exchanged during that? Very little. It was the ideals of one Party versus the ideals of another Party, or the ideals of one person versus the thoughts or ideals of another person.

How does that serve the debate in this House of Assembly? How does that serve the questioning of a \$9 billion or almost a \$10 billion budget? It doesn't, and I think that's valid stuff to put to that committee and say, go out and do some of that work. It's a bit of a red herring, in a way. We talk about - I said "red herring," and I forget what I was going to say, but it's the issue of "don't do as I do, do as I say," I think, is what we try to say. I got it right on the first try.

Especially for those of us who have been here a little longer, we tend to look at things maybe a little bit differently, just because we experience different facets of the way this House of Assembly proceeds. To the new members, I think you look at this in a new light and I think the opportunity to speak, or at least have their thoughts brought forward during a different committee, I think it would be valuable. How many times have we talked about online petitions? We've talked about that a ton of times and I know the member for Fairview-Clayton Park has talked about that on a bunch of occasions; she even brought a bill forward to allow for electronic petitions.

I know the problems with that, but why not actually have that debate? Why not come up with a solution? Today, how many electronic change.org petitions are we asked to bring forward to the House of Assembly? We can't, we need to have a prayer that is very prescriptive; we need to have original signatures; we need to have the original pieces of paper. If the prayer is not on every paper then it doesn't count. Unless we handle our petitions on behalf of our community, which I've tried to do on a number of occasions to

make sure that it stays to form, but if someone else says, listen, I think the member for Inverness had a petition the other day with 400 names on it but it was not admissible to the House floor because it didn't have all those ingredients involved.

Why not look at a system that allows for electronic? That is what we're talking about. Those are things that should be talked about in the Committee on Assembly Matters - just like the things that we kind of disagree on today.

I would say in closing, I think contrary to what you are hearing, or what you're understanding today, I'm going to say this to my colleagues across the way, by no way did we want to start off being obstructionist on this. The issue is that there is only one thing we can do when we disagree with what government is doing, especially on the floor of this Legislature, and that is to take up time and talk. I don't want to quote Michael Gorman's column in the Howe Room that was up last night, but it's true. That's all we have the opportunity to do, hoping that clearer heads will prevail and that there will be that sense of debate or at least a bit of negotiation that will happen in the background.

I can say that today there has been no negotiation. It's been pretty cold, I think, in our discussions. All we want to find is a solution to the problem that we see before us and move on to things that are more important, that are important to the daily operations of Nova Scotia, the things that are truly debatable. I mean, I've been ready for two days now to talk to Bill No. 6 but that hasn't been able to come forward, and I'm hoping at some point it will.

My closing plea to the Government House Leader is that if there are changes, we'd really like to be able to see them and debate them and bring them back to our caucuses and be able to have that discussion. I think many people around here will take some of the adversity between House Leaders as being that we don't like each other, but quite honestly, I appreciate the member for Richmond as I always have appreciated - sorry, Cape Breton-Richmond, it's sort of like Argyle-Barrington, we'll never get the straight answer on this one for a while. I think we try to be collaborative on this. We would like to be able to continue to be collaborative on this, and be able to come up with a solution to the problems that are before us.

With that, I thank you for the opportunity to speak to the amendment that is before us.

MR. SPEAKER: There is a request for a recorded vote on the amendment.

Ring the bells. Call in the members.

[7:00 p.m.]

[The Division bells were rung]

MR. SPEAKER: Are the Whips satisfied?

[The Clerk calls the roll.]

[8:01 p.m.]

YEAS

Mr. MacMaster
Mr. Dunn
Mr. Baillie
Mr. d'Entremont
Mr. Corbett
Ms. MacDonald
Mr. David Wilson
Ms. Zann
Ms. Peterson-Rafuse
Mr. Belliveau
Mr. Orrell
Ms. MacFarlane
Mr. Houston
Mr. Harrison
Mr. Lohr

NAYS

Mr. Colwell
Mr. Churchill
Ms. Bernard
Ms. Regan
Mr. Samson
Ms. Whalen
Mr. Glavine
Ms. Casey
Mr. MacLellan
Ms. Diab
Mr. Horne
Mr. Hines
Mr. Stroink
Ms. Arab
Mr. Delorey
Mr. Ince
Mr. Kousoulis
Mr. Farrell
Mr. Rankin
Ms. Miller
Mr. Rowe
Mr. Maguire
Ms. Lohnes-Croft
Ms. Treen
Mr. Gough
Mr. Jessome
Mr. Irving

THE CLERK: For, 15. Against, 27.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is defeated.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. TERRY FARRELL: I move we adjourn debate on Resolution No. 1.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn the debate. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 6.

Bill No. 6 - Petroleum Resources Act.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, holy cow. I was so expecting to do something different; I've been ready for this for the last three days. It's going to be great. I can't say that but I will thank the members opposite for finally bringing Bill No. 6 to the floor of the House again for a debate. It's something we have been saying for a while: there are important things to be debated in this House of Assembly and I think we are happy to be back on to business.

There are some great issues to be debated and one of them, we have been saying for a while now, is the issue of fracking and the issue of - go slowly, but keep going. I think the message we got out of the Wheeler report was one that there is some opportunity for Nova Scotia at a time when we are bleeding jobs and we continue to bleed jobs in Nova Scotia. The last round in the last year I think it was 9,000 jobs lost in Nova Scotia. I think that's a travesty because most of those jobs are in rural Nova Scotia, places that are economically in trouble as well.

Mr. Speaker, jobs in southwestern Nova Scotia are important, jobs in northern Nova Scotia are important, jobs here in Halifax are important. I think it is incumbent upon us to make sure that all those opportunities are available to developers and to private industry when that time comes.

The fracking bill, as it is coming to be known, which is a bill to ban fracking; yet we've heard "ban" and we've heard "moratorium", which are really two different things. Banning is an outright issue that bans it forever, or at least until another government dares to unlock the banning. Moratorium is such that it normally has a time limit to it. This has

neither a time limit nor does it make it palatable to future governments to take on the issue of undoing it, so we end up in a bit of a quandary on what to do with a bill that bans something that, even by the admission of the minister, is based on old information, information that is incomplete, information that could require more research, even to the point to where what we see moving forward that should this ban be put in place, who will do the further research?

We've heard this a number of times from the minister, we've heard it from the Premier during Question Period - well, we need to do more work. Well who's going to do the more work, Mr. Speaker? That's sort of the crux of the question. If you are banning it, you become uncompetitive in at least a Canadian aspect if not in an international aspect. People who are going to be making decisions and will be looking at Nova Scotia or Canada, for that matter, and saying no, they're the ones who banned it so we're not going to be investing our money in even doing some research because we all know that any oil and gas research is extremely expensive.

We know that it is far more expensive to do it offshore than it is onshore, but we do know there is going to be a tremendous amount of work that needs to be done. So if you ban it and you are the organization that bans it, i.e., the government, the minister, the Department of Energy, are they going to be doing the research themselves, are they going to have to fund that research? And, if they do need to fund that research, quite honestly, how are they going to fund it? It is going to cost millions of dollars to do that.

As I said, under the admission of the minister - and he says it was sort of tuned up to 2014 or 2013, but really the Wheeler report and other reports are using data that is based in 1998, 2003 and 2008, I think. So are we saying that this province would be the ones to do the further research to go and drill holes and be the oil and gas explorer, or will we find a better way that allows the industry to do it?

I've heard the minister talk about the Wheeler members, the members of the Wheeler report who helped write this report, who sat through all those public meetings. I've heard that they're all for the ban. I find that confusing because I can go through a number of news reports from different places that say quite the opposite. So I'm hoping that at some point, maybe when the minister closes debate, that he can clarify a number of them.

I thought that for the benefit of the House I would maybe read a few points of these reports as they are. One of them, which I'll table once I'm done, is an article - from one of the members, actually - that was published in *The Chronicle Herald* on September 16th, from Mr. Ray Ritcey. I'm just going to read a couple of paragraphs:

"I was a member of the panel that released the Wheeler report on hydraulic fracturing on Aug. 28. The decision taken by government to ban 'high volume' hydraulic fracturing on Sept. 3 is not what the

panel recommended nor what I personally believe to be in the best interests of Nova Scotians. Hydraulic fracturing is a complex and divisive issue, particularly in Nova Scotia, where onshore petroleum development is a relatively young industry. While I cannot explain why or how the government decided to proceed on the basis it has suggested, I remain hopeful that the government will find a solution that better represents the intent of the very hard work that was done by the panel on behalf of Nova Scotians.”

So that member had said that he does not support a ban or a moratorium or whatever you want to call it, as the report also says. I forget the exact wording, if I can find it here, but no political mechanism in which to stop the further development of this resource. And like I said, time and time again, the minister stands and says, all the members are accepting of the ban. So I can't square that round hole at this point, or I can't round that square hole. I don't know what that one is, so I guess I'm going to have to take on the member for Pictou East for a bad issue.

You know, they say that, and yet the minister says they say something different. I think it would be beneficial to this House, or for others, if we called the Wheeler report members to one of our committees and asked them straight out, what is your feeling, or the committee's feeling, on the ban on hydraulic fracturing? Maybe we will hear that when the Law Amendments Committee will sit to consider this bill, because I don't hear that.

I think there's, what, maybe two dissenting members at this point that we've heard, from all the members? They were what, five members or eight members on the Wheeler report, at this point? Most of them had said they don't support the ban, and there's a couple that have said they do support the ban. So on a pure majority standpoint - and I guess majority led the Wheeler report in this case, but I don't know how the minister or the government took that information and threw it into a decision to put Bill No. 6 in front of us today.

There's another article, by Monica Graham. This was in *The Chronicle Herald*, dated September 6th, I believe, and its byline: “Fracking ban makes future study ‘really hard’: Wheeler panel member”:

“[The Energy Minister's] plan to ban hydraulic fracturing demonstrates an incomplete reading of the Wheeler report,” - and there's a link to the Wheeler report - “said a member of the panel that studied the controversial method of extracting onshore natural gas in Nova Scotia.”

[The minister's] comments about hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, and his quick move to ban the practice show that he doesn't

understand the report or the subject, said Brad Hayes, head of the Calgary firm of Petrel Robertson Consulting Ltd.

Hayes, whose company investigates and assesses geophysical and geological data for the petroleum industry, served on the panel that Cape Breton University president David Wheeler led . . .

I'm totally in agreement with the recommendation in the report for further study," Hayes said.

Regulatory processes, new well designs, rocks, the amount and location of the resource, and groundwater distribution all should be studied, he said.

That study depends on companies exploring Nova Scotia geology, but they can't afford to do it if fracking is banned outright, Hayes said."

So here's a second panel member who clearly has said that a ban is not the way to go, contrary to what the minister tells us on a regular basis, that all Wheeler report members have said that they support a ban on hydraulic fracturing.

Further down he also says the work hasn't been done yet to define the potential more reliably and to design techniques to access the petroleum economically. So again, this just shows, as the report said, further work has to be done and not only further work in - I think what the minister uses of community acceptability or community buy-in to these kinds of projects but there's a technology issue that needs to be addressed, as well, that will not be addressed if a ban is put in place.

I harken back to a number of other bans that have been put in place in this province. One of them, of course, is the uranium mining that was put back a number of years ago. Quite honestly, if we think that uranium mining will happen at any time in Nova Scotia's history, I think, will be slim to none and that's in part because of banning something. There wasn't further study done, it was just outright banning. I can't remember what government did that, I think we did that, I'm not positive, or you guys did that during your time, or the NDP did that in their time.

If you're going to ban something outright, you would know, but uranium mining, in my estimation, is probably not the right thing to be doing anyway because of a whole bunch of issues, not including the longer issue of uranium degradation over the years, the radiation that, of course, is held in it as it's further refined. It doesn't have anything to do about finding what the resource is or how the resource is going to work or anything like that. I think straight-out mining of uranium is one that is very clear and the resource was clearly defined.

There are the comments from Mr. Hayes; we've quoted during Question Period a number of times. The business community has questioned whether the ban is the right way to go or not. We've heard in a number of editorials, which I'll talk about in a few moments, from *The Chronicle Herald*. The editorial panel of *The Chronicle Herald*, I think, does some very good work. Some stuff that I agree with, some stuff that I don't, but in most cases I think they thoughtfully look at many resources. To talk about what we're hearing from the industry or from, what we would qualify, the economy, is well put together in a letter from the Atlantic Chamber of Commerce dated October 3rd that went to the honourable Premier and also a copy to the minister.

I think it's right that we read this one as well and I think we've quoted some pieces of it, and probably other people have quoted some pieces of it, but I thought I'd read most of it if I possibly can, Mr. Speaker.

Since 1896, the Atlantic Chamber of Commerce and its predecessors have been championing the cause of business in Atlantic Canada. We represent upwards of 16,000 businesses through member Chambers of Commerce across the region and advocate on a variety of issues, such as population, productivity, policy and partnership.

We are writing today to offer our thoughts on the Government of Nova Scotia's announcement that it will introduce legislation to prohibit high volume hydraulic fracturing for onshore shale gas.

Please allow me to begin this letter by outlining the ACC's view on a few key premises relevant to this and other topics:

- Governments have a clear role and responsibility to take reasonable measures to ensure the health and safety of their citizens . . .

I think all of us could agree with that. They go on to say:

- The regulation of natural resource industries is expected and welcomed, as industry players as well as the general public have a clearer understanding of the expectations of all involved in regulated environments . . .

I think that also harkens to the issues that we have with offshore and we have a very vibrant offshore, or at least an offshore that I think will continue to grow over the next number of years for a number of reasons, not that we have a clear set of regulations that maintains, or at least makes it as safe as it possibly could ever be through the offshore CNSOPB.

The third point that was here is:

- Public policy decisions must be made on evidence, and decisions should be re-visited when evidence indicates a rationale for change.

As you are aware, there is a history of safe and responsible resource development, including hydraulic fracking, in Canada. Equally we understand that it is the intention of government to prohibit high volume fracking only. We understand that your government is seeking to strike a balance in its public policy decisions - encourage some level of exploration and development while capping the amount of activity so as to limit potential negative effects.

It goes on, of course, for another whole page and I call on many members of this House to maybe make a copy of this and have a read because it is, I think, a good summation of what I think our business community is saying - you know, listen, there is further work that needs to be done, we all understand that and I think that is something that we've said. There is further data that needs to be collected, but let industry collect the data, let them do the work, provide a safe regulatory framework that is safe for, of course, the workers who are going to be doing the work, but also for the environment that it will be touching.

Not for a minute do we believe that there won't be concerns or issues that will arise for drilling into our mantle, into our crust, as they look for hydrocarbons but if you have a strong set of regulations that stipulate, drive, and direct that work then we know that we've done our work as legislators to be able to provide an environment for further development.

Roger Taylor has an article from September 4th, and I think you'd probably believe that he is questioning the ban as well.

“The McNeil government's quick decision to ban hydraulic fracturing of onshore shale gas in Nova Scotia has at least one expert writing it off as a political decision. The ban Energy Minister Andrew Younger announced Wednesday surprised Graham Gagnon, a member of the Nova Scotia Independent Review Panel on Hydraulic Fracturing, headed by Cape Breton University president David Wheeler. A drinking water expert and Dalhousie University professor, Gagnon wrote one of the chapters in the panel's final report and contributed more broadly to all its recommendations. He told me . . .” - told Roger Taylor - “. . . Thursday he was amazed how quickly the government came to its conclusion.”

That definitely questioned us as well, I know the minister has said, well listen, we've had drafts and we have, of course, the chapters, as that panel was reporting back they were reporting back specific chapters so he would have had the opportunity and the department would have had an opportunity to read those chapters as they became available, as all of us did. Yet it was three days, it was three days from the final report to him, standing over at One Government Place in the room announcing that the government would be bringing forward a bill to ban high-volume hydraulic fracturing in this province.

Mr. Gagnon goes on to say, "I was disappointed . . . with such a short reaction time. It just doesn't seem like it was given a thorough consideration. At least that is what it would appear from media (reports). We haven't had any discussions, as a panel, with the department."

I find that to be a troubling statement because you would think that if you'd go out and do all this work as a committee that you would like to have an airing with the responsible department, that those who had the responsibility of writing specific chapters would be able to present their findings, their research to the department or to the minister for further consideration before he would have had the opportunity to bring this bill forward - as a matter of fact I would expect it of the Energy Minister to do that.

I do find it interesting because that minister is probably one of the most well-read ministers I've known in my time in this House, whether he was doing his work as Energy Critic, spending his evenings reading and researching - God knows how many Red Bulls were consumed at that time, but you know what I mean? He spent his time making sure that he spent his time reading and making sure he had the information, which is why I think I'm disappointed, along with Mr. Gagnon, that such a quick reaction had to happen. I would have thought the minister, the Premier, even the Executive Council would have invited the Wheeler panel to come in and present their findings to them, which we find that they didn't.

"Many panel members anticipated there would be either feedback from the department or an opportunity to discuss the report with department officials . . . You can just imagine with any written text, there is always the opportunity to misunderstand what we were thinking and where we were going. There was an opportunity for the department to host a workshop, meeting or discussion with the panel members as a followup, said Gagnon, even if it was just to clarify what was being said in the report and the thinking behind its 32 recommendations."

This article goes along, Mr. Taylor, as we read is very thorough and also talks to Phil Knoll, the CEO of Corridor Resources of Halifax. He told Mr. Taylor on Thursday, when this was written, on September 4th, ". . . he is disgusted, disappointed and embarrassed by the government's decision." Here's a guy that's been doing onshore research for some time. "Watching a pure political decision like this be made, it can only be bad for Nova Scotia, Knoll says. Corridor does not have any operations in the province and

isn't interested in Nova Scotia, he says, but it is safely fracking for shale gas in New Brunswick and has plans to do more because there are regulations in place."

Strong, clear, straight-up regulations that keep our environment safe. He also goes on to say, ". . . the rules around fracking in places where shale gas is already being produced are well documented. And given that Nova Scotia's industry will probably take five to 10 years to start, he says that offers government time to create a regulator and implement sophisticated policies."

I think it was a reasonable approach to it. We know there won't be a whole lineup of companies coming to the door of the Minister of Energy and asking for permits to frack today. I mean, as an admission from the industry at this point that they don't know exactly where all the places they would like to drill even are. Even before they can do a little bit of their research, do an exploration of those areas - that takes time and I'm sure it would take a couple of years, by the time we would even ever have a well drilled. We even know at this point there have been a couple of wells drilled in some places and they came up dry. We already know there could be some data updates on this as well. That is the article from September 4th from Roger Taylor that was in *The Chronicle Herald*.

Again, going back to my original comments, by no way have we advocated that we want fracking to begin tomorrow - far from it. We have said on a number of occasions that fracking won't be happening immediately because there's far too much work to be done between here and there. But we're not saying that we have to ban it outright, that work can continue on the research as outlined within the Wheeler report.

The editorial is one that I do like; there are a couple of them, one from September 26th, the other from October 8th, and one from Marilla Stephenson. There are actually three different editorials now that all question why the government is proceeding with a ban. I'll read a couple of points out of all of them, I won't read them all verbatim but they go like this:

"When Energy Minister Andrew Younger announced the government's intention to legislate a ban on hydraulic fracturing for shale gas development, I was one Nova Scotian - apparently in the minority - who was surprised he chose this blunt club to knock the issue on the head and put it to sleep indefinitely."

That was from Bob Howse, who goes on to say:

"After all, the Wheeler expert panel had just given him a finer set of tools, to my mind, for dealing in a balanced, thoughtful way with a complex, divisive issue that, however it turns out, will have economic and quality-of-life consequences for Nova Scotians."

I think Bob Howse is right. This is a blunt instrument when it comes to political issues. I thought it would be, as I said before, the difference between ban and moratorium. Really, had the minister come in with, let's say, a moratorium and said, in five years' time we'll look at something else, it would have been a little more palatable than the outright ban, than the outright clubbing of the whole issue of hydraulic fracturing.

Mr. Howse goes on to say:

“What really astonished me, however, was a word Mr. Younger used in explaining his decision. Nova Scotians, he said, just aren't 'comfortable' with fracking at this time. Comfortable. Hmm. When did that become the dividing line between what we'll consider and what is banned? How many of us have the luxury of only dealing with comfortable choices and options in life? No one I know. But if banning the uncomfortable from public life is what we want, we had better just ban the Ivany report, too.”

So he's pulling in something that I think needs discussing as well, which is the further steps to the Ivany commission report and how all of this goes together in creating a stronger new economy for Nova Scotia, creating those jobs. If the Wheeler report says there's 1,500 jobs that could be had for the province - that's in five to 10 years' time - I think we have a right or a necessity or a duty to look at that further, to see if it's right or whether it's wrong.

I'm going to go to the Marilla article first before I do that final one. In Ms. Stephenson's report of October 7th, it says:

“The fine print on the McNeil Liberals' fracking moratorium poster should read: Not exactly as illustrated.

This is what happens when politicians try to dance a fine line between saying one thing, then turn around and do something else.

As a result, neither side on the controversial issue is happy with the legislation introduced at Province House last week.

There is little doubt that the government is having second thoughts - in the wake of widespread concern over its decision to announce a broad moratorium” - she says moratorium, I guess it's a ban - “on fracking - by its rapid-fire response to the Wheeler report.

The political fallout, in a time when the province's economy is gasping for air, has been damaging. The message to the energy industry: Nova Scotia is closed for business.”

I want to go to that for a moment. There are two points that are brought forward in this one. The decisions to do further work are not made here in Nova Scotia. There's another one that is sort of a subtext to that, the issue of what is high-volume fracking and what is not high-volume fracking - what the actual definition of it is.

In speaking to some people from Shell the other day, their decision-making process is, of course, as an international company. Yes, they don't do non-conventional petroleum play, so they wouldn't be looking at this, but I thought their discussion was one that made enough sense. That sense was, they look at the world, as many of these companies do, and they're looking for those opportunities around the world. I would say they're all engaged or rated one against another, for a bunch of various reasons: what the economy looks like, what the environment looks like, what the political upheaval is, if there's a war going on. I mean, you can add up - there are a whole bunch of issues that would go into this rating. Of course, one of them is whether the government is supportive or not supportive of something, whether that's high-volume or low-volume fracking.

As they look at those decisions, in the particular case of Shell, whose main office is in Calgary, would be looking at a bunch of different projects around the province. Their final decision is made in Geneva, where all those projects are brought together with their ratings, and they'll make a decision one way or another whether they'll go forward with a project or another. As I said, Shell will not be the one to be doing some onshore fracking in Nova Scotia, but I think their process is one that we have to be conscious of because not only now, when you sit in a boardroom in Geneva, does the issue of Nova Scotia come up. For them it's just Canada. In Canada do they allow fracking? Well, we know in the West they do. They have successfully fracked in Saskatchewan, Alberta, BC.

AN HON. MEMBER: Different geology than we do.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Yeah they've got different geology than we do, but unfortunately, without further work, we are not going to know exactly what we have versus what they have, but those decisions are made globally, not unlike anything that would be made here.

So Nova Scotia has a ban, or will be having a ban, when the majority government rules on this one. Who's next? Well, we know New Brunswick is for calling for a ban as well, even though they do have fracking going on; we know that Premier Gallant has said that he will be moving for a ban or at least a suppression of that work.

Who's next in line? Quebec. Who's next in line? Ontario. I don't know, at the end of the day we might have a ban three quarters of the way across the country, starting here, because everybody got a little antsy and instead of doing the further work and maybe taking a few of the tough questions, moved to ban.

This brings me to another point that was in that article, which says nobody is happy. We heard the member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River speak in support of the ban, yet I think if you were to talk to many environmental groups, they would say that the ban doesn't go far enough. I don't know, maybe the old adage if everybody is mad at you then you might be in the right place, and maybe that's what they are aiming for at this point. I don't know, we'll see when government members stand and add to the debate.

The other editorial that was brought forward was on October 8th and a little bit of quoting some - I would say some interesting prose - a Robbie Burns quote,

“O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us.”

I can't believe I read that out right. As a French Acadian that was a tough thing to do, I've got to say, it's a terrible line but all right. I'm sort of 25 per cent Scottish so I guess that saves me to be able to read any Robbie Burns.

But this one goes on to say:

“As his department fleshes out Bill 6, which prohibits, without yet defining, ‘high-volume hydraulic fracturing’ in shale formation, Mr. Younger and his boss, Premier Stephen McNeil, should be concerned about how some very important ‘ithers’ see the fracking ban and Nova Scotia. First, there are outside energy investors upon whom we rely heavily to develop our resources. Many are concerned about the difficulty of ever lifting a shale fracking ban once it's legislated.”

As I said earlier in my debate, once it's put on it is very difficult for another government to come along and lift it without the same kind of political strife that I think we're seeing in this one. “It's an understandable view given the long history of uranium in our province.” I already covered that one. This is the one I wanted to get to:

“There's also a swell of commentary in Western Canada slamming Nova Scotia's fracking ban and New Brunswick's promised one. In these circles, we're seen as provinces absurdly shunning a technology and a resource that help fund our equalization payments - out of revenues Ottawa derives from the huge fracked gas industry in the West.”

So I think that's a very interesting point that we, Nova Scotia, as a province who sorely want to be a have province - I mean how many times have we heard this in our time as politicians, or even time before politicians, where we no longer want to be a have-not

province, we want to be a have province. We want to be able to take full advantage of the resources that are here before us and use them to the benefit of our population.

We've said it thousands of times, thousands of time have we said this. We've looked at the offshore and we look at those opportunities there; they'll get us a little bit of that way, but they will not allow us to come off the dole. We'll always be those recipients from the East, when quite honestly the ironic part of the whole thing is that we send probably our best resource, our most important resource, which is our people, to the West to do this work. Where are they going? Where are the Mr. Hendersons that we had in the gallery last week, or the week before? Where are all those young folks, my cousin,, Georges, my friend's grandson, Jean-Marc? We go on about all the people that in our communities are now gone out West because of resource development in the West.

We're giving away our best resource to go do the exact thing that we're denying here in Nova Scotia. There's got to be some irony in that. At least I see it. I would like nothing better than to call Jean-Marc and say, listen, there's going to be work for you here in Nova Scotia. You know, Jean-Marc d'Entremont, he happens to be a d'Entremont, young guy, I'll say he's 25, maybe 24, or might be 26, not too sure at this point, has a business degree from the Université Sainte-Anne, went out West, got a job as a driller, so he's working on the rigs at some place up north of Edmonton, has been able to take those dollars and he's turned around and invested them in a pumping business.

As we know, when they drill they need these vacuum trucks to vacuum up the stuff that comes out of the wellheads, the sludge, that as they're cleaning that has to be disposed of, of course, in a responsible, environmentally friendly manner. So here's a young guy, I'm saying he's 25, he could be a little older, but he has taken those dollars that he's earned in the oil patch, has invested in a business, and I don't know what a vacuum truck is worth but I'm going to bet that it's a \$100,000.00 item, if not more, he has two of them now and is employing more Nova Scotians. He's employing more Nova Scotians. He got on the horn and called a couple of his friends from Pubnico. They got on the next flight, headed off to Edmonton to drive the pumper truck to work in an industry that today we're talking to a bill that's going to ban it.

Look at the economic stability of the West. Premier Brad Wall has said, after being questioned about the oil and gas industry in his province, the only sort of glibly bad thing that he said that happened is that people came home to work. How bad is that? We're not expecting that to start today. I don't think we ever said that, you know, that if this ban doesn't go forward that tomorrow there's going to be oil and gas development onshore in Nova Scotia, but if it's 10 years out, if it's 15 years out, I think all of those people that have gone and travelled and continue to travel back and forth to work in the oil patch would say thank you; would say thank you to a government who thought forward enough to not ban, to further develop an industry that has promise.

I think what they're saying out West too is not that you're banning it, just look into it for us. At the end of day they might say, listen the resource is not there like we said it was. The shale formations aren't such that they're going to have a lot of gas in them. Fine, and then all of us can say, well, listen, at least we tried to bring some people back home. I know that each and every one of us in this House of Assembly has a Jean-Marc, has a Rob Henderson, has a whoever who has gone out West. Maybe some people here have sons and daughters who have gone out West to work in the oil patch or at least work in an affiliated industry that benefits from oil and gas development in the West. I think we owe it to them and their families, and owe it to us, to try to find an opportunity for them here.

The debate that I'm hearing at home now that percolates through our communities - I mean southwestern Nova Scotia won't have fracking happen. I think all of us know that there's sort of a line that southwestern Nova Scotia is on a granite formation and would not be able to have gas available to it. So Yarmouth County, Shelburne County, Digby County - I think we can go along on all those ones - wouldn't have that kind of development happen in that direction anyway.

Of course, they're looking at the offshore but I think the balance between the two is one that I think will benefit this province. I'm hearing it in southwest now - which is going to the offshore for a moment, Mr. Speaker, if you'll allow me - that for a long time we said no drilling on Georges. We're on the - I don't know, what are we on, the third extension at this point? We're on the third extension of the moratorium, I believe, at this point, but yet what I hear is a balance. I mean it's a balance right now of why not look and see what's there.

I don't think anybody is coming out and saying let's drill on Georges, I think that's a long way off. I think what they are saying is, well, let's do a little bit of work, let's continue to get the data available to us so that at some point we can make a decision to look at further drilling in southwestern Nova Scotia. We know at this point that Shell will be investing in a couple of wells, we believe in the next year's season, to see if that Shelburne Basin will have some kind of play. Will it be natural gas? Will it be oil? We don't know at this point but it excites people to see that happening.

Now we know that those folks working in Alberta and Saskatchewan will probably not be able to come and work on our offshore because if you look at what people are doing out West - those who are not necessarily on the rigs, the drillers themselves - they are support. They're driving trucks, driving excavators, and they're doing that heavy machinery kind of work - they're working in some of the support services. That doesn't translate into an offshore play. They're not going to come home to drive an excavator in 6,000 metres of water, but there's an opportunity in the onshore to do a little bit of work and continue to do that as it travels along.

I hope, as time goes on, that there is going to be further work in our offshore to look at what's happening in other parts. I mean we're looking at BP now and those northern

blocks. There are more blocks that are available now, becoming available in different parts of our offshore. It will be interesting to see who bids for them and who doesn't bid for them.

We had raised sort of a little alarm bell, a little red light a little while ago when the ban was first announced - how will that ban affect the offshore? I mean here we are putting out a number of blocks for bid - and as I said, there are decisions that are made far from Nova Scotia on our offshore. How do they not look at the newspaper and say, well, that's Nova Scotia, that's the same place that's banning the onshore stuff. Maybe they don't want to have some of that offshore stuff so we're going to move our investment somewhere else that's more friendly.

I know a lot of times the minister said, well, that's just fear-mongering. I don't think so, I don't think it's fear-mongering, but I do believe that as these large companies are making those decisions they look at all the data before they invest millions and millions of dollars. Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to go on and on, I will take my hour as we complete this, but it goes to the issue of what is the right thing to do. I see this government is such that they think the ban is the right thing to do.

Did it come from, as we read in those editorials or as we read in those articles, did that come from the minister? You know what? I don't think it did; I really don't. I've had a number of conversations with that minister and I really didn't see him talking about a ban. I did see him thinking about a go-slow kind of approach and adopting some of those (Interruption) Bless you, minister. We always knows which minister sneezes like that, she has a specific sound.

So I don't know if the minister made that decision and recommended it to Cabinet as an R & R or whatever the decision mechanism was or they referred that to legislation committee, but I don't think it necessarily came from the minister. I question exactly where it came from. Did it come from the Premier's Office? Did it come from others, I don't know and I don't think we'll ever find out exactly who made that final decision. It's a collective agreement from Cabinet and I guess that's just the way it's going to be.

But I thought from my debates and discussions with the minister that the Wheeler report itself created enough of a road map to go slow, to be able to take your time, to look at water quality and water issues around Nova Scotia, to be able to look at what the resource was in different regions around the province. We look at that ban basically from the New Brunswick border going across I would say even into Cape Breton, that whole northern section which is a vast piece of real estate. I wouldn't even know where they start, I don't know enough about geology to say that all that rock is shale - I know it's not, there are some sandstone formations and I know there's some granite in there - there's a whole bunch of different things.

Maybe there is no formation in there that's going to give shale gas to be able to help our economy. Maybe, but we know the data isn't such that we can make a jumped-in-feet-first decision tomorrow. I think the data was very clear on that; I think the minister has been very clear on that too; and I think the Premier's been very clear on that. Yet, they want to use, as Mr. Howse did in his editorial, they want to use a blunt instrument, the blunt instrument of a ban.

I want to speak for a moment to energy, the issue of availability of that energy to our communities. Take the economy side of it, because the economy side of it as we debate these things, we look at big business, we look at how they're going to use that gas to make widgets - whether it's tires, cars, I don't know what. There's also a social cost I think in our communities for the availability of natural gas. I know my community will never have natural gas in it. The Town of Yarmouth probably will never have natural gas in it - it might have a little spot there by the hospital, but I don't think it will. Barrington will never have natural gas in it, unless there's a really cool offshore play that they might bring gas into Cape Island, but that's years off too.

But the availability to some of those communities - I look at Antigonish and the plum they're being given, the opportunity to plug into a natural gas distribution system is phenomenal. I look at all our houses in southwestern Nova Scotia and it's no different in Antigonish or Pictou or any of those communities, but we depend on an oil-fired hot water system or, even worse, an electrical heating system that's costing our residents, our community members, hundreds, thousands of dollars.

We know that even at a high point at this point of natural gas, if they had access to that natural gas, they could heat their house for very little, for a few hundred dollars. I don't know what the comparison was on a family of four and a regular-size ranch house - I forget what the whole comparison was, but to heat that house would be somewhere close to \$2,000, whether you're talking about oil or electricity, but if you had natural gas you'd be doing it for like \$400. Holy mackerel, that would be phenomenal.

I hope at some point the people in Antigonish will have that opportunity to plug in and be able to see those savings - not only for the savings but for the environmental benefit that it gives as well. Yes, of course, it is a hydrocarbon, but it burns so much cleaner, so the emissions are far less. That's a tremendous opportunity for communities like Antigonish, and I just look at those people that are along that pipe, whether it's access to New Glasgow, whether it's access to Oxford, whether it's access to Amherst - in all of those communities - Port Hawkesbury, there is an opportunity to that.

Having that trucked in is one step forward, but what if there is a play a few hundred kilometres or 50 kilometres away from Antigonish that actually makes sense? If it makes sense environmentally, makes sense community-wise, they could plug into that system. I think we need to look at it. I don't think we should just throw it out and say we're going to ban it for time immemorial.

I'm having a good time looking over at the member for Antigonish, because I think he's got a great opportunity there. Yarmouth's not going to have it. I wish we would. I mean, they're going to have the opportunity of trucked or compressed natural gas to the hospital, and maybe they might have a little distribution system in and around it, but truly - you know, I was talking to the folks at Heritage Gas, and to even run from the hospital to Starrs Road, just sort of that intersection by the McDonald's, would be \$1 million. So by the time you shipped it up into Milton or you shipped it down to the south end, I mean, I think the Antigonish system is going to cost about \$9 million or something like that to go and lay the pipe from one end of it to another and allow that access.

What an opportunity that is to bring down energy costs in Nova Scotia, and like I said, at the same time be a little more environmentally friendly. It's a hydrocarbon, so it's not going to solve everything, but I think it's a pretty good way to do it.

Take Sydney, for example. I mean, in Sydney some people still sell coal, still burn some coal in their homes to heat it. I know many places in rural Nova Scotia, as the member for Queens-Shelburne has mentioned a thousand times at this point during this sitting, people burn wood. So coal in Cape Breton, or at least coal in Sydney, in that area, and wood in most parts of the rest of it.

That's not the best way to treat our environment. It's not the best way to heat your house, but sometimes it's the cheapest way to do it. I myself, Mr. Speaker, have a woodstove, and I do enjoy the heat that it creates, but what a pain it can be to have to go and pack that wood. I'm not saying I cut it - by any stretch of the imagination, no one allows me to have a chainsaw. I've tried to use one on a couple of occasions. One time put my heart into atrial fib, so that wasn't a good showdown; another time I decided to put a couple of stitches in my knee, so my wife is such - I have one in the garage, I do, but it gets used very, very, very sparingly. Nonetheless, we do have people who provide us with wood, and you pay for it.

AN HON. MEMBER: Does Anne use it?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Anne uses the woodstove quite often. She doesn't use the chainsaw. She will not use the chainsaw. She's a smart teacher, one of those very smart schoolteachers in this province. (Interruption) I don't know how I fell off that one, but there you go.

But the issue of heating your house and being able to have access to natural gas supply, to be able to burn it - you know, I spent a couple of years in Ontario and I think Ontario residents would find it odd that you didn't have access to gas, to either use in your stove, to use in your furnace, to use in your hot water heater. I think those are tremendous opportunities for our rural communities, for those that will have access to it.

The wood issue - I've spoken to the Minister of Natural Resources on this a couple of times, brought it up in a couple of news reports as well. We're having trouble accessing the wood; there is not the same wood supply that used to be available to us so those thousands of people who do use wood will have trouble accessing it. Just think if we had natural gas across the province. I would like natural gas to come to Clare-Digby. Digby would be a great community, good and compact. It would be a good community to bring natural gas to. Middleton would be a great place.

I just look at that Valley floor and how it would be easy to put a natural gas corridor into but wouldn't it be nice if we had our own natural gas to burn there so that it's actually closer to the source, which I think we had quoted a number of days ago for Nova Scotia Power as they talked about natural gas in the province, that they could maybe have a saving to their customers if they could get a cheaper supply of natural gas and that would mean the transportation issue.

There is a transportation cost on a pipeline so if you're taking natural gas from natural gas formations or shale gas formations from Pennsylvania or most of that Eastern Seaboard, natural gas which they found trillions of cubic feet of it, here, there and everywhere, that they could reverse our pipe and bring it here but of course that has a cost. There's a transportation cost that is included in that. If we had our own natural gas industry, well it would be cheaper for us to be able to access that gas.

So, Mr. Speaker, to wrap up, to sum up what I've been talking about tonight, is that I've tabled a number of documents that contradict what the minister has said time and time again in this House of Assembly, that the panel members of the Wheeler report do not all support the ban on hydraulic fracturing; as a matter of fact, it's quite the opposite. There is, I think, a really good road map for government to follow with its recommendations. We support a go-slow process, one that will continue to develop the information that is required to move further in natural gas development in the Province of Nova Scotia and that allows the government to make other decisions as time goes on.

So I urge the minister, I urge the government to maybe rethink Bill No. 6, to try to find an opportunity to truly allow it, to truly explain what high-volume hydraulic fracturing means because all formations are different and this ban that bans this particular kind is not beneficial to the future developments, contrary to what the minister says. He says this will not get in the way.

Well, I say it is and I say it already has and we really need to watch ourselves, as legislators, to make sure that we don't look at all opportunities to grow our industry here in Nova Scotia and bring people back from the West who deserve to come home - our loved ones, your friends and all those great people who support us. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 6.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn the debate. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Resolution No. 1.

Res. No. 1, House of Assembly Rules - Amend - notice given Sept. 26/14 - (Hon. M. Samson)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand here this evening and speak about House Rules. I can recall a few years back entering this Chamber and it didn't take too long before I realized that some changes should occur in the way we handle the business of the day in the Chamber. At the time, a lot of members had a considerable amount of experience in the House, but it did seem that members continued to follow all the protocol, rules, regulations that previous members followed for many, many years in the House.

At times, I really didn't think it was that effective, that a change should be made. If I had my way, I think I would like to see all members in the House have input into revamping the rules to bring them up to the century we are in and have that input sent to the Committee of Assembly Matters, let them sift through the information and decide what rules and regulations would benefit us the most in this House. We believe that we need to design a more modern, effective, and accountable Legislature more than ever before and I think that is in the best interest of all Nova Scotians.

We certainly want to see some improvements in the rules that we presently use. The rules sometimes are, in my opinion, not very relevant to the people of Nova Scotia. I think we could make many changes. For example, when I look at the Question Period, Mr. Speaker, there are lots of suggestions that I certainly agree with. In fact, the Question

Period on Wednesday - I'm not so sure if I agree with the length of time we use for Question Period. I'm not so sure how relevant it is, especially when you get into the last 30 minutes of that Question Period. I would prefer having a Question Period each and every day, a shorter one, and have the questions and answers to the point where they are brief; they are short and to the point. I think this would be more effective, and the approach that we should be using in the House.

I can recall very vividly one of my good friends from the House, a former member, I think a friend to all, a former member from Digby, Junior Theriault. I think if you didn't like Junior, you didn't like anyone because he was a great guy. He did say to me a couple of times, just follow the flow, don't worry about a thing, everything will fall into place. And again, Junior certainly gave us a lot of chuckles in the House when he was up debating - especially during late debate - if it was on Fisheries, or perhaps on the alders that were growing on the side of his roads, and he wanted the DOT to go down and cut them.

When I think of change, I think of something Winston Churchill said one time, "There is nothing wrong with change, if it is in the right direction." And I think that as a three-Party House, we can certainly make the changes that are appropriate to make this House more efficient, to have it run more smoothly, to tailor our debates, to represent our constituencies, and to get the work done that we would like to.

The four-day work proposal, Mr. Speaker, I'm not so sure if this is the time to be looking at that. I agree with our caucus that we probably should stay with the five day system. There is so much work for us to do here in the Legislature representing our constituents that that extra day certainly would be advantageous.

I think we have to spend as much emphasis and time as we possibly can on improving the economy in our province. It has been noted by various speakers earlier, we have so many people leaving the community and going out West to work. For example, last Wednesday a good friend of mine, John Wilson, started a plumbing company in 1979, probably one of the best companies in Pictou County. He shut down his company, took one or two of his employees, left Wednesday for Cambridge Bay. I'm sure every member of this House could name 5, 10, 15 people who we know who have gone out West.

I think we should put our differences aside and work extremely hard representing the residents of Nova Scotia, work on creating jobs, improving the economy and moving forward. It's time to roll up the sleeves because I think throughout my lifetime we are at a crossroads as far as where this province is going to go. Is it going to be a retirement community? Or are we going to move ahead and be a have province?

There are a lot of issues that we have to tackle. At the same time, I realize that there is a lack of revenue coming into the province and we're limited to what we can do. However, these issues are ones that we have to work around. We have to find solutions and through those solutions rebuild our economy and find ways to bring back a lot of our Nova

Scotians who are away working. (Interruption) Mr. Speaker, please ignore my friend over there, he's enjoying my speech.

But, again, the reality of our position and our job working in the Legislature is to improve the life and well-being of all Nova Scotians. We realize all the various issues and I certainly have respect for all members of the House because I know the type of job they do. They work morning, noon and night and they work all weekend and I'm sure a lot of the public in the province don't realize that.

It's time for us to face reality. Things are tough for Nova Scotians and they're looking toward us to perhaps create a better environment. With those few words - I'm doing the amendments? Okay.

We have a number of amendments which puts Monday night back in. I'll slap my glasses on - okay, do you want me to read this now? Okay.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the papers have been passed out to the appropriate members. I don't think the Government House Leader is going to go through every one, but PC-1, number 1, amends subsections 1(1), 2, and 3 to read as follows and deleting subsection.

Mr. Speaker, if it's okay with our House Leader, I'm not going to go through and read every one of them, but I'd like to put Monday back in, and I so move this amendment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Resolution No. 1.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn the debate. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 6.

Bill No. 6 - Petroleum Resources Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the honourable minister for reverting back to Bill No. 6. The first thing I would like to say about Bill No. 6 is that I am disappointed at the moratorium. I believe that a moratorium will have a chilling effect on industry. What I would say about moratoriums is that industries in Canada aren't that big. Everybody knows everybody in each sector. If we talk about farming, I know farmers across the country; if you talk about chartered accountants, the chartered accountants know each other; dentists know each other . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Kings North has the floor.

MR. LOHR: Likewise, Mr. Speaker, in the energy sector, I would suggest that the industry all know each other and know the scuttlebutt and know what's going on. I believe that for Nova Scotia to have a moratorium on fracking is a sign to the industry - not just to the oil and gas industry but to the mining industries and certain other related industries that all have very similar activities - that Nova Scotia is closed for business.

I am really disappointed that this government would have this in Bill No. 6. I note that the Wheeler report itself says, "However, we are not proposing a moratorium or any other political device" on Page 5 of the Introduction of the Wheeler report. The Wheeler report itself was not proposing a moratorium, but we have a moratorium. We have an unfortunate moratorium on high-volume fracking and I didn't see the definition of high-volume fracking in the Wheeler report and I know the minister has been asked about that and that definition hasn't been forthcoming. From reading the report I understand that the volume of fracking fluid used is related to the thickness of the layer of shale that is . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We're almost there, the honourable member for Kings North has the floor.

MR. LOHR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I notice there is no definition of high-volume in the report so not only is there a moratorium but there is a moratorium on something that is ill-defined which is possibly why, as my colleague said earlier, no side on this issue has been particularly pleased with this moratorium.

I noticed a few days ago that the minister had mentioned agriculture and I did look through the report to find the references to agriculture and there aren't a whole lot of references to agriculture in the report but the minister had suggested that there was a negative impact to agriculture through fracking and I thought well, I would look into that.

The reference in the report, on Page 243, is a reference by someone by the Woodlot Owners Association, and the Woodlot Owners Association person is quoted here: "Because there are so many important reasons to preserve agricultural land, we feel that it is vital at this time to make a case for farmland . . ." - which I would agree with - "all the negative impacts that hydraulic fracturing can have on rural communities and how it could create excessive fragmentation of our agricultural land base." That is Submission 23.

So I thought I would just drill down into that question about agricultural land and fracking and I would like to take a few minutes to discuss events in the U.S. and then a few minutes to discuss events in Canada.

It is well known that two of the states that have been most impacted by fracking in the United States are Pennsylvania and North Dakota. Pennsylvania, I'll just read this and I'll table this:

"Pennsylvania's shale gas resources are part of the Marcellus Shale, an extensive formation of shale . . . in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, and other states in the region. . . . Between Jan. 1, 2005 and March 2, 2012, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection issued 10,232 drilling permits, and denied only 36 requests."

Needless to say, in that 2005 to 2012 period there was an enormous amount of drilling done in Pennsylvania, and Pennsylvania is a well-known agricultural state, as I'm sure you all realize, with the Amish and very intensive livestock industry in Pennsylvania.

North Dakota is the other state that is quite famous for fracking in the last 10 years:

"In May 2012, North Dakota passed Alaska to become the No. 2 oil-producing state in the country, . . . North Dakota's total oil production has approximately tripled since 2005 . . . As of 2011 there were 6,664 producing wells in North Dakota, and as of April 2012 there were 210 drilling rigs. . . . As of October 2012 companies operating in North Dakota spent \$2 billion a month on drilling operations."

There we have it, there are two states that have an enormous amount of fracking going on in the 2007 to 2012 period, thousands of wells drilled, I have some statistics with me from the U.S. Department of Census of Agriculture, now just like Stats Canada is highly respected in Canada, the U.S. Census of Agriculture is more than 100 years old and highly respected in the United States. I would just like to talk about these two states in particular: North Dakota and Pennsylvania. We've established the number of wells drilled already in those two states between 2007 and 2012, these are two agricultural states.

In 2007 the net cash farm income for Pennsylvania, the net cash income in billions - so the gross farm sales out of Pennsylvania in 2007 in billions was \$1,172,716,000. In 2012 that number had grown by approximately \$600 million, so between 2007 and 2012 Pennsylvania saw an increase of some \$600 million in gross farm sales. In the same period that we just established they had 6,000 wells drilled.

North Dakota, likewise. That same period, from 2007 to 2012, saw an increase in net cash, net farm sales.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Kings North has the floor.

MR. LOHR: So likewise, North Dakota has seen in that same five-year period an increase in net cash farm income from \$2.5 billion to \$4.5 billion. So we can see that if those drilling operations impacted the farms it did not show up in their net cash sales.

Likewise, the Wheeler report had mentioned the fragmentation of agricultural land and the lost value of that. Again, the U.S. Census of Agriculture, 2012 state data for value of the land - the average value per acre of land in Pennsylvania in 2007 was \$4,775 U.S. an acre, and in 2012 that average value had jumped to \$5,425, so approximately \$600 an acre. If the land values had been hurt in that same period when all those thousands of wells had been drilled in the State of Pennsylvania, then farmers would not have been paying more money for land but clearly in Pennsylvania, between 2007 and 2012, farmland values went up by about 10 per cent.

Likewise if we look at North Dakota, land in North Dakota in 2007 was worth \$771 U.S. an acre, not nearly as valuable as land in Pennsylvania, but from a farming point of view your opportunities of what you can grow on the land kind of dictates the value and North Dakota is a little more limited in what you can grow. However, by 2012 farmland values in North Dakota had doubled. So they were \$1,426 U.S. an acre.

In that time frame of where we saw so many wells drilled in North Dakota the land value doubled. So clearly, whatever was going on in the state did not impact land values and you might say, well, what about other states around it? I have all of the data for them; some went up and some went down. There were very few that doubled in value in that time frame, I can tell you that.

The market value, the total sales of agricultural products sold in that 2007 to 2012 time frame for Pennsylvania was a total sales of \$5.8 billion of total market value of all agricultural products sold. In 2012 that number had jumped to \$7.4 billion in Pennsylvania. Clearly, not only did land prices go up not only did land values go up, the market value of total agricultural products sold went up. Likewise in North Dakota, the total market value of products in 2007 was \$6 billion and that had jumped to almost \$11 billion by 2012. One of the things I did not realize when I did this research was what a big agricultural state

North Dakota was. It was not my impression that North Dakota ranked right up there with Florida, California, New York, Nebraska and Ohio, all those big agricultural states, but North Dakota is a big agricultural state. It nearly doubled in these agricultural categories in that time frame.

Another statement is - and if you're aware of the farm business, it doesn't necessarily track alongside the rest of the economy. The farm economy runs on its own track and I know in the U.S. there was quite a depreciation of houses after 2008 and I just read you some statistics showing farm values went up. One of the things that happened from 2008 to 2012 was the prices for some of the basic commodities went up so you may recall a few years ago your bread prices went up, and that type of thing would have a huge impact on agricultural production.

One of the things that we can see is that fracking does fragment the land a little bit, there's no doubt about that but I just wanted to touch on acres harvested. For North Dakota, in 2007 they had 22 million acres of ground harvested. Again, I had no idea North Dakota had so much farmland, but in 2012 they had 23.469 million acres of land harvested. If you look at a map, you'll notice that North Dakota is immediately below Saskatchewan and one thing you might not know about Saskatchewan - it has 40 per cent of the arable land in Canada. So 40 per cent of the farmland in Canada is in Saskatchewan, which is just a staggering amount of land and I guess this is true, that the good land in Saskatchewan carries down into North Dakota. They are neighbouring states.

Pennsylvania, likewise, between 2007 and 2012 saw an increase in acres harvested. Despite the fact that all these wells were drilled in Pennsylvania, in fact the amount of land that was farmed increased. Whatever we can say about the oil and gas industry, the statistics in those two states show us that it did not have an impact on the agricultural use of land. It did not have an impact on the value of the crops sold and it did not have an impact on how many acres were planted.

Another issue with fracking is the idea that the water table might be damaged. There is also irrigated land - I have statistics here again from the U.S. 2012 Census in Agriculture. In 2007 land in irrigated farms for North Dakota was 2.1 million acres. In 2012 that had shrunk a little to 2.089 million so it had dropped by about 50,000 acres. That's land on irrigated farms. The land that was actually irrigated land in North Dakota in 2007 was 236,000 acres and that had dropped in 2012 to 218,000 acres. There's a slight drop in the land irrigated.

Nevertheless, it shows a substantial amount of land irrigated and would, I think, go back to the fact that as I mentioned earlier there was a change in the world grain prices and a lot of these states went to more grain production. Pennsylvania, very similar although on a much smaller scale, between 2007 and 2012 saw a slight decrease in the amount of land and irrigated farms, but actually in 2007 there were 37,000 acres of irrigated land, in 2012 there were 38,990 acres of irrigated land. So I would say that it shows that whatever was

going on in those states with the oil and gas industry, it did not affect agricultural production in any particular way.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker, on cattle and calf inventory. (Interruption) Keep going, you want to hear it? Okay. Cattle and calves, livestock, because there has been some question about livestock in fracking and there are some things in the media about that. I was looking at the website, Cornell University published something, two researchers' interviews, mind you, with farmers who had lost livestock. Interviews, so they didn't actually go and look at the livestock, they phoned them up, I presume, or talked to them on the Internet by email.

Anyway, cattle and calf numbers - great data - North Dakota saw no change virtually, a very small change. They had 1.8 million cows and calves in 2007 and 1.8 million cows and calves, just a very small change in the actual number. So there was no change in the livestock industry in North Dakota between 2007 and 2012 with cattle and calves, despite many thousands of wells being drilled in North Dakota.

Pennsylvania likewise actually had virtually no change, a very slight increase between 2007 and 2012, in the number of cattle and calves on those farms.

Hogs and pigs, a slight decrease for North Dakota, but as many of you know, you will have noticed that when you go to the Superstore or Sobeys and you buy your bacon, what you paid for a 500 gram pack of bacon you now pay for a 375 gram pack of bacon. I don't know if anybody has noticed that but that's because hog numbers across North America went down, that's because the grain - again going back to my story about high grain prices driving production in these states. Farmers who had very low-value hogs three or four years ago had to make the decision, do I feed my expensive grain to my inexpensive hogs or do I sell my grain and sell my hogs and get rid of them? The actual herd numbers went down across North America and across Canada.

It takes a little while for that number to rebound so now you will see for three or four years from now on you'll see an increase, in that higher hog prices will be there. It's a boom and bust economy, like it won't be long before there will be more pigs than there are buyers and they will be broke again. That's the way it goes with that hog industry. It is down, but that's because that was a trend across North America and likewise in Pennsylvania. I didn't want to be accused of just quoting all stats that favoured my argument.

Needless to say, the stats substantially proved that there was no effect in Pennsylvania or North Dakota, no noticeable decline in agriculture. They increased in almost every category substantially and more or less on track with most of the other states, although not all the other states saw that sort of increase. One of the reasons I would just speculate is that one of the things farmers do when they get a little bit of money in their pocket is they'll go buy a new tractor or a bigger seeder or another harrow (Interruption)

And fishermen buy new boats. So one of the reasons you see increases in production in rural North Dakota and rural Pennsylvania is because the productive capacity of those farms increased when they had more money.

Now I know I've been quoting extensively from the USDA and I'll table all those documents. I know I've been quoting the U.S. Census of Agriculture, and I would be remiss if I didn't mention Statistics Canada, but I will say that I found their website much less easy to drill down into so I don't have nearly the number of data for Statistics Canada. However, it was mainly on account of the fact there was lots of data there but it wasn't really - I couldn't capture it in that 2007 to 2012 time frame as easily.

However, from 2007 to 2011 in Alberta - another province that is heavily invested in the oil and gas industry, as I'm sure you all realize - the net farm worth in 2007 was \$1.469 million. By 2011, that net farm worth in Alberta had grown to \$2.1 million. So over a five-year period, they saw a more than 25 per cent growth in net farm worth in Alberta. In an area where there is - not in every part of Alberta, but in many parts of Alberta the oil and gas industry is heavily invested into agricultural areas.

Likewise, Saskatchewan, which saw a substantial increase in the oil and gas industry in that time frame - in 2007 the net farm worth was \$915,941. By 2011, the net farm worth had jumped to \$1.441 million - almost a 33 per cent increase over a five-year period. So both of those provinces, much like the growth I was quoting in the U.S., saw substantial increase in their net farm worth.

Statistics Canada does not really break out Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick frequently. The main reason they don't do that is they do not want to give away - in some cases, there's only one producer for some commodities, so they don't want to give away too much information, so they lump the three Maritime Provinces together.

In 2007, the net farm worth in the Atlantic Provinces was \$947,000 and in 2011, that had jumped to \$1.089 million. So we saw approximately a 10 per cent increase here while we saw in the western provinces 33 per cent and 25 per cent increases. We did not, across the Atlantic Provinces, keep up. So obviously, whether you can interpret too much out of these statistics or not, you cannot say that the fracking hurt the net farm worth out West.

Now, I have a number of agricultural friends across the country and last night I took the time to call three of them. I called a farmer in Ontario, a farmer friend in Saskatchewan, and a farmer friend in Alberta to ask them about the effects of the fracking industry, oil and gas on their farms. I know these farmer friends through a particular organization - in 1997-98, I was privileged enough to be a Nuffield scholar.

Now, Lord Nuffield was a British maker of that Morris car. He was the Henry Ford of the U.K., and he was fabulously wealthy. In 1950 or so, he thought Communism was

going to take over the world and he started to give away a lot of his money. If you google that term “Nuffield” you’ll never find our Canadian Nuffield Scholarship because there are so many hospitals and health-related endowments that he created in the U.K. that you’ll be hard-pressed to find us, but we’re there - the Canadian Nuffield agricultural society.

I am an alumnus of that, one of about 1,200 people worldwide. There are about six or seven countries that participate. There’s Australia, New Zealand, the U.K., Ireland, France, just recently Holland has jumped in, and Zimbabwe and Canada are the participating countries. It’s a real privilege to belong to an international association that is focused on sharing information and hospitality. One of the things - and I did my Nuffield study in 1997-98 on herb drying - it is intended for farmers in mid-career to travel overseas and study farming, and “study” is defined as going and talking to people who are doing what you’re interested in, not spending time in a classroom. And through that association, what I never expected was to have such a good set of friendships across the country.

I called my friend Jack Rigby last night who lives in Blenheim, Ontario and, on his farm he has a natural gas well. It was drilled in the 1950s and it’s a vertical well, not a horizontal well. In the 1960s they were able to purchase that well, so they own their own gas well on their own farm and they’ve used that well since that time to provide the energy needs for their farms. They heat two houses, a bunkhouse, two large shops, and a grain drying, and they actually are now tied into the grid. The well is slowly declining and I know that when we talk about fracking - and I hope that I’ll put this bug in your ear - when we talk about decommissioning old wells, if you happen to have an old well on your property and can acquire it, it will give you fuel for many, many years to come. They never really stop producing gas, they will keep producing gas for a long-time.

So Jack has a gas well on his farm, which he has used to heat all of those buildings since the 1960s. A couple of years ago that well was slowing down to the point where he had to get it rejuvenated and I remember him telling me about it when I was there on his farm a couple of years ago and I called him up. It wasn’t exactly fracking but something similar. Because I knew Jack had a natural gas well on his farm, I thought I would call him and talk to him about that.

It is not precisely fracking that was done to rejuvenate that well, but it is something similar. The well has been of enormous benefit to his family farm. So when and if we ever get to the point in this province where we do allow this I hope that we can provide in legislation the opportunity for the landowner to acquire the well if the company no longer considers it viable because it will provide fuel for one or two homes. Any well that produces gas will slowly produce more gas, even if it is not an economically viable well.

I did call my friend in Saskatchewan, Ian McFadden, a geologist by trade. He is a retired farmer, he had 55,000 acres, and when I got him last night on the phone he had just finished getting off a combine and they were eating their Thanksgiving dinner. (Interruption) He told me how big a combine it was. It was a great big John Deere, the

biggest one they make. He was working for his neighbour who has 30,000 acres of grain and they were harvesting the 30,000-acre crop and Ian was happy to talk to me about that.

I asked him about Saskatchewan and what was going on. He said there were concerns in Saskatchewan about it. He says it takes a lot of water; water is always a big issue in Saskatchewan. He was telling me that earlier, not related to fracking, that the coal mining industry is active in Saskatchewan too, and he told me that when they had dug up the coal that some farms had lost their wells. If they had a 60-foot or 70-foot well, their well went bad and they had to drill a deeper well. So there were some issues with water. He said there is a little bit of bad press, but in his mind it was unfounded.

They are on the upswing now and actually I had been there in 2003 with Ian, and at that time Saskatchewan was a bit of a basket case as a province. They had celebrated that year - or the year before - their one millionth resident and that one millionth resident had actually moved to Calgary shortly after being defined and celebrated as the one millionth resident.

But he says all that has changed now in Saskatchewan; Saskatchewan is an economic powerhouse now. He says they have 50 per cent of the world's uranium and 50 per cent of the potash in the world and 45 per cent of the arable land, but it really was the oil and gas industry that got the thing going. He had nothing but good to say about it.

I then called my friend in Innisfail, Alberta, Rod Bradshaw, and Rod also had just gotten off a combine when I got a hold of him at about 10 or 11 o'clock last night. One of the benefits of having friends out West is it really doesn't matter how late at night you call them, if you work your way across the country, you can call them all. Rod farms 1,000 acres. He had just finished combining his fava beans - I'm not totally clear what a fava bean is. (Interruptions) Rod has 15 wells on his 1,000 acre farm. These are fracked wells, wells that are clumped and they go out in every direction. They are horizontal wells so he has on his 1,000 acre farm 15 wells and he went into great detail explaining to me how this worked in the sections, how it was on the odd number sections of their - I can't remember what, a quarter or they have a section and it was quarters, I don't know. Anyway, you understand that the West was all mapped out in squares and on their 1,000 acres he said the average wellhead of those 15 wells is about four acres and, depending on the site, they were getting between \$900 and \$2,500 a year per acre for the lease for those 15 wells.

Right away I did that calculation in my head. So you're getting about \$70,000, \$80,000 a year for these 15 wells on your farm. Yes, that's right. He didn't say it could have been more, like it depends on which ones, where they fall in this gradient of \$900 to \$2,500, so it's a substantial farm income on Rod Bradshaw's farm. I asked him were there any kinds of consequences to having so many fracked wells on your farm - actually when I was talking to him he was actually driving the combine and he said, well, we have to kind of work around them a little, but the oil and gas people build good roads so we have good roads to get out to all our fields now.

The issue he had was the fact that they put underground pipelines in the farm and he wasn't sure if, when he was planning to do some tile drainage, he wasn't sure if he would hit any or not, so he was a little worried that they - he wasn't totally positive that they had maintained their gradient; he needed to know that they were four feet under the ground.

The other issue that he had, which he didn't tell me, but Ian McFadden told me actually in the previous call, was that when he went to build his house he had to sort of have offsets from these underground pipes. So in effect the underground pipe becomes - even though they are not paying for that, it's sort of like an expropriation. If you have a wellhead here and you're getting rent for it, the underground pipe goes on the farm and you can't build over the top of that pipe. So, in effect, it limits where you can build a little bit, but if you have 1,000 acres and 15 lines, there are places to build, so it's not that big a deal.

I asked him about the effects of having so many wells on his farm and he really didn't have much to say about it. There really were no negative effects, but he did mention what he called the "politics of envy." The politics of envy is if you happen to be a farmer and you didn't get any of these wells and don't have this revenue stream, you are jealous and that sometimes triggers stories and things in the media. That was his opinion about that. He said there is a certain amount of politics of envy.

He believes you need good regulations if you want to go ahead with fracking and he believed that the fracking opportunities really kind of depended on the shale. He thinks that we should be going ahead with that.

There's sort of another aspect, so there we have North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario - all those places have seen dramatic increases in the value of agricultural production, dramatic increases in the value of their farmland. I can tell you that farmers base purchase decisions on what drives up the value of farmland is when farmers have more money in their pocket, fundamentally. When they have more money in their pocket it is because they made more money and it's very simple economics. If there was a detrimental effect to those oil and gas wells being drilled on those farm properties, we'd see that in the farmers' reaction to the opportunities to purchase and what they were purchasing for.

So clearly we see in those places to some extent, in my opinion, although you can't extrapolate too much out of statistics, the effect of the oil and gas industry putting more money in farmers' pockets possibly. On the other hand, it might be the fact that simply the world prices of the grains went up too, we see that.

I would like to talk about what I think to be what I would call . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Kings North has the floor for another few minutes.

MR. LOHR: I would like to talk about what I think is a moral dilemma that we face. I haven't heard this expressed too much, but the moral dilemma is that we really want the transfer payments from the federal government. I know it's been said that next year we're going to have a new formula for federal health transfer payments, and rather than it happening on an actual number of sick patients in the hospital system, the federal transfer payments are going to be based on a per capita formula.

Apparently in that per capita formula, every province will lose money except Alberta. Alberta will gain about \$1 billion in transfer payments for Health, and every other province will lose some part of the slice of that \$1 billion. That's next year. That's going to, apparently - I heard the number, but I can't remember it. I know the total is \$1 billion. I think it's somewhere in the \$40 million or \$50 million or \$60 million range for Nova Scotia, a reduction in federal transfer payments for health care. (Interruption) Is that what it is, \$100 million? It was the formula - if you remember, John Hamm negotiated with the federal government that the federal transfer payments be based on the actual number of sick cases instead of per capita.

The reason Alberta will gain on that is that they don't actually have as many sick people as the rest of Canada, because their population is younger. They have all of our young people in Alberta. We want the transfer payments, so the moral dilemma I see for us - and I would like to ask you to consider this, I may be wrong, but you can think about it - is that we want the transfer payments, but we don't want the industry that gives the transfer payments. The transfer payments are coming from the oil and gas industry, by and large, across the prairies. We don't mind sending our young people there - well, we may have misgivings about it, but we're surely not stopping them from going. To me, it's a moral dilemma that we don't want to participate in what creates the wealth but we're quite willing and quite eager to participate in sharing the wealth and receiving our share of the wealth.

I believe it's a moral dilemma for us, and I would ask you to consider that. Maybe someone could tell me if I'm wrong about that moral dilemma, but I do think there is a moral dilemma in that sort of analysis. (Interruption) I can adjourn anytime? I did have - I'm going to keep going. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing I would like to comment on is that I read the Wheeler report. I noticed that in the analysis of risks - and this is on Page 319, there is - if you want, you can break that analysis of risk down between below ground and above ground. In this category, the below-ground risks are migration of pollutants from deep zone to shallow zone, and well integrity, A and B, and both of those are rare.

Then you have to go to the above-ground risks. There's about (Interruption)

I move that we adjourn the debate. I'll be happy to get back to that.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn debate on Bill No. 6.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That concludes the government's business for this evening. The House will sit again tomorrow on Wednesday, October 15th, from the hours of 12:00 noon until 10:00 p.m. During that time from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. will be Opposition Day. Following Opposition Day, we will be calling Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill Nos. 6, 18, 22, 25, and 26; Government Motions, Address in Reply, Resolution No. 1; and any other business that time permits.

I will now ask the House Leader for the Official Opposition to give us the business for Opposition Day tomorrow.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, after the daily routine and Question Period, we will be calling two bills: Bill No. 27, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; and Bill No. 34, Living within Our Means Act.

I now move that we do adjourn to meet tomorrow between the hours of 12:00 noon and 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 10:00 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 229**

By: Hon. David Wilson (Sackville-Cobequid)

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

Whereas A.J. Smeltzer Junior High School of Lower Sackville has approximately 240 students from Grades 6 to 8, with 80 students enrolled in the band program; and

Whereas on October 10, 2014, A.J. Smeltzer was presented with a donation in the amount of \$5,678 from C100 Radio, who are contributing \$25,000 to various music programs throughout the Halifax Regional School Board; and

Whereas this funding will enable the band program to refurbish instruments, purchase new instruments, and enhance learning with visiting artists;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Lower Sackville's A.J. Smeltzer Junior High School on receiving \$5,678 from C100 Radio to enhance the music programs at the school, and wish all staff and students a successful year.

RESOLUTION NO. 230

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas formerly known as Sam Slick Days and Windsor West Hants Summer Fest, the Avon River Days was formed in 2014 and is celebrating each year on Natal Day weekend; and

Whereas the Avon River Days committee and many volunteers worked hard to make this year's festival a better celebration for the Windsor/West Hants locals and visitors to the area where many find it is a time for hosting family reunions and celebrating our heritage; and

Whereas the three day festival included more than 45 activities, which included our first ever evening street concert with performances by Broken Circuit and our own local rising country music artist, Josh Macumber, and ended Sunday evening with a spectacular show of fireworks;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly applaud the tremendous efforts put into ensuring a successful festival this year and wish the committee all the best with future events.

RESOLUTION NO. 231

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Halifax Mayor Mike Savage and Councillors of HRM hosted a reception on September 13th to welcome first-year international students to Halifax and to thank them for choosing Nova Scotia's capital city as their home while pursuing their studies; and

Whereas Nova Scotia's international students make an important contribution to the cultural diversity and vibrancy of Nova Scotia communities, including that of Halifax, as they account for 16 per cent of the area's post-secondary population; and

Whereas the purpose of this event was to welcome students and introduce them to various service providers including myself and the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, supplying information on various services and programs, including pathways to immigrate to Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly support the initiative and fine work done by Mayor Savage and Halifax to make international students feel welcome in our province.

RESOLUTION NO. 232

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia Legal Aid ensures that all Nova Scotians have access to the Justice system and that help is available; and

Whereas under a new social justice framework, the commission's lawyers across the province can now help people with every day practical problems regarding income and housing security; and

Whereas this initiative will help decrease interactions with the criminal law and family law systems and help Nova Scotians connect with community resources that are around the province;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate everyone involved in this valuable initiative and recognize the importance of these services to Nova Scotians.

RESOLUTION NO. 233

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas the Long Service Award Program recognizes employees for their dedication to the government of Nova Scotia for 25 years or more of service; and

Whereas the Public Service Commission coordinates annually in the Fall the Long Service Award for reaching service milestones of 25, 30, and 35 years; and

Whereas Mr. Bob Book is a recipient of this year's award for dedicating 25 years of service to the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Mr. Book for the tremendous public service achievement.

RESOLUTION NO. 234

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas the Long Service Award Program recognizes employees for their dedication to the government of Nova Scotia for 25 years or more of service; and

Whereas the Public Service Commission coordinates annually in the Fall the Long Service Award for reaching service milestones of 25, 30, and 35 years; and

Whereas Mr. Marcel McKeough is a recipient of this year's award for dedicating 30 years of service to the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Mr. McKeough for this outstanding public service achievement.

RESOLUTION NO. 235

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas the Long Service Award Program recognizes employees for their dedication to the government of Nova Scotia for 25 years or more of service; and

Whereas the Public Service Commission coordinates annually in the Fall the Long Service Award for reaching service milestones of 25, 30, and 35 years; and

Whereas Ms. Kerry MacLean is a recipient of this year's award for dedicating 25 years of service in the Executive Council;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Ms. MacLean for this outstanding public service achievement.

RESOLUTION NO. 236

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Justice)

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

Whereas the Long Service Award Program recognizes employees for their dedication to the government of Nova Scotia for 25 years or more of service; and

Whereas the Public Service Commission coordinates annually in the Fall the Long Service Award for reaching service milestones of 25, 30, and 35 years; and

Whereas Mr. Elliott Richman is a recipient of this year's award for dedicating 25 years of service to the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Mr. Richman for this outstanding public service achievement.