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## HANSARD 08-35

### DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Alfie MacLeod

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Second Session

THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS:	
N.S. Medal of Bravery - Nomination Process, The Premier	<a href="#">3686</a>
Edmond, Wilf - Dominion Legion Command: President - Appt., Hon. R. Hurlburt	<a href="#">3687</a>
GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 3334, Edmond, Wilfred - Dominion Legion Command: President - Appt. Congrats., The Premier	<a href="#">3690</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3690</a>
Res. 3335, Health: VON Achievements - Celebrate, Hon. C. d'Entremont	<a href="#">3690</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3691</a>
Res. 3336, USS Barry/USS Donald Cook/USNS Big Horn - Welcome, Hon. R. Hurlburt	<a href="#">3692</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3692</a>
Res. 3337, Agri-Food Products: Guidelines - Support, Hon. B. Taylor	<a href="#">3692</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3693</a>
Res. 3338, Donahoe, Arthur R.: SMU - Hon. Deg., Hon. A. MacLeod (by Hon. A. MacIsaac)	<a href="#">3693</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3694</a>
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:	
No. 178, Children and Family Services Act, Hon. C. Clarke	<a href="#">3694</a>
NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 3339, MacLean, Gwen - Excellence in Teaching Award, Mr. C. Parker	<a href="#">3694</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3695</a>
Res. 3340, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 508 - Anniv. (100 <sup>th</sup> ), Mr. S. McNeil	<a href="#">3695</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3695</a>
Res. 3341, Mader, John/Peter/Rosemary: Mader's Store - Anniv. (100 <sup>th</sup> ), Hon. M. Baker	<a href="#">3696</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3696</a>
Res. 3342, Hfx. Cycling Coalition: Efforts - Congrats., Mr. L. Preyra	<a href="#">3696</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3697</a>
Res. 3343, CBU: Graduates (2008) - Congrats., Mr. Manning MacDonald	<a href="#">3697</a>

Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3698</a>
Res. 3344, Motorcycle Ride for Dad: Supporters - Recognize, Hon. B. Taylor	<a href="#">3698</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3699</a>
Res. 3345, Theatre Arts Guild/Walton-Bone, Vanessa: Liverpool Intl. Theatre Fest. - Awards, Ms. M. Raymond	<a href="#">3699</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3699</a>
Res. 3346, Dal. Circle K Intl. Club: Founding Members/Exec. - Congrats., Ms. D. Whalen	<a href="#">3700</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3700</a>
Res. 3347, Lockview HS Sen. Concert & Sen. Jazz Bands - Heritage Intl. Music Fest. Awards, Mr. P. Paris	<a href="#">3700</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3701</a>
Res. 3348, Smith, Ford (Deceased) - SAERC Scholarship Donation, Mr. M. Samson	<a href="#">3701</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3702</a>
Res. 3349, Queens Fit Pro - Incentive: Family Doctors - Recognize, Ms. V. Conrad	<a href="#">3702</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3703</a>
Res. 3350, Intl. Museum Day (05/22/08) - Recognize, Mr. K. Colwell	<a href="#">3703</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3703</a>
Res. 3351, Comeau, Clarence & Aline: Clarence's Shopping Mart - Foodland Award, Mr. W. Gaudet	<a href="#">3704</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3705</a>
Res. 3352, Stern, Jeffery: West. Hfx. Showcase Concert - Congrats., Mr. W. Estabrooks	<a href="#">3705</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3706</a>
Res. 3353, Natl. Geographic - Crittercam Proj.: Luck - Wish, Mr. H. Theriault	<a href="#">3706</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3707</a>
Res. 3354, Fish. & Aquaculture - Cusk: Endangered Species Status - Review, Mr. S. Belliveau	<a href="#">3707</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3707</a>
Res. 3355, MacKinnon, Joe & Christa: Quadruplets - Congrats., Mr. L. Glavine	<a href="#">3707</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3708</a>
Res. 3356, Brown, Annie - Heritage Intl. Music Fest. Award, Mr. P. Paris	<a href="#">3708</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3709</a>
Res. 3357, Karam, Roy, et al: French Pub. Speaking Contest - Congrats., Mr. David Wilson (Glace Bay)	<a href="#">3709</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3709</a>
Res. 3358, Kent, Ian - Paralympic Games: Participation - Congrats., Ms. B. Kent	<a href="#">3710</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3711</a>
Res. 3359, Clare Special Olympics Hockey Game: Organizers - Congrats., Mr. W. Gaudet	<a href="#">3711</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3711</a>
Res. 3360, Sutherland, Sandy - Great Cdn. Geography Challenge: Prov. Finals - Congrats., Mr. C. Parker	<a href="#">3711</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3712</a>
ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS:	
No. 350, Health: Seniors' Pharmacare - Budgeting, Mr. D. Dexter	<a href="#">3712</a>
No. 351, Health: Seniors' Pharmacare - Cap Removal, Mr. David Wilson (Glace Bay)	<a href="#">3714</a>
No. 352, Health: VGH Transitional Unit - Action, Mr. D. Dexter	<a href="#">3715</a>
No. 353, Fin.: Electricity Rebate - Removal, Mr. D. Dexter	<a href="#">3716</a>
No. 354, Educ.: Strait Reg. Sch. Bd. - Problem Address, Mr. M. Samson	<a href="#">3718</a>
No. 355, Agric.: Pork Producers - Protection, Mr. D. Dexter	<a href="#">3719</a>

No. 356, Health: N. Cumb./Lillian Fraser ERs - Commitment, Mr. David Wilson (Sackville-Cobequid)	<a href="#">3720</a>
No. 357, TCH: U.S. Visitors - Entry Points, Mr. H. Theriault	<a href="#">3722</a>
No. 358, TIR: Forest Ind.: Road Classifications - Effects, Ms. V. Conrad	<a href="#">3723</a>
No. 359, Health - Corpus Sanchez Rept.: Endorsement - Confirm, Mr. David Wilson (Glace Bay)	<a href="#">3724</a>
No. 360, Health: Retention & Recruitment - Requests, Mr. David Wilson (Sackville-Cobequid)	<a href="#">3725</a>
No. 361, LWD - MSVU: IT Prog. - Enrolment, Ms. Maureen MacDonald	<a href="#">3727</a>
No. 362, Energy: Renewable Energy - Direct Sales, Mr. M. Samson	<a href="#">3728</a>
No. 363, Com. Serv.: Child Care Plan - Efficacy, Mr. T. Zinck	<a href="#">3730</a>
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:	
PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:	
No. 127, Health Professions Disciplinary Proceedings Protection (2008)Act, Hon. C. d'Entremont	<a href="#">3731</a>
Mr. David Wilson (Sackville-Cobequid)	<a href="#">3732</a>
Mr. David Wilson (Glace Bay)	<a href="#">3734</a>
Hon. C. d'Entremont	<a href="#">3735</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3736</a>
No. 130, Emergency Health Services Act, Hon. C. d'Entremont	<a href="#">3736</a>
Mr. David Wilson (Sackville-Cobequid)	<a href="#">3737</a>
Mr. David Wilson (Glace Bay)	<a href="#">3743</a>
Hon. C. d'Entremont	<a href="#">3744</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3744</a>
No. 131, North American Labour Cooperation Agreement Implementation Act, Hon. M. Parent	<a href="#">3744</a>
Ms. Maureen MacDonald	<a href="#">3745</a>
Adjourned debate	<a href="#">3745~~~~~</a>
ADJOURNMENT:	
MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5):	
Com. Serv.: Home Repair Progs. - Income Limits, Mr. G. Gosse	<a href="#">3745</a>
Mr. Manning MacDonald	<a href="#">3748</a>
Hon. J. Streach	<a href="#">3751</a>
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:	
PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:	
No. 131, North American Labour Cooperation Agreement Implementation Act, [debate resumed]	<a href="#">3754</a>
Ms. Maureen MacDonald	<a href="#">3754</a>
Mr. K. Colwell	<a href="#">3757</a>
Mr. M. Samson	<a href="#">3757</a>
Hon. M. Parent	<a href="#">3760</a>
Vote - Affirmative	<a href="#">3761</a>
No. 156, Land Registration Act, Hon. J. Muir	<a href="#">3761</a>
Adjourned debate	<a href="#">3762</a>
ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Fri., May 23 <sup>rd</sup> at 9:00 a.m.	
<a href="#">3763</a>	
NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):	
Res. 3361, Riles, Kevin: Commun. Support - Congrats., Hon. L. Goucher	<a href="#">3764</a>
Res. 3362, Chignecto-Central Fam. & Schools: Sch. Action for Emergency Prog. - Congrats., Mr. P. Dunn	<a href="#">3764</a>
Res. 3363, New Glasgow: Environ. Funding - Congrats., Mr. P. Dunn	<a href="#">3765</a>
Res. 3364, Svendsen, Sarah: New Glasgow Music Fest. - Award Mr. P. Dunn	<a href="#">3765</a>
Res. 3365, Pictou Co. Special Olympians - Team N.S.: Quebec City Comp. -	

Congrats., Mr. P. Dunn	<a href="#">3766</a>
Res. 3366, Brannen, Heather: DND - Work Placement, Mr. P. Dunn	<a href="#">3766</a>
Res. 3367, Tucker, Michael: Engineering Skills Comp. - Bronze Medal, Mr. P. Dunn	<a href="#">3767</a>
Res. 3368, Passport to Health Fair: Pictou Co. Health Authority - Congrats., Mr. P. Dunn	<a href="#">3767</a>
Res. 3369, MacPherson, Megan/Corbin, Paul - Town Youth Participation Strategies Conf., Mr. P. Dunn	<a href="#">3768</a>
Res. 3370, Mombourquette, Alex - Richmond Co. Home Support Vol. of Yr., Mr. M. Samson	<a href="#">3768</a>
Res. 3371, Osmond, Darlene - Fest. Acadien de Petit-de-Grat la benévole de l'année, Mr. M. Samson	<a href="#">3769</a>
Res. 3372, David, Jalisa - Bibliothèque Reg. East Co. de Petit-de-Grat la benévole de l'année, Mr. M. Samson	<a href="#">3769</a>
Res. 3373, Boudreau, Janelle - Immaculée-Conception Paroisse la benévole de l'année, Mr. M. Samson	<a href="#">3770</a>
Res. 3374, Benoit, Thérèse - Comité des femmes en marche de Richmond la benévole de l'année, Mr. M. Samson	<a href="#">3770</a>
Res. 3375, Samson, Lena - Coopérative Radio Richmond la benévole de l'année, Mr. M. Samson	<a href="#">3771</a>
Res. 3376, Boudreau, Julien R. - Maison des Jeunes de Richmond la benévole de l'année, Mr. M. Samson	<a href="#">3771</a>
Res. 3377, Martell, Shirley - Centre La Picasse la benévole de l'année, Mr. M. Samson	<a href="#">3772</a>
Res. 3378, Collier, Kenny/Staff/Students/Medal Winners: Mem. HS - Skills Comp., Hon. C. Clarke	<a href="#">3772</a>
Res. 3379, MacEachern, Juleen: Heart & Stroke Fdn. - Commitment, The Premier	<a href="#">3773</a>
Res. 3380, Mhabu, Feis: Heritage Preservation - Congrats., The Premier	<a href="#">3773</a>
Res. 3381, Beaton, Kate - Artistic Achievements, The Premier	<a href="#">3774</a>
Res. 3382, Gillis, Michael: Commun. Commitment - Congrats., The Premier	<a href="#">3774</a>
Res. 3383, McLean, David - RCL Friendship Award, The Premier	<a href="#">3775</a>
Res. 3384, Bulger, Matt - Musquodoboit Hbr. Vol. FD: Contributions - Applaud, Hon. W. Dooks	<a href="#">3775</a>
Res. 3385, Hendsbee, Eric - Chezzetcook Vol. FD: Contributions - Applaud, Hon. W. Dooks	<a href="#">3776</a>
Res. 3386, Loupe, Sarah-Marie - Chezzetcook Vol. FD: Contributions - Applaud, Hon. W. Dooks	<a href="#">3776</a>
Res. 3387, Lunn, Murray - Chezzetcook Vol. FD: Contributions - Applaud, Hon. W. Dooks	<a href="#">3776</a>
Res. 3388, Mannette, Donna - Chezzetcook Vol. FD: Contributions - Applaud, Hon. W. Dooks	<a href="#">3777</a>
Res. 3389, Mannette, Joe - Chezzetcook Vol. FD: Contributions - Applaud, Hon. W. Dooks	<a href="#">3777</a>
Res. 3390, Mannette, Keith - Chezzetcook Vol. FD: Contributions - Applaud, Hon. W. Dooks	<a href="#">3778</a>
Res. 3391, Miller, Johnathan - Chezzetcook Vol. FD: Contributions - Applaud, Hon. W. Dooks	<a href="#">3778</a>
Res. 3392, Towns, Ben - Chezzetcook Vol. FD: Contributions - Applaud, Hon. W. Dooks	<a href="#">3779</a>
Res. 3393, Whalen, Jennifer - Chezzetcook Vol. FD: Contributions - Applaud, Hon. W. Dooks	<a href="#">3779</a>
Res. 3394, Whyte, Jodi - Chezzetcook Vol. FD: Contributions - Applaud, Hon. W. Dooks	<a href="#">3779</a>
Res. 3395, Belanger, Sheenah - Chezzetcook Vol. FD: Contributions - Applaud, Hon. W. Dooks	<a href="#">3780</a>
Res. 3396, Bezanson, Melinda - Chezzetcook Vol. FD: Contributions -	

Applaud, Hon. W. Dooks	<a href="#">3780</a>
Res. 3397, Conrad, Steve - Chezzetcook Vol. FD: Contributions - Applaud, Hon. W. Dooks	<a href="#">3781</a>
Res. 3398, Crowell, Crystal - Chezzetcook Vol. FD: Contributions - Applaud, Hon. W. Dooks	<a href="#">3781</a>
Res. 3399, Duchesne, Al - Chezzetcook Vol. FD: Contributions - Applaud, Hon. W. Dooks	<a href="#">3782</a>
Res. 3400, Goldsworthy, Dawn - Chezzetcook Vol. FD: Contributions - Applaud, Hon. W. Dooks	<a href="#">3782</a>

[\[Page 3685\]](#)

**HALIFAX, THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2008**

**Sixtieth General Assembly**

**Second Session**

**3:00 P.M.**

**SPEAKER**

**Hon. Alfie MacLeod**

**DEPUTY SPEAKER**

**Mr. Wayne Gaudet**

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we begin the daily routine, the subject for this evening's late debate was submitted by the honourable member for Halifax Chebucto:

Therefore be it resolved that the government increase the household income limits used to qualify low-income families in Nova Scotia for home repair programs.

We will commence the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

[\[Page 3686\]](#)

3685

HON. RODNEY MACDONALD (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour today to launch a call for nominations for Nova Scotia's new Medal of Bravery.

While we are surrounded by heroic actions every day by those acting in the best interests of their fellow citizens such as our police, our firefighters, our doctors and nurses and paramedics, our social workers and, of course, our military personnel, we are often struck by particular acts where an individual has risen to an extraordinary challenge in extraordinary circumstances. It is to those Nova Scotians that we wish to direct this honour.

Today I call on all citizens to put forward the name of any individual or individuals who qualify for the Medal of Bravery and to follow the nomination process outlined on the form available at Access Nova Scotia centres across the province or by going to [www.gov.ns.ca/bravery](http://www.gov.ns.ca/bravery).

The deadline for nominations for this year is June 30, 2008, and this covers actions of a Nova Scotian dating back to January 1, 2007.

The recommendations of those recipients deserving of the medal rests in the competent hands of a committee of accomplished Nova Scotia citizens. I thank them for their commitment to this duty. They are the Honourable Constance Glube, former Chief Justice, Nova Scotia Court of Appeal as Chair; Wayne Adams, a former MLA and community activist; as well as John Cody, retired from the Department of National Defence.

The statutory members include Marian Tyson, Deputy Minister for Justice; Brigadier-General Richard Parsons, Commander Land Forces Atlantic Area; Chief Gary L. Copeland, President, Nova Scotia Chiefs of Police Association; Craig MacLaughlan, CEO, Emergency Management Office; and Robert Cormier, Public Safety and Office of the Fire Marshal.

With the assent of all Parties in this House, we passed the Medal of Bravery Act just one year ago. I am proud that today we are sending out the call to have names brought forward for nominations, and I thank all involved who have made this happen.

Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to bring the nomination process for the Medal of Bravery for Nova Scotia forward in anticipation of commending today's heroes who have and will rise from a strong heritage of valour in our province. Thank you. (Applause)

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

MR. DARRELL DEXTER: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the NDP caucus, I'm very pleased the province is now calling for nominations for this medal, the first Nova Scotia Medal of Bravery. It is very important to recognize the extraordinary citizens in our province who put themselves at risk to help others. They are the heroes who live among us and who

[\[Page 3687\]](#)

inspire us all. The Premier mentioned this province has a strong heritage of valour. The evidence is in the almost 300 Nova Scotians who have been awarded the Canadian Medal of Bravery, including the MLA for Timberlea-Prospect and I believe the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. They also include the Westray draegermen who risked their lives in an attempt to find survivors after the terrible explosion.

We have had many great heroes in our past, no doubt there will be many more heroes in our future. My caucus is proud to be part of this important honour for Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. STEPHEN MCNEIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today and respond to the Premier's statement. I believe, like my honourable colleague, that government should acknowledge the bravery of those ordinary Nova Scotians who have chosen to do extraordinary things. The Liberal caucus was pleased to support the Medal of Bravery Act passed one year ago.

It is important for us to recognize and pay tribute to the everyday heroes in this province, those men and women who go beyond that which is expected of them. It is a deliberate choice to take action and move one's self from safety into harm's way, in order to protect and provide help to someone in need. But Nova Scotians rise to that challenge, Mr. Speaker, every day. It is these individuals that the Medal of Bravery seeks to honour.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to recognize our valued professionals who work hard to keep Nova Scotians and their families safe, secure and out of harm's way. Our men and women in the military, law enforcement, fire protection and our valued health care professionals set a standard of excellence and professionalism of which we should all be proud.

[3:15 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, I proudly echo the Premier's call for nominations. The spirit of courage and determination in principle is our proud heritage and one that we should honour. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Before we move on, I would ask the members of the House to draw their attention to my gallery, where today we have some special visitors. We have with us today Wilfred Edmond, would you please stand, his wife Annie, his daughter-in-law Debra, his son Wilf, his very special family friend Ann MacKay, his daughter Phyllis Hunter and his son Brian. I'd ask the House to give them a warm welcome. (Standing Ovation)

The honourable Minister responsible for Military Relations.

[\[Page 3688\]](#)

HON. RICHARD HURLBURT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to acknowledge Wilf Edmond for his service to his community, our province and our country. As Minister responsible for Military Relations, I am proud to see his impending installation as the Dominion Royal Canadian Legion President. He will be the first member elected to the post from Nova Scotia in 54 years. (Applause) So it is, indeed, an honour for our province.

This former member of the Canadian Army's Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps has been a member of the Royal Canadian Legion since first becoming a member of the Donkin Branch half a century ago. He served as President of Branch No. 5 for 13 years. He has served on the Legion's Dominion Executive since 1995, holding positions on all major committees. He is a life member of his branch and has been honoured with two outstanding medals.

Mr. Edmond has been in service to the Cape Breton Development Corporation until his retirement in 1991, after 36 years of service as the Manager of Preventive Maintenance Department. His selfless commitment to his community also includes 35 years with Donkin's volunteer fire department and was a member of the much-loved Men of the Deeps.

Mr. Speaker, this gentleman's genuine commitment to Donkin, Nova Scotia and this country extends also to his

family. He has a daughter and two sons. His positive influence on his children is obvious - his two sons, Brian and Wilf, are both members of the Canadian Military. Brian has served in the Persian Gulf and Wilf in Afghanistan. Devotion to service to our country is obviously in the genes. I thank these two men for their commitment also. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it is hard to believe that one man can accomplish so much. I am sure he could not have done this without the love and support of his wife and family. Once again, on behalf of all Nova Scotians, I offer my congratulations to Mr. Edmond and wish him well as he prepares for the significant work ahead and thank him for his contributions thus far. (Applause)

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

MR. DARRELL DEXTER: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the NDP caucus and as a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, I would like to congratulate Wilf Edmond on his promotion to National Legion president. Mr. Edmond has worked on behalf of the Legion for more than 25 years. This is not only an honour for Mr. Edmond, it is an honour for our province because he's the first Nova Scotian since 1954 to be elected to this position and I'm not sure about this, but perhaps the first person from Cape Breton to receive this honour. (Applause)

[\[Page 3689\]](#)

Mr. Edmond began serving his country more than 50 years ago when he joined the Army's Ordnance Corps. He has contributed to his province through the Legion work, as a long-time volunteer with the Donkin Fire Department, and as a singer with the Men of the Deeps. Mr. Edmond is an outstanding Nova Scotian who has dedicated his life to serving his family, his community and his country. On behalf of my caucus, I would like to thank him for his contribution to our province and for the work he will be doing as president of the Royal Canadian Legion. (Applause)

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

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise in my place here today as the Military Relations Critic to honour Wilf Edmond, a good friend of mine. As the Leader of the NDP has stated, he's also from the large city of Donkin in Cape Breton and he's the most distinguished resident of Donkin that I know. Anyway, he's going to be installed as president of the Royal Canadian Legion and, indeed, that's an honour for both Nova Scotia and, particularly, Cape Breton.

He has been on the Legion executive for many, many years and he has served on all major committees, making this a natural progression for Mr. Edmond to rise to the top of that grand Canadian organization. He has been a member of the Legion for 50 years, as was previously stated, and I know he is a proud Legion member. I have the opportunity on many occasions to meet Wilf at installation of officers and awards nights in various branches in Cape Breton and I, too, am very proud to be a life member of the Royal Canadian Legion. So I know that it's a privilege when Wilf comes to our branch, that we're able to welcome him. He never misses and Branch 138 in Aspy is pretty pleased about that, Wilf, that you're there every year.

We in the Liberal caucus wish you and your family all the best in the future. You have a distinguished family, you are a distinguished icon in Cape Breton, and we certainly wish you smooth sailing in the future in your new role as president of the Dominion Command. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond on an introduction.

MR. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, all members of the House are well aware of the important role that Legislative Pages play in the operation of the House of Assembly and it's always a pleasure when we have some of them visit us after they're no longer working here. In the west gallery today we have a familiar face, who worked here as a Legislative Page some sessions ago. Shehzad Pradhan is here today and with him as well are his parents visiting from Pakistan, Amirali and Yasmin. As well, members will note an important addition to his family, Shehzad now has with him his beautiful daughter, Serena, who is joining us here today. (Standing Ovation)

[\[Page 3690\]](#)

#### GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 3334

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

Whereas 2008 marks the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the birth of parliamentary democracy in Canada, one of many proud firsts for Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Democracy 250 is celebrating this year by recognizing and thanking our veterans and their organization, the Royal Canadian Legion, for standing firm for democracy; and

Whereas at the national Dominion Convention in Ottawa in June, Wilfred Edmond of Donkin will be installed as

the new president of the Dominion Legion Command, becoming the first Nova Scotian to assume this prestigious and important position in 54 years;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House thank Wilfred Edmond for his long and devoted service to his country, commend him for his loyal and dedicated support of the Royal Canadian Legion over the past 50 years and extend sincere best wishes to him as he takes on the new, exciting role as president of the Dominion Executive during the special year of celebration.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health.

RESOLUTION NO. 3335

[\[Page 3691\]](#)

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

Whereas staff and volunteers from across the country are celebrating VON Week, incorporating this year's theme, Stay at Home with VON; and

Whereas hundreds of Victorian Order of Nurses staff and volunteers play a key role in helping Nova Scotians across the province remain independent in their communities and in their homes; and

Whereas Halifax women played a significant role in the establishment of the VON in 1897, bringing the concerns of the women to Lady Ishbel Aberdeen who, as President of the National Council of Women, directed that a nursing service be established in honour of the silver jubilee of Queen Victoria;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join in the celebration as VON sites across Nova Scotia celebrate their achievements and raise awareness of the important role VON plays in the Canadian health care system.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister responsible for Military Relations.

HON. RICHARD HURLBURT: Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if I could do an introduction, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Please do.

MR. HURLBURT: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw to the attention of my colleagues in the House to the Speaker's Gallery where we have two special guests, members of the United States Navy, who are visiting our province following a bilateral exercise off the coast of Scotland. First we have Commander William Parker, a commanding officer of the USS Donald Cook. He is also joined by Petty Officer Jennifer Stoker, the

[\[Page 3692\]](#)

communications officer of the USS Donald Cook. I would ask all members to give them a warm welcome to Nova Scotia. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister responsible for Military Relations.

RESOLUTION NO. 3336

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

Whereas three ships of the United States Navy, the USS Barry, the USS Donald Cook and the UNS Big Horn, departed their home port of Norfolk, Virginia, on April 7<sup>th</sup> to participate in the joint American and British Exercise Joint Warrior off the coast of Scotland; and

Whereas following this exercise, these three ships have steered the course for Halifax to begin a week-long visit to our province; and

Whereas the visit of these ships and their sailors is a further indication of the close friendship of the people of Nova Scotia and the United States Navy;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House acknowledge and offer a heartfelt welcome to the ships' companies of the USS Barry, the USS Donald Cook, and the UNS Big Horn on the occasion of their port visit to Halifax.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 3337

[\[Page 3693\]](#)

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

Whereas the federal government has announced new guidelines that will better reflect the origin of agri-food products sold in Canada; and

Whereas under the new rules, a product of Canada label will mean that all or virtually all of the contents are Canadian in origin and if the ingredients in the product come from another country, the label will indicate that they are imported; and

Whereas this qualified label will let shoppers know they are supporting Canadian jobs and the Canadian economy even if not all of the contents come from Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature support these proposed new guidelines for agri-food products as they will help consumers when choosing and buying their groceries.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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 Deputy Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 3338

HON. ANGUS MACISAAC: Mr. Speaker, I am going to present this resolution on behalf of the honourable member for Cape Breton West but the context of the resolution more appropriately to say on behalf of yourself, sir.

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

Whereas there is no greater honour than to be recognized by one's peers; and

Whereas that opportunity so seldom happens to one so universally admired; and

[\[Page 3694\]](#)

Whereas a life of service to one's community, province and the Commonwealth is one that is deserving of the

respect of all;

Therefore be it resolved that this House do congratulate Arthur R. Donahue, Q.C., on receiving an honorary degree from Saint Mary's University, while recognizing that tenure in this place can upon occasion provide the path to greater glory.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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.

[3:30 p.m.]

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 178 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 5 of the Acts of 1990. The Children and Family Services Act. (Hon. Cecil Clarke)

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

#### NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

#### RESOLUTION NO. 3339

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

Whereas Gwen MacLean of Green Hill, Pictou County, has been honoured with the 2008 Excellence in Teaching Award; and

Whereas Gwen MacLean is the principal of Saltspings Elementary School, the Reading Recovery teacher, and the Grades 4 and 5 social studies and science teacher; and

[\[Page 3695\]](#)

Whereas held in high esteem by her colleagues, Gwen MacLean is also greatly admired by staff, teachers and parents for being a most caring teacher;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Gwen MacLean, principal of Saltspings Elementary School, for receiving the 2008 Excellence in Teaching Award, and commend her for her commitment and dedication to her profession.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

#### RESOLUTION NO. 3340

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

Whereas the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 508 has been representing transit workers in the Halifax Regional Municipality for 100 years; and

Whereas though their employer has changed many times throughout the years, the union representation has remained the same; and

Whereas the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 508 will be celebrating 100 years of representation with a

dinner and dance on June 7, 2008;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly extend best wishes to the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 508 on this special anniversary and wish them continued success in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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

[\[Page 3696\]](#)

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Finance.

#### RESOLUTION NO. 3341

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

Whereas many things have changed during the past 100 years in the community of Barss Corner, Lunenburg County, however, Mader's Store continues to provide quality products and service to the residents of its community; and

Whereas Howard Mader opened Mader's General Store in 1908, and offered a wide array of goods and merchandise to local residents; and

Whereas John Mader took over the operation of the store in 1945 after returning from the war, and Peter and Rosemary Mader now own and operate the store;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate John Mader, and Peter and Rosemary Mader on the milestone of their 100<sup>th</sup> year of operating Mader's Store in Barss Corner and providing superior service and quality products to their community.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel.

[\[Page 3697\]](#)

#### RESOLUTION NO. 3342

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

Whereas cycling is one of the cleanest, most sustainable modes of transportation that exists; and

Whereas a number of Nova Scotians choose this method of transportation for work, school and their recreational needs; and

Whereas the Halifax Cycling Coalition is a group of citizens that advocate on behalf of cyclists to improve the conditions for cycling in the Halifax Regional Municipality and to increase cycling awareness and the safety of cyclists;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Cycling Coalition for its efforts to make Halifax a more bike-friendly city, and that all members take the responsibility to assist in their success.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cape Breton South.

RESOLUTION NO. 3343

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

Whereas on May 10, 2008, Cape Breton University celebrated the graduation of 600 students at their convocation ceremony; and

[\[Page 3698\]](#)

Whereas at the ceremony, honorary degrees were given to Bea LeBlanc, a humanitarian, role model and advocate for women and children, and Dr. Kenneth Mann, a world leader on aquatic ecology; and

Whereas in addition to her honorary degree, Ms. Leblanc gave the address to the graduating class;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate all Spring 2008 graduates of Cape Breton University and wish them every success in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 3344

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

Whereas the Motorcycle Ride for Dad is without a doubt Canada's largest annual motorcycle event dedicated to fighting prostate cancer through research and education; and

Whereas there are an estimated one million men with prostate cancer in Canada, with 4,300 dying every year and an estimated 800,000 having the cancer and not even realizing it; and

Whereas the first Motorcycle Ride for Dad took place in Ottawa back in 2000 with 75 riders, and this exercise has now grown into a number of rides right across Canada, including a big one here in Halifax on Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup>;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House recognize the ardent support put forth by Chair Mitch McIntyre, former Dartmouth MLA Tim Olive, Ride Captain Mark

[\[Page 3699\]](#)

Doyle and Murray McIntyre and wish them every success with their fundraising initiatives for prostate research.

Mr. Speaker, I would point out that there will be a press conference here tomorrow at 11:00 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

RESOLUTION NO. 3345

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

Whereas every two years, the Liverpool International Theatre Festival brings live drama from around the world to the stage of the historic Astor Theatre, where the best of amateur theatre is judged; and

Whereas 11 plays were presented during the five days of this festival, allowing companies from Syria, Israel, Germany, Canada, the USA and Wales to perform, compete and to share in workshops; and

Whereas the Theatre Arts Guild, Canada's oldest continuously running amateur theatre, and the pride of Jollimore, was the only Nova Scotia company to win an award, being recognized for its production of *The Lover*, as best Canadian play, and for the performance of Vanessa Walton-Bone as outstanding actress;

Therefore be it resolved that this House extend congratulations to the Theatre Arts Guild on receiving the best Canadian play award, and to Vanessa Walton-Bone as outstanding actress at the Liverpool International Theatre Festival awards, and wish them continued success on the local and international stage.

[\[Page 3700\]](#)

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Halifax Clayton Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 3346

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

Whereas the Dalhousie Circle K International Club was officially established at a chartering dinner on April 3, 2008; and

Whereas the event was presided over by past Kiwanis International President Glen Bagnell and attended by other members of the Kiwanis Club of Dartmouth; and

Whereas the new club, under founding President Michael Kennedy, is committed to community service, leadership and fellowship;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this Legislature offer congratulations to the founding members and the executive of the Dalhousie Circle K International Club and wish them every success in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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.

[\[Page 3701\]](#)

The motion is carried.

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

RESOLUTION NO. 3347

MR. PERCY PARIS: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the

following resolution:

Whereas in April, 2008, the Lockview High School Senior Concert Band and Senior Jazz Band, under the direction of Joe Cormier, performed at the Heritage International Music Festival in Boston; and

Whereas Lockview won a remarkable six major awards at the festival, including first place in its class for both the Senior Jazz Band and Senior Concert Band; and

Whereas Lockview High won the prestigious Festival Spirit Award for the delegation that best represents its school, community, state, province and country with spirit and co-operation;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate the Lockview High School Senior Concert Band and Senior Jazz Band for their outstanding musical achievements and stellar performances at the 2008 Heritage International Music Festival.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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 Richmond.

#### RESOLUTION NO. 3348

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

[\[Page 3702\]](#)

Whereas the Strait Area Education Recreation Centre has received a most generous donation in the form of a \$500,000 memorial scholarship fund for SAERC students; and

Whereas this scholarship was given to the school by the late Ford Smith, a local businessman with a keen interest in seeing students pursue further education; and

Whereas Mr. Smith carefully designed a selection committee comprised of representatives of St. Mark's United Church, the Knights of Columbus of St. Joseph's Parish, SAERC faculty and the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce to judge applicants on criteria, including academic achievement, community involvement and financial need;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize the generosity of the late Ford Smith in providing \$500,000 in scholarship money to students of the Strait Area Education Recreation Centre.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Immigration on an introduction.

HON. LEONARD GOUCHER: Mr. Speaker, it's always great when we have visitors come to the House. I want to take a moment to recognize Mr. Kevin Riles, a local business entrepreneur here in the HRM area. Through his businesses, with his Pinky's locations in the Halifax-Bedford-Sackville areas, Kevin is a great employer of some of our finest young people in this area. With the opening of the Pinky's location in Sackville, he now employs over 200 summer students. Kevin, I'd like you to rise and accept the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

#### RESOLUTION NO. 3349

MS. VICKI CONRAD: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the

following resolution:

[\[Page 3703\]](#)

Whereas an innovative fitness incentive program, known as Queens Fit Pro, has been introduced in Queens County to help 100 inactive residents of the county get involved in regular physical activity; and

Whereas the participants will be referred by their family doctor who will provide them with a voucher which will discount the membership to Queens Fit Pro by 50 per cent; and

Whereas this program will encourage preventive health needs and provide significant benefits to the participants and to the community by providing the participants with qualified staff support and a full range of fitness equipment;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the family doctors of Queens General Hospital, Queens Fitness Centre, the Queens Community Health Board, and the Region of Queens Municipality for putting this incentive in place for residents of Queens.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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 Preston.

RESOLUTION NO. 3350

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

Whereas each year a day is set aside for the public to recognize the important role that museums play in areas such as education, tourism and the arts; and

Whereas today, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia is celebrating International Museum Day by offering free admission to the public from 5:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.; and

Whereas this year's theme for International Museum Day is Museums: Agents of Social Change and Development;

[\[Page 3704\]](#)

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly recognize May 22, 2008, as International Museum Day in this province and be aware of the many educational opportunities that museums provide.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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 Shelburne.

[3:45 p.m.]

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia lobster industry is the single most important source of revenue for a great number of fishers across Nova Scotia and the Maritime Provinces; and

Whereas the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife and the Species at Risk Committee have raised the concerns of fishers across Nova Scotia on the potential listing of cusk as an endangered species; and

Whereas any such listing of cusk under the Species at Risk Act would have a devastating effect to the lobster

industry in South West Nova and great economic impact because of the potential for closure of some lucrative fishing grounds;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly, after much discussion in Budget Estimates and late debate on this topic, support fishers in our rural communities by requesting further review before the cusk is named as an endangered species.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

MR. SPEAKER: I believe that we cannot have a resolution that involves an Act that is before the House so I would rule it out of order.

[\[Page 3705\]](#)

The honourable member for Clare.

RESOLUTION NO. 3351

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

Whereas Clarence's Shopping Mart in Saulnierville was presented with the 2008 Foodland Store of the Year Award for the Maritimes; and

Whereas the owners, Clarence and Aline Comeau, recognize the dedication and support of their manager, Wade Chiasson, and their staff in achieving this award; and

Whereas Clarence's Shopping Mart is an important shopping centre in Clare and the owners appreciate the strong customer base and support they receive;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Clarence's Shopping Mart owners, Clarence and Aline Comeau, and their staff for being awarded the Foodland Store of the Year Award for 2008 for the Maritimes.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

MR. WILLIAM ESTABROOKS: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption . . .

[Technical difficulties]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

AN HON. MEMBER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect, his microphone wasn't on either.

[\[Page 3706\]](#)

MR. SPEAKER: We seem to be having some technical difficulties, so we are going to have to take a short recess.

The House will adjourn for about ten minutes.

[3:48 p.m. The House recessed.]

[4:00 p.m. The House reconvened.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

RESOLUTION NO. 3352

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

Whereas an important and integral part of every school is the band program; and

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Whereas on May 14 , the Western Halifax Showcase Concert featuring school bands from throughout the area was held at Sir John A. Macdonald High School; and

Whereas legendary band teacher, Jeffery Stern, coordinated this highly successful band event;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Jeffery Stern for a successful Western Halifax Showcase Concert and thank him and all band teachers for their dedication and commitment to band programs in schools throughout our province.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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 Digby-Annapolis.

RESOLUTION NO. 3353

[\[Page 3707\]](#)

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

Whereas in recent years we have seen a decrease in the fish population and in some cases grey seals are the culprit; and

Whereas National Geographic has donated the Crittercams, which will be installed on the shoulders of grey seals from the Sable Island region, in an attempt to track what the seals are eating and where they are eating it; and

Whereas each seal will be filmed over a period of approximately six weeks, at which time scientists will have the difficult task of retrieving the Crittercams from the seals;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly wish the scientists involved with this project the best of luck, both in their study and in retrieving the Crittercams from these roughly 800-pound seals.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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 Shelburne.

RESOLUTION NO. 3354

MR. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, for clarification:

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly support fishers in our rural communities by requesting further review before the cusk is named an endangered species.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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

Is it agreed?

[\[Page 3708\]](#)

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Kings West.

RESOLUTION NO. 3355

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

Whereas on January 24, 2008, Joe and Christa MacKinnon's family expanded to seven as they and their son, Matthew, welcomed quadruplets into their lives; and

Whereas these quadruplets are unique in that they are two sets of identical twins - twin boys, Ben and Alex along with twin girls, Morah and Julia - all of whom are healthy and have been able to come home; and

Whereas many people throughout the community have offered assistance to this young couple as they adjust to their new situation as parents of quadruplets;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate Joe and Christa MacKinnon on their healthy quadruplets and recognize the many generous people who have helped ease their financial challenges.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

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

RESOLUTION NO. 3356

[\[Page 3709\]](#)

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

Whereas the Lockview High School Senior Jazz Band placed first in its class at the Heritage International Music Festival in Boston in April 2008; and

Whereas band member, Annie Brown, a Grade 11 student at Lockview, wowed the festival with her vocal solo in "Birdland"; and

Whereas Annie Brown won the Jazz Band Maestro Award for outstanding solo, musical ability and sensitivity;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly commend Annie Brown upon her achievements at the 2008 Heritage International Music Festival and congratulate her for winning the Jazz Band Maestro Award.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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 Glace Bay.

RESOLUTION NO. 3357

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas four students from the Glace Bay Elementary School competed in the annual French Public Speaking Contest; and

Whereas Roy Karam, Victoria Clarke, Emily Milley and Ashley Angelo participated in this competition which

was held on March 26<sup>th</sup> in the library of Malcolm Munro Junior High; and

[\[Page 3710\]](#)

Whereas Roy placed first in his category, Emily and Ashley placed second and third respectively;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly acknowledge the participation of Roy Karam, Victoria Clarke, Emily Milley and Ashley Angelo in this challenging competition, and may they have continued success in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

MS. BECKY KENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your indulgence, before I do my resolution, I would like to draw attention to some very special guests in the Speaker's Gallery today. Three residents of Eastern Passage, two of which are my sons, I'm especially pleased to have them here today, two out of three - Isaac Kent and Matthew Kent. So if I could ask the House to give them a warm welcome I'd appreciate it. (Applause)

As well, they are here today with their father. I want to take the time to recognize him here today and introduce him as a Canadian representative for us at the Beijing Paralympic Games. He is representing Canada in the sport of table tennis. We're especially pleased to say, as well, that he's been selected as one of a very few who will be ambassadors for Canada at those Olympic Games, Ian Kent, and I ask the House to give him a warm welcome and wish him the best of luck. (Applause)

#### RESOLUTION NO. 3358

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

Whereas 47-year-old resident of Eastern Passage, Ian Kent, has been an elite athlete and coach on both table tennis and soccer on the local, national and international levels; and

[\[Page 3711\]](#)

Whereas despite a nine-year battle with the neuromuscular disorder dystonia, Ian Kent continues to demonstrate an indomitable spirit of courage, determination and grit to all who know him, including his children, Isaac, Tyler, and Matthew, and other family members and friends; and

Whereas Ian Kent will be fulfilling his lifelong dream when he travels to Beijing, China, in September to compete in the sport of table tennis in the 2008 Paralympic Games;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly congratulate Ian Kent for exemplifying such a strong will to compete and to overcome obstacles on his way to reaching his goal to represent Canada and his home province of Nova Scotia in the sport of table tennis in the September 2008 Paralympic Games and wish him the best of luck in his competitions.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Clare.

#### RESOLUTION NO. 3359

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

Whereas co-organizers Hughie Batherson, Vice-Dean of Université de Ste. Anne and Francis Robichaud, Team President of Clare Lions Junior C hockey team organized a charity hockey game for the Clare Special Olympics on Saturday, February 2, 2008; and

Whereas the charity hockey game was organized between a team made up of former professional players and the Clare Lions Junior C hockey team; and

Whereas they raised \$2,000 in support of the Clare Special Olympics;

[\[Page 3712\]](#)

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House congratulate and thank the co-organizers of this fundraising event, Hughie Batherson and Francis Robichaud for reaching out to such a worthy cause.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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. 3360

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

Whereas for 13 successful years the Canadian Geography Challenge is Canada's largest student geography competition; and

Whereas this competition has seen over 2 million students who have participated from every province in the country over that time; and

Whereas Sandy Sutherland, a Grade 9 student from River John with a passion for geography spent many long hours preparing for this year's competition by studying various atlases and maps, was one of 13 finalists at the 2008 Nova Scotia provincial competition;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Sandy Sutherland for reaching the provincial finals of the Great Canadian Geography Challenge and commend him for his hard work and commitment to the study of geography.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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

Is it agreed?

[\[Page 3713\]](#)

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

MR. SPEAKER: Question Period will begin at 4:11 p.m. and end at 5:11 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

#### HEALTH: SENIORS' PHARMACARE - BUDGETING

MR. DARRELL DEXTER: Mr. Speaker, my question will be for the Premier. Nova Scotians learned yesterday that the Department of Health doesn't account for savings in the Seniors' Pharmacare Program. Despite what the Health Minister says, seniors do pay more than 25 per cent of the program cost. The past seven years seniors paid anywhere from 25.13 per cent of the cost to 28.33 per cent of the cost. Mr. Speaker, that is a lot of

money when you are talking about a program worth nearly \$180 million. My question for the Premier is, how long has the Premier known that seniors were getting shortchanged with the Pharmacare Program?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to ensuring that seniors in this province are treated fairly. The program as was mentioned by my colleague is close to \$180 million of investment which ensures a 75/25 per cent split. We work with the Group of Nine representing seniors across this province to ensure that the program reflects their needs, their wishes, and we will continue to do so.

MR. DEXTER: Mr. Speaker, this government has siphoned off more than \$27 million away from the Seniors' Pharmacare since 2001. They took money from the pockets of people on fixed incomes who are counting every penny to pay for prescription drugs and the government knows that they don't even keep track of how much money it is siphoning away. So my question to the Premier is, can the Premier tell seniors why his government has not been honest enough to tell them that they are using Seniors' Pharmacare as a way to squeeze some extra revenue out of seniors?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member, once again the rhetoric that we hear from the NDP trying to suggest things which simply aren't factual to the citizens of this province. A few weeks ago, they were saying a long-term care facility wasn't being built and it was being built. The week after, they had to apologize for suggesting that certain

[\[Page 3714\]](#)

individuals had to pay for long-term care facilities which simply wasn't true. Once again, we don't know really what to believe from the NDP.

MR. DEXTER: Mr. Speaker, higher gas prices, higher home heating costs, sky-rocketing food costs and extra taxes on electricity from a budget that, of course, we would not support. (Applause) I can't understand why this government would want to foist extra hardship upon the most vulnerable section of our society at a time like this. My question to the Premier is, will he do the decent thing and put the millions of dollars they have taken from seniors back into their pockets?

[4:15 p.m.]

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, once again the NDP have it wrong, have it wrong. They are standing there and misleading seniors in this province. Misleading. Shame on them. If they would have actually known how to read the sheet that was before them, they would know that the seniors paid 25 per cent of that cost. The deputy said that the seniors paid 25 per cent of that cost. Every premium went into that side of the equation. I said also yesterday in my response to this very same question, was that the dollars are dollars of taxpayers' money that go into this program, that cover the 75 per cent of our dollars that were underspent. There was a savings there to the taxpayer of Nova Scotia. (Interruptions) Nova Scotian seniors are paying no more than they have to be. As a matter of fact, they get to have . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please. (Interruptions)

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Read the rest of the document. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. (Interruptions)

The honourable member for Glace Bay.

#### HEALTH: SENIORS' PHARMACARE - CAP REMOVAL

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Yesterday we learned that there has been a surplus in the Seniors' Pharmacare budget. In the last couple of years, it has amounted to some \$17 million and numbers of that magnitude point to one conclusion, that seniors didn't need to pay an increase in their premiums last year. This year, seniors were subjected to changes in the program again. The \$30 cap was removed from the co-pay and, in return, seniors could sign up for what is called Option No. 2 which would allow them to pay the \$382 up front. My question for the minister is, given that you had all budgetary information before you, why did you remove that \$30 cap which is causing undue hardship for seniors in this province?

[\[Page 3715\]](#)

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. When it came to the \$30 cap, it was the decision of the department in concert with the Group of IX, that since seniors were able to pay their premium on a monthly

basis, they were able to pay their deductible on a monthly basis, that the cap was not required. So I am sure seniors, who have a drug cost and go up and above that maximum co-pay, that they will be taking that out on a monthly basis. That is why we got rid of the cap.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): Mr. Speaker, the news gets worse for seniors because if you choose to pay that \$382 up front and come the end of the fiscal year, if all or part of that \$382 is unspent, they don't get it back. The government has established a "use it or lose it" policy when it comes to paying the co-pay up front. My question to the minister is, knowing that you have major surpluses in the Seniors' Pharmacare budget over the past two years, why didn't you commit to refunding the balance of that \$382 to seniors if it remained unspent?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, of course, year to year there have been adjustments to the premium paid by seniors. If you would have noticed this year, there was no increase to seniors. There is still increasing costs of drug care costs. I can also say (Interruption) Thank you very much to the Minister of Agriculture - this is the most inexpensive plan in all of Atlantic Canada.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that about 3,000 seniors have signed up for that Option No. 2 - so I guess they'd rather take their chances than pay \$382 knowing that they're not going to get it back if it's unspent. Given that the minister's intent on continuing to build surpluses, then, in the Seniors' Pharmacare Program, my question to him is, why won't the minister, at the very least, let seniors carry over any balance of the \$382 to next year's program?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, that is a good suggestion, one that I will bring back to the department to look at more closely. We want to make sure that the program is as fair as it can be. But drug costs do change, programs do change, and we'll try to make it as fair as we can to Nova Scotia's seniors. We'll continue to have the best plan in all of Atlantic Canada. (Applause)

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

#### HEALTH: VGH TRANSITIONAL UNIT - ACTION

MR. DARRELL DEXTER: Mr. Speaker, my question will be for the Minister of Health. The minister knows that he is presiding over the unravelling of health care services here in the province, and probably nowhere is that more apparent than with the conditions at the transitional unit of the Victoria General Hospital. Those have been concerns for not only the seniors who live there and their families, but also to the staff who care for them.

[\[Page 3716\]](#)

Chronic water leaks have led to mould problems and staff are experiencing respiratory illnesses. The issue was made public in January, but little has been done, so nurses are here today to voice their concerns. I ask the Minister of Health, when will he take decisive action for the health and safety of the seniors and the health professionals who work on the transitional unit?

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to be the Minister of Health of a system that's in the middle of transformation to be better for all Nova Scotians. (Applause) I want to thank the nurses and, of course, the NSGEU for coming here today to speak to me, to speak to the Minister of Environment, to talk about the issues they're having at the transitional unit is one that I'm aware of - one where we're trying to find some solutions.

It would be my hope that someday we can move the residents out of that facility and close the doors once and for all. That cannot happen today because we still need to take care of the seniors who are there. So we'll take the concerns the people brought to us today and see if there are any other solutions we can come up with.

MR. DEXTER: Mr. Speaker, despite their own health concerns, the nurses and other staff are even more concerned for the seniors who live in those conditions 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Tests may show that mould is within acceptable limits, but the nurses will tell you that the air quality on the unit is terrible and that they are frequently taking seniors' clothing home for laundering. This has been an ongoing issue for over two years and one by one the health care workers are having problems - just imagine how much worse it is for the seniors who are there living on the unit. My question to the minister is, why is he so unwilling to close this unit?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I will simply maybe ask this question of the member of the Official Opposition, where would we send these seniors who need our help so much?

MR. DEXTER: Well, the then Minister of Health in 2004 announced the closure of that unit for the summer of that year and the opening of new facilities. Mr. Speaker, the question for the minister is, why are they still there?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, they accuse us sometimes of not answering the question but there was a non-answer as well. I can say to the member opposite that we are working through our continuing care strategy to build 832 beds across this province - the largest amount of infrastructure happening in this province.

Mr. Speaker, we are building a brand new Northwood health care on the Hammonds Plains Road with - oh, wait a minute, they forgot, they didn't know where that was. We will

[\[Page 3717\]](#)

continue to make improvements for seniors in this province. We will continue to invest over \$260 million to take care of our loved ones.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition on a new question.

#### FIN.: ELECTRICITY REBATE - REMOVAL

MR. DARRELL DEXTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The centrepiece of the government's budget was an across-the-board 8 per cent increase on basic electricity for every household in Nova Scotia and as if that weren't bad enough, the 8 per cent rebate was removed from all electricity - all electricity - including heating on May 15<sup>th</sup>. Apparently this government thought that the 30 per cent of Nova Scotian homes that heat with electricity don't need the heat after May 15<sup>th</sup>. The overnight lows for the Halifax area for the seven days since this cold-hearted tax increase came into effect have averaged five degrees and some nights down to three degrees. So my question for the Premier is, when will this government admit that the 8 per cent rebate on electricity should never have been removed?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I stand by what was in the budget because the government's intention through the budget was to ensure that we got more help where that help was needed, and that's for low-income Nova Scotians. Unfortunately, the NDP do not see that need and they voted against the budget that not only gave a rebate to the tune of up to \$200 for individuals with low income, it also gave that HST rebate for those on their home heating. Now, the NDP saw fit to vote against that. They also saw fit to vote against seniors with doubling of the property tax rebate over the coming year. They also saw fit to vote against (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'm having trouble hearing the Premier speak.

The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the NDP can try to spin it any way they want. They had the chance to do the right thing but they put politics ahead of people.

MR. DEXTER: Mr. Speaker, that Premier and that government put an 8 per cent tax on every home in Nova Scotia. That's the Tory record in this province. No wonder he doesn't want to answer questions. So, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about Port Hawkesbury, closer to the Premier's house.

On the next five days Environment Canada forecasts an average low of four degrees, dipping down to two degrees on Monday - 30 per cent of Nova Scotians heat with electricity and every single bit of that electricity for the next four months will be taxed. My question to

[\[Page 3718\]](#)

the Premier was, when will this government admit that the 8 per cent rebate on electricity should never have been removed?

HON. MICHAEL BAKER: Mr. Speaker, we have made it perfectly clear that the money that is being saved off that program is being used to provide benefits to low-income Nova Scotians. (Applause)

MR. DEXTER: Mr. Speaker, that's just not true. The reality is that for the next four months not a single penny will go back to anybody, not a penny. (Interruptions) The government's message on the HST rebate has been less than complete. Let me table a piece of information distributed by the MLA for Chester-St. Margaret's. It says, "The 8 per cent HST rebate is being continued on all home heating." That is not true. It never was true, never will be true. So my question to the Premier is, when will he ask the MLA for

Chester-St. Margaret's to send out a correction so that her constituents and all Nova Scotians will know just how hard this tax increase is going to hit all of them?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it must be very difficult, because I can just imagine this summer, the various events, with the Leader of the NDP going to talk to average Nova Scotians, perhaps to fishermen in the Eastern Passage area, perhaps it's in Queens County, and he is going to have to listen to them talk about the fact that they voted against fishermen in rural Nova Scotia. They are going to have to hear it. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, they're going to have to hear that they voted against new programs and community services to help those in need. They're going to have to hear why they voted against ensuring that 180,000 Nova Scotians are receiving a Pharmacare Program, they voted against it. (Interruptions) They're not standing up for anything, they're standing up for themselves, and that's it.

MR. SPEAKER: That's better. The honourable member for Richmond.

EDUC.: STRAIT REG. SCH. BD. - PROBLEM ADDRESS

MR. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, Strait area residents are once again frustrated and embarrassed by the actions of select members of the Strait Regional School Board. The board itself, for all intents and purposes, has become paralyzed. While the Minister of Education has removed certain financial and human resources powers from the board, certain members continue to act in an inappropriate and deplorable manner. Parents, students, teachers and residents from the Strait area are now looking to the minister and the Premier for leadership in dealing with these disruptive members. My question to the minister is, what

[\[Page 3719\]](#)

steps will she take to address the problem with specific members of the Strait Regional School Board?

[4:30 p.m.]

HON. KAREN CASEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member opposite who is very familiar with the situation at the Strait board, as are a lot of Nova Scotians at this point in time. I have to tell you that my comments to the press with respect to my feelings were that I was very disappointed with the behaviour, the decorum around the boardroom table. I will do everything I can to work with the board chairman to make sure this does not have a negative impact on any delivery of programs to our students.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, in December 2006, the minister disbanded the Halifax Regional School Board, stating that it was her only legislative option under the Education Act to deal with disruptive members who had rendered that board dysfunctional. The minister and her government have had a year and a half to introduce amendments to the Education Act to allow either herself or the boards to discipline, suspend or remove disruptive members. Disbanding an entire school board due to the actions of a few rogue members is not a reasonable approach. My question to the minister is, why have you and your government failed to bring about legislative changes to deal with disruptive school board members in Nova Scotia?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, we certainly have looked at the provisions within the Act, the authority that gives the minister within the Act. I'm not comparing one school board with another. I would not do that, but I will look at each one individually, and we are currently, as I've said, reviewing the situation at the Strait board and we will not allow the performance, or the lack of performance, the functionality of a board, to interfere with programs for students.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, as the member for Richmond, allow me to publicly express my full support for the two school board members from Richmond County, George Kehoe and Francine Boudreau. I would question whether the Premier, the Minister of Economic Development, and the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture would be prepared to do the same about their members. The residents of Richmond County deserve to continue having excellent representation from George Kehoe and Francine Boudreau, rather than having them silenced by the Minister of Education for the actions of a few rogue school board members. So my final supplementary is, will the Minister of Education commit to introducing changes to the Education Act during this session to allow school boards the ability to deal with disruptive members?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat my answer from the previous two questions. I will do whatever is in my power to ensure that we protect student programs in the classroom.

[\[Page 3720\]](#)

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

AGRIC.: PORK PRODUCERS - PROTECTION

MR. DARRELL DEXTER: Mr. Speaker, my question will be for the Minister of Agriculture. While Canada's pork industry struggles to sustain itself amid rising feed costs, shrinking inventory, declining hog slaughter and fleeing producers, the country's strong currency is resulting, ironically, in increased imports of pork from the United States. Nova Scotia hog producers have declined from 78 in 2005 to under 50 today. Of those left, I am told by Pork Nova Scotia, there are 25 that are in the process of liquidating. What this is really saying about Nova Scotia is that we are a province that is losing its ability to feed itself. My question for the minister is, if he won't do something provincially to protect Nova Scotians, how does he expect to protect Nova Scotians once we become 100 per cent dependant on imports?

HON. BROOKE TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the Official Opposition Leader is right about one thing and that is that the pork producers in Nova Scotia are facing an incredible amount of challenges. The biggest concern that the pork producer has is the high cost of production, the input costs relative to feed, high fuel costs and in fact the inability to compete with some of the major corporations. What this government has done is worked with the producers, assisted many of our producers with transition to different models that would take them out of the so-called North American model of production when, quite frankly, they have that difference in the cost of production and the cost they actually get for the pig.

We, as a government, have supported the local producers but we do recognize that we have financial pressures and, as a consequence, we can't expect the taxpayers to continue to subsidize the difference between the cost of production and what they actually get for the product. We are working with the pork producers and as recently as three weeks ago, I did sit down with the chairman of Pork Nova Scotia to discuss some of the challenges that they are facing. Without a doubt, that is a sector that is struggling in the agriculture industry in the Province of Nova Scotia.

MR. DEXTER: Mr. Speaker, the farmers I speak to tell a very different story. These circumstances that I outlined are affecting all farmers and in the end it will be Nova Scotia consumers who pay. Consumers forked out 1.2 per cent more for food in April than they did a year earlier, mainly because of rising food costs. As our farms disappear, we will become more dependant on food imports and every rise in the cost of energy will be reflected in Nova Scotians' grocery bill. So my question to the minister is, why has he failed to ensure a viable agriculture sector in this province?

MR. TAYLOR: Well, Mr. Speaker, we have not failed. In fact, we have worked with the agriculture industry in Nova Scotia. Many of the sectors in the agriculture industry are doing quite well, thank you. We don't believe, on this side of the House, that we should take

[\[Page 3721\]](#)

the attitude that we know what is best for you. But, we are willing to work with the sectors that have challenges, like the pork producers. In fact, the Nova Scotia Government, over the last four or five years, has put more money into the pork industry than any province in Atlantic Canada and we have made those investments with consultation with Pork Nova Scotia and the industry, the farmers out there. We have sat down, we have listened, we have worked with them and made the investments necessary to help them transition.

MR. DEXTER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the minister's definition of transition is, but for a lot of those farmers it means to close the doors, that's what it means. Nova Scotian farmers are suffering the economic fallout as a result of flawed government policy. The less we are able to feed ourselves, the more dependant we become on imported food. Creating the conditions for a thriving and prosperous agricultural sector in Nova Scotia will pay great dividends and environmental benefits and in protecting consumers from pending increases for imported food. So my final question for the Minister of Agriculture is, when will he get serious about sitting down with our agricultural producers to develop a plan to help our farmers feed Nova Scotians?

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I told the Agriculture Critic in Budget Estimates that we are sitting down with the farmers. We hope to come in some time this Fall with a framework that will assist the farmers in all the various commodities that are produced in the Province of Nova Scotia. I do want to say that I stood in my place and voted for a budget

because it does support the farmer and their family, it supports Select Nova Scotia, it supports buy-local and it supports pork, it supports beef, it supports dairy, it supports poultry. Mr. Leader of the Opposition, what did you do? How did you vote?

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

HEALTH: N. CUMB./LILLIAN FRASER ERs - COMMITMENT

MR. DAVID WILSON (Sackville-Cobequid): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Yesterday, the member for Digby-Annapolis stood up in this House in support of his local emergency room. He got a commitment from the Minister of Health that the Digby emergency room would stay open 24/7, 365 days a year - a promise he made last year. Today I'm standing up for the constituents of Colchester North and Cumberland North. The emergency rooms at North Cumberland Memorial and Lillian Fraser Memorial are both closed today. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health, will he commit to a 24/7, 365-day emergency room coverage for the North Cumberland and Lillian Fraser hospitals?

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite forgets about all of the other hospitals that are open today that are providing services to Nova Scotia. We have the best ambulance system in all of North America which the member opposite should know very well, being a past paramedic. I can say that the individuals and the citizens

[\[Page 3722\]](#)

of all regions in this province are treated fairly and equally and they have the best medical system, the best emergency care, in all of North America.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Sackville-Cobequid): I'm sure the constituents of those areas will be quite glad to hear those comments from this minister. From Malagash to Amherst is 76 kilometres, it could take you over an hour to get there. I don't think that gives any comfort to those people who know their emergency room is closed. The minister may say his government is committed to keeping ERs open but its plan is to actually reduce emergency services in places like Pugwash, Tatamagouche and Digby. Just ask Dr. Ron Matsusaki, a recent recruit to Digby General ER Department. Last week he stated, "The appearance is that the hospital is undergoing a natural process of attrition - but this apparent attrition is being facilitated at the bureaucratic level." I'll table that and I do have a question to the Minister of Health. What is this minister doing to ensure that his department won't siphon off services in order to close hospital emergency rooms?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I can say that through our transformation document - through the PHSOR - that there are a number of recommendations that are held within it. Some that are hard to do, some that will be easier to do. Mr. Speaker, we work with a real health strategy that we know where we're going into the future to protect rural areas. I can say to the member opposite that we are not going to be closing rural ERs. We have committed to that, I have committed to it, my Premier has committed to it, and I can say that we will continue to do our best to recruit individuals.

Mr. Speaker, this is a recruiting game that we're falling into, that all jurisdictions across North America, if not all jurisdictions across the world, are looking for physicians. As soon as we can train the physicians that are coming through Dalhousie, hopefully those 10 we added in this year's round will come back and work in places just like Tatamagouche.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Sackville-Cobequid): Mr. Speaker, health care is no game in this province and it wouldn't be a game to that individual who's suffering a heart attack who shows up at the emergency room doors and sees them closed. The Minister of Health has committed to enacting all 103 recommendations of the operational review. Recommendation No. 26 states some hospitals will be redefined as community health centres and "need not have inpatient beds or 24/7 Emergency Department services . . ." I'd like to ask the Minister of Health will the minister tell this House which facilities are going to be redefined as community health centres?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, it is time for a new model of care in this province. It is time for strength in the health care system, one that responds to the needs of all Nova Scotians. I can say, with this year's budget, with our plan, we're going to do it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

[\[Page 3723\]](#)

TCH: U.S. VISITORS - ENTRY POINTS

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture

and Heritage. Yesterday the minister stated, "From January to March, I see that our U.S. visitors are actually up 25 per cent - 1,500 more . . . Overseas visitors are up 68 per cent to 4,900 people." My question to the minister is, can the minister tell Nova Scotians, in detail, what entry point these visitors are coming through?

HON. WILLIAM DOOKS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member across the way, mostly by air.

[4:45 p.m.]

MR. THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the minister has no idea where the visitors are arriving from and whether tourists boarding connecting flights are incorrectly inflating the actual numbers. A Statistics Canada report released on May 20<sup>th</sup> seemed to indicate a different trend. From March of this year, the same-day car travel from the U.S. was down 2.5 per cent from the previous month, and down 41 per cent during the past two years. My question is, how can the minister say that U.S. visitors to Nova Scotia have increased when Statistics Canada is reporting that U.S. visitation to Canada is decreasing?

MR. DOOKS: I say to the member across the way, Statistics Canada reported figures within a year, as he shared with us. My figures were from January, February and March, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THERIAULT: Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada has reported that, in March 2008, overseas visitors have fallen by 3 per cent and have declined in 8 of Canada's 12 top markets. Again, the numbers don't add up. Since nobody can understand the minister's numbers, I'll ask the former Minister of Tourism - now our Premier. My question to the Premier is, will you admit that the minister's visitation numbers don't make sense?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage is doing a fantastic job in seeing visitors coming into our province. All one has to do is take a look at the last few weeks in this province. We welcomed thousands of visitors here to our great City of Halifax, to our great province. They were all treated with hospitality. They will be repeat visitors. In fact, the model that is used around the numbers and around the estimates on the financials for tourism actually were put in place, I believe, in 1996 under a previous government. The same model has continued to be used, and I am pleased to say that our government, in the last number of years, has hit the record for tourism numbers in our province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

[\[Page 3724\]](#)

Order, please. The honourable member for Queens has the floor.

TIR - FOREST IND.: ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS - EFFECTS

MS. VICKI CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. All industries are being impacted by high energy prices and rapid increase in our Canadian dollar. One such sector is the forest industry. They are being hit with a decrease in demand for their products, increased global competition and a doubling of their fuel costs when transporting logs to mills and finished products to outside markets. The forestry sector is faced with a mesh of road classifications, making it nearly impossible to maximize loads from the woods to the mills. My question to the minister is, why is he failing to deal with rules that are costing millions of dollars to our forestry sector?

HON. MURRAY SCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. Actually if the honourable member would talk to the folks in the industry, she would find that we have been working with them. In fact, we worked with them throughout the winter.

Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows in this province, we have road closures with Spring weight restrictions, and I'm proud to say that this government, the various departments have worked for the forest industry. In fact, they gave us great accolades for the work we've been doing in conjunction with them to assure their industry will continue to survive.

MS. CONRAD: Mr. Speaker, the Forest Products' Transportation Committee has a plan that outlines the issues they want addressed. I also understand that this same presentation was presented to government. Forest producers are looking for a clear transportation vision, new truck configurations and want to work with the department to bring about these positive changes that will make them more efficient. In short, they want to work with government to make themselves more efficient. My question to the

minister is, why hasn't his government been back in touch with the Forest Products' Transportation Committee regarding this request?

MR. SCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite - it is a good question because that industry, like other industries in this province are having tough times. We are looking at not only configurations of trucks on our roads, we're doing an assessment of certain roads that will actually help the industry she's talking about. We're doing that now. We're looking at bridges. Mr. Speaker, what amazes me is that if the member opposite and the group opposite were so concerned about the resource industry in this province, I think they would have voted for the budget.

MS. CONRAD: Mr. Speaker, that's rhetoric. While some of the variables impacting Nova Scotians are outside of provincial control, there are some things the province can do to assist the industry, but it appears the government is failing to deal with the ideas being

[\[Page 3725\]](#)

presented to them. We have seen the good ideas of farmers ignored and now it seems the forest producers will be ignored as well. My question to the minister is, when will you sit down with this industry to work on the plans they have spent so much time and effort in developing?

MR. SCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. We will continue to dialogue, not only with that industry, but with all truckers in this province to ensure those industries continue to thrive in this province. They are a vital part of our province, we know that. We have met with them and continue to work with them. We will make changes, both in that industry and the trucking regulations in this province to assist the very people that she's talking about today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

#### HEALTH - CORPUS SANCHEZ REPT.: ENDORSEMENT - CONFIRM

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Today's media reports outline a series of downgrades of intensive care units in various regional hospitals across the province and closures, possibly including the ICU in Glace Bay. Those recommendations were made by Corpus Sanchez, the authors of the report that recommended 103 recommendations, all of which were quickly endorsed by the government. My question to the minister is, have you and your government endorsed the recommendations of the \$150,000 critical care report?

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, we have not accepted recommendations held therein. It's a new document for us, one that we're reading through, seeing what the implications are, sharing that with the district health authorities and see what the implications will be for their areas. Also, I want to comment that nowhere in that document does it talk about or recommend the closure of Glace Bay. I just want to assure the member opposite of that.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Leader of the NDP, was very proud, almost gleeful to outline the fact that the Glace Bay ICU was slated for closure. In true typical NDP fashion, he chose to complain about a lack of consultation instead of supporting the ICU staff and the unit and the people in Glace Bay.

MR. SPEAKER: Do you have a question?

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): Mr. Speaker, last year eight coronary care beds at Cape Breton Regional Hospital were permanently closed. The 12 beds at the ICU at the regional hospital are full on a regular basis. This report recommends that five more ICU beds, possibly, would be removed from the system. My question for the minister is, does he

[\[Page 3726\]](#)

believe that given the Health Human Resource strain being felt throughout this system, that Halifax would be able to shoulder most of the acutely ill cases in this province - yes or no, Mr. Minister?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, again I thank the member opposite for that question. I don't think the coronary unit here in Halifax can shoulder all the requirements of the province. So, again, we'll look at these recommendations more closely to see what it means to all Nova Scotians.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the member opposite for underlining a research

problem that the NDP has. Again, there is nowhere in that document that talks about Glace Bay, that talks about the things that he's alleging. It's not fair to Nova Scotians; it is not fair for them to fear-monger, to say that these things are happening in Nova Scotia. Let them do their research correctly. Let them know the truth for once.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): Mr. Speaker, the report does advocate for a further downgrade of services.

I just want to ask the minister, if it's not true what the Leader of the Official Opposition said yesterday, then let me ask as a final question to the minister, the Glace Bay ICU will be closing temporarily for the summer, Mr. Minister, is the Glace Bay ICU going to close on a permanent basis, yes or no? (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, one word - no.

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

#### HEALTH: RETENTION & RECRUITMENT - REQUESTS

MR. DAVID WILSON (Sackville-Cobequid): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. It appears this minister has turned to Dr. Seuss for advice in managing health care. Last week he told the Bridgewater Chamber of Commerce that there are great similarities between the Whos in Whoville and health care here in Nova Scotia. He said that we must take action before calamity strikes, and the minister stated it will take our collective voices and actions over time to bring about real changes. We met with health care workers this week and they told us that they have been calling for better recruitment and retention for years. So I would like to ask the minister, how come the minister has not heard their collective voices?

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I know the member spent a lot of time cross-examining my budget during estimates. There were a number of initiatives

[\[Page 3727\]](#)

in there that talked about recruitment of nurses, that talked about the recruitment of doctors. Now, again, I did have the opportunity to see a wonderful movie with my children and I did talk about getting all of our collective voices together to make a change in health care - that means all Nova Scotians, all political Parties, all health care workers, because only together will we be able to make a difference.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Sackville-Cobequid): Mr. Speaker, in the same speech the minister admonished health care unions for opposing legislation that takes away their democratic right. The minister said that recruitment was being hurt because ads showed that the health care professionals were being overworked and their rights were being taken away - hardly a great working atmosphere. So I would like to ask the Minister of Health, why doesn't this government either withdraw this legislation or call for a vote and resolve this issue once and for all?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I can see once again that their research is bad because I don't remember seeing the member opposite at my meeting; I didn't see that he was interested in health care in Nova Scotia. He wasn't interested in the health care of people in Bridgewater. Bill No. 1 is one that we'll continue to examine, one that I know the Minister of Labour and Workforce Development will keep in mind. This is in no way, and I'm going to say it again, anything against our wonderful health care workers.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Sackville-Cobequid): Mr. Speaker, I'm in this House today as a health care worker because of the way these people treated health care workers in the past and over the last 10 years. That's why I'm here. (Applause) (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Sackville-Cobequid): A lot of the people the minister and this government listen to or talk to and ask their advice are front-line health care workers. So, Mr. Minister, can you tell us when you will start asking front-line health care workers how to solve the problem in health care and not just slough it off?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, this comes from a member of a Party who voted against the budget, who voted against Family Pharmacare, who voted against selfcare/telecare, who votes against transformative change (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please. (Interruptions)

The honourable Minister of Health.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest maybe that the member opposite would like to take a walk outside, cool his heels, maybe talk to a few real Nova Scotians and find out exactly what we should be doing for health care. We have a

[\[Page 3728\]](#)

tremendous investment in Nova Scotia, a tremendous investment in health care and we will continue to make changes to make health care better for all Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

LWD - MSVU: IT PROG. - ENROLMENT

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, my question, through you, is to the Minister of Labour and Workforce Development. Firms like RIM, Keane, Register.com, Citco and other IT companies are welcome players in the Nova Scotia provincial economy. Register.com is expanding in Yarmouth and opening a Halifax office with public assistance from Economic Development and Nova Scotia Business Inc. There is strong demand for IT employees here, in Nova Scotia, and the average weekly pay is \$964 a week - a week. So my question for the minister is, with such good employment opportunities can the minister explain why Mount St. Vincent has stopped taking applicants for its IT program since almost no one wanted to enrol?

HON. MARK PARENT: Mr. Speaker, I can certainly look into that matter and provide a reply for the honourable member.

[5:00 p.m.]

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the IT sector in Nova Scotia was worth \$3 billion in 2006 and it's bigger now. It employs over 14,000 . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please. The member for Halifax Needham has the floor.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, it employs over 14,000 Nova Scotians but industry groups across North America, and here in Nova Scotia, are worried. They are facing a serious labour shortage in tech workforce and even the community college two-year program is not full and is having difficulty filling their seats. The Minister of Justice should check into that. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, will the Department of Labour and Workforce Development encourage Nova Scotians to get the skills they need to enter the tech workforce?

MR. PARENT: Mr. Speaker, the answer is absolutely yes. In fact, yesterday I did a resolution about the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Techsploration. Techsploration is aimed at getting women to take an interest and to plan for careers in skilled trade industries, and it has been a very successful program. I'm glad the honourable member asked the question because one of the biggest challenges facing this province is the demographic one in regard to skilled workers. That is why the new Department of Labour and Workforce Development was put

[\[Page 3729\]](#)

together and I'm very proud to serve that department. That department has wonderful programs that are working at this . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: She wouldn't vote for that, would she?

MR. PARENT: Well, no, she didn't vote for that, but Techsploration is one such program that I spoke about yesterday that is a very successful program.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I believe the record will show that this caucus supported the bill on the floor setting up the new department.

Mr. Speaker, the province has put millions - millions - of public dollars to encourage the development of the IT sector but we don't seem to be putting the same amount of effort into ensuring that these companies will be staffed. This is a very serious issue. The department's business plan doesn't even specifically identify the need for more IT workers. I'd like the minister to tell the House, what concrete steps will his government take to meet the need for skilled workers in the growing Nova Scotia IT sector?

MR. MACISAAC: Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased that the honourable member has seen fit to speak about the success of our economic development strategy in this province. We

have been indeed very successful in attracting a large number of IT jobs to this province. We do so because the companies that have decided to invest here with us have the confidence that the Nova Scotia workforce will be able to provide them with the skills they need in order to be competitive in the hi-tech world. They are here because they have confidence in Nova Scotia, we have confidence in Nova Scotia. We have a lot more confidence in Nova Scotia than that Party exhibits, especially when you hear the honourable member for Halifax Chebucto saying that NSBI doesn't get it. They do get it and they bring the jobs to this province and we're going to continue expanding those jobs.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

#### ENERGY: RENEWABLE ENERGY - DIRECT SALES

MR. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, renewable energy producers in this province are still waiting for the green light from this government to produce and sell directly to Nova Scotia customers. The Electricity Marketplace Governance Committee made this recommendation to the government back in 2003, yet four years later and four Ministers of Energy later no progress has been made. Communities such as Fourchu in Richmond County were excited about the prospect of building a wind turbine and have the energy provided directly to them. The only thing that stands in the way of making this a reality is the Minister of Energy and his Progressive Conservative Government. My question to the minister is, why do you continue to stall on allowing renewable energy producers to sell directly to Nova Scotia customers?

[\[Page 3730\]](#)

HON. RICHARD HURLBURT: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you and all members of the House that we have an open market in this province and I am not going to interrupt the marketplace that we have in place today.

MR. SAMSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, that answer certainly caused more confusion. I'm sure the Minister of Energy is aware that currently renewable energy producers cannot sell directly to Nova Scotia customers, they have to go through Nova Scotia Power. I'm assuming he's aware of that. Recommendation 51 was accepted and applauded in the energy and environment community. It's not just the 2003 committee that made this recommendation. The government's own consultant recommended that it be implemented back in February 2007. Large municipalities such as HRM and those in the Strait area want to buy greener power directly, large industrials want to buy greener power directly, but for some reason this government won't let them. My question again to the minister is, why are you stepping in the way of Nova Scotians who want to purchase greener power directly?

MR. HURLBURT: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the member and all members that this government is working very favourably on having more renewable energy in our province. We are proposing that we're going to have approximately 300 generators and wind turbines in this province within the next five years - \$1 billion in private investment in this province. Nova Scotia Power is regulated by the URB and it's working very fine in this province as we speak.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, during estimates the Minister of Energy on this very subject indicated that he was waiting for a report to make a decision on whether he would allow renewable energy producers to sell directly to Nova Scotia customers. The message today seems to be from the minister that he's quite content with having Nova Scotia Power control renewable energy in this province and not allow communities such as Fourchu or communities everywhere else in Nova Scotia that want to see green power that they can buy directly and they can invest in. My question to the Premier is, if your Minister of Energy has abandoned the concept of allowing renewable energy producers to sell directly to Nova Scotia customers, are you going to intervene in this matter? Or is it your government's new position to allow Nova Scotia Power to not only have its monopoly on our energy, but now monopolize renewable energy in our province for good?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I will defer that question to the minister.

MR. HURLBURT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate what the member is saying and I did mention that we are waiting for the report. When that report is out I will review the report and I will be making recommendations to my Premier and my Cabinet colleagues. But as the market stands today, I stand firm on my decision.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

[\[Page 3731\]](#)

## COM. SERV.: CHILD CARE PLAN - EFFICACY

MR. TREVOR ZINCK: My question is to the Minister of Community Services. The minister appears to be very proud of her government's 10-year child care plan but I thought the minister might like to know what they're doing for child care in Manitoba, so I'll table the details for the minister's information - just a few highlights. The minister's plan calls for 1,000 spaces in the next five years; Manitoba is creating 6,500 new spaces in the same period of time. So my question through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister is, why does her plan fall so short of what a province nearly the same size as Nova Scotia is doing to build its child care system?

HON. JUDY STREATCH: Thank you very much for the opportunity to rise today and speak about the successful child care plan that we have here in Nova Scotia. I repeat, Mr. Speaker, here in Nova Scotia, for it is indeed the families and the children of Nova Scotia that this government has the concern, the families and the children of Nova Scotia that this government has invested over \$200 million in, and the families and children of Nova Scotia that this government will continue to invest wisely in, from one end of this province to the other.

I am in full awareness of the report from Manitoba. While I have the utmost respect for my colleagues across the country, my concern is for the children and the families of Nova Scotia.

MR. ZINCK: Mr. Speaker, wait, there's more. Nova Scotia only offers workers short-term stabilization grants and we've seen that from this government. Manitoba is giving wage increases directly to child care workers and setting a minimum pay scale and increasing benefits by 20 per cent. They're building 35 more child care centres in available space in schools. This adds child care to rural communities while also allowing them to keep their local schools open.

Mr. Speaker, in half the time and for \$30 million less than the minister's half-measure, 10-year plan - no wonder we voted on this side for the lacklustre promises that that government has made. My question to this minister is, when will she admit that her plan is spending more money and we're getting less in this province for child care workers? (Applause)

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

MR. DARRELL DEXTER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. During Question Period on a number of occasions the Minister of Health said that the review of intensive care services in Nova Scotia did not have a recommendation with respect to the Glace Bay ICU. I'd like to take this document and specifically draw the minister's attention to the part that

[\[Page 3732\]](#)

says, ". . . the consultants recommend that the current model which describes the Glace Bay unit as an ICU is not viable in the long term and that a more appropriate classification would be as an intermediate care unit or enhanced nursing observation units."

Mr. Speaker, I will table it, just to be helpful to the minister, of course.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There's a blatant - missing the point and trying to read between lines, trying to get things that are not there. There is no intention of this government to be closing ICUs and maybe he should retract that and apologize to the citizens of Glace Bay.

MR. SPEAKER: I would say that's not a point of order, no, but the information has been passed on.

## GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

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

## PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 127.

Bill No. 127 - Health Professions Disciplinary Proceedings Protection (2008) Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to stand today to speak to Bill No. 127, which is the Emergency Health Services Act. Before I start, I do want to thank my colleagues for this, especially the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal for bringing this to my attention.

Mr. Speaker, to quickly speak to the Emergency Health Services Act, it proposes amendments to establish the Nova Scotia long-service award medal for paramedics and other people involved in providing emergency medical health services. (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 127.

[\[Page 3733\]](#)

MR. D'ENTREMONT: The Emergency Health Services Act.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 127 is the Health Professions Disciplinary Proceedings Protection (2008) Act.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: All right, there we go. (Interruptions)

I can give you the same speech maybe for the next one. Maybe we can call the - all right, I know I don't have those notes here with me.

MR. SPEAKER: Has the minister found his place?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I think I can move second reading on this. Again, this is a bill that basically adds a number of amendments to different colleges that we have in this province. Last session, we did make an amendment that allowed disciplinary hearing information to remain with the college and that disciplinary hearing, so that information isn't automatically sent over to a civil proceeding in case a patient or somebody who has felt that they've been misrepresented, that they could take a civil action against that person.

Mr. Speaker, this looks at approximately, I believe, 14 different colleges, and adding that provision to them so that the information of patients is protected. What we find in some of these disciplinary hearings is that patients are unwilling, at times, to come forward with information to that disciplinary hearing because of fear that information is going to be held off or sent off to a civil proceeding.

[5:15 p.m.]

So, Mr. Speaker, this is something that has been run through all the colleges. It has been asked for by these professional organizations to have this added to their legislation. So this is a larger piece that will add that to, again, 14 different colleges in this province so that they have the same protections as doctors, nurses and other organizations. With that, I move second reading.

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

MR. DAVID WILSON (Sackville-Cobequid): Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to stand to speak on Bill No. 127. This piece of legislation was introduced to amend various Statutes that provided for the regulation of health professions. This is something that has been definitely an issue and a concern with me over the years, one reason why I think I'm here in this Legislature today to talk about issues from health care workers and about health care workers, about front-line health care workers, and the health care professions throughout this province.

[\[Page 3734\]](#)

This piece of legislation - and we saw similar legislation back in the Fall of last year that pertained to solely physicians - I would suggest that we're seeing this piece of legislation today because of what I don't think happened in the original piece of legislation that we saw in the Fall, which was to capture the audience, really the true audience that legislation that we passed in the Fall should have captured, not just solely pertaining to physicians in this province. Even though physicians and their college, their regulatory body is important, so are all the other disciplines and all the other professions here in this province, professions like the chiropractors in their Act and their regulations. This piece of legislation will address and add some clarity to their proceedings on how they go about ruling on certain items in their profession.

It also talks about the Dental Act and their regulatory body, something that we talked about, and I talked about in this House when that process was going through the legislative process here in the House to recognize the dentists in this province and also the dental hygienists who recently became certified or recognized by the government as a regulatory body to oversee conduct and incompetency in that profession which is a vital, key profession in this province. We've said that in the past and I think we need to recognize that.

We also know that this piece of legislation will deal with and change the Dispensing Optician Act, which is something I stood in this House and talked about several years ago, I believe, when we saw that profession get regulated through the regulatory body and the legislative process here in this province.

Also, the Medical Laboratory Technology Act, which I think was enacted several years before I was elected as a member but ultimately another important group of health care providers here in this province. One that I know play a vital role in the health care system and delivery and the treatment of Nova Scotians here in this province. I have criticized the government and the minister several times around the need to ensure that these front-line workers like the medical laboratory technologists, x-ray technologists, ultrasound, those who work in cytology, paramedics, nurses and continuing care workers are all asked how to improve our system here in Nova Scotia and what can work and what doesn't work.

Far too often, changes come from government in the health care system and in the delivery of the health care system that, if they would have attempted to ask those who are actually delivering the service if it was a good change, they would have realized that it was the wrong road to go down and it was the wrong approach to take, Mr. Speaker.

This piece of legislation also changes a number of professions and their regulatory bodies but one that I'm concerned about, and I will bring to the attention of the minister and the government, is the Paramedic Act which was the Act respecting the practice of para-medicine here in this province. I worked years ago, before I was elected, Mr. Speaker, with the College of Paramedics of Nova Scotia, which was a group of paramedics across this province who were working hard to try to get the attention of government, to ensure that the

[\[Page 3735\]](#)

profession of para-medicine here in this province was properly recognized. Recognized as an important part of the health care system here in Nova Scotia. I said it earlier in Question Period and many times about the lack of, I think, respect shown to this profession over the years.

That is why I am here today, standing in my place as a former paramedic, because of those actions from government and from this government. I know the Minister of Health wasn't part of that government at the time of the labour dispute of the paramedics but many of his colleagues were, Mr. Speaker. Many paramedics finally stood up and said that was enough, we need to be recognized in this province, we need to be looked upon as an important, key component of the health care delivery here in this province. I'm proud to say that I'm here today in the NDP caucus as a paramedic, as a front-line health care worker, because of the work that this caucus has done over the years to promote the needs and the ambitions and the professions like paramedics and nurses and all through the allied health professions.

I bring forward the concerns around the Paramedic Act because we passed that legislation. I believe the first reading for that was back in April 2005 and then the second reading and third reading after that. The third reading was on May 16, 2005. Today, as we stand here, as I stand here today, they still haven't implemented that college. They are working on it several years later. We are going three years after we passed that legislation. The college of paramedics here in Nova Scotia is still not up and running and operating to oversee the professions of paramedics. Yet we have a piece of legislation that is actually going to change that Act that I passed, that I think everybody in this House voted for, but we don't see them implementing the regulations, the policies, the direction of a college.

So I am taking this opportunity make sure the Minister of Health, and I know he is listening, and the government recognize, what is taking so long? It's over three years since we passed that in this House and that profession deserves to get the rightful recognition they deserve with the operation of this college.

So we support these changes. They are important changes and I am glad to see, finally, it wasn't just geared around one profession, as I said earlier, the physicians of this province, but it talked about all the professions of health care and the regulatory bodies

that are created here in this province. So I will end on ensuring - and hopefully the minister listened to me about the Paramedic Act and hopefully he can have some influence on maybe looking at and influencing the fact that this needs to come to full term and have that regulatory body up and running for the paramedics of this province.

So we will support this piece of legislation going through the legislative process and we look forward to any input that any of these professions might have on this amendment to the regulatory bodies.

[\[Page 3736\]](#)

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Chair now recognizes the honourable member for Glace Bay.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We in the Liberal caucus believe that this bill has been developed in order to best meet the needs of Nova Scotians. Self-regulating professions must have the power to honestly and openly address complaints and disciplinary issues and complainants and others need to feel that they are able to speak in confidence as well. The information they share will remain between the college and the health care professional involved in the proceeding.

Mr. Speaker, the bill also ensures that the separation between college proceedings and civil proceedings, as it currently is available for physicians, nurses and LPNs and respiratory technologists, that that is extended to other health care professionals as well.

Mr. Speaker, investigative and disciplinary proceedings are intended to regulate the profession and protect the public interest. The purpose of civil proceedings is different; specific methods for the discovery of evidence exists with that process and standards for evidence and testimony in each of these proceedings are very different.

Mr. Speaker, we in the Liberal caucus fully support self-regulating health care professions and this type of legislation will ensure a more open and accountable investigative process that serves the best interests of the public, then this is a good step forward. So we support this going through the process of the Law Amendments Committee and we look forward to hearing individuals and organizations with regard to their thoughts on this particular piece of legislation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. If I recognize the honourable Minister of Health, it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Minister of Health.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to thank the members opposite for their interventions on second reading when it comes to Bill No. 127, Health Professions Disciplinary Proceedings Protection (2008) Act. To the member for Sackville-Cobequid, I know there is some frustration about that college right now. I'm getting the final regulations approved and moving. I know that the department is working in conjunction with the group of paramedics to make sure that that bill is proclaimed as soon as possible, Mr. Speaker, yes, but this at the same time does make some changes to it.

Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite speaks from the heart when he talks about frontline health care workers, especially when it comes to paramedics. I know he also knows that I have a number of friends who are paramedics who work out of the Yarmouth and

[\[Page 3737\]](#)

Pubnico bases. I do take opportunities to ride along with them and help them out as well, as often as I can, and I want to make sure that they have the best possible legislation to protect them and their patients, in case of some disciplinary issues. That is what this Act truly does for all the professions that are listed therein.

Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the members opposite for their interventions and I want to close discussion on second reading on Bill No. 127.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is for second reading on Bill No. 127, Health Professions Disciplinary Proceedings Protection (2008) Act. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would you please call Bill No. 130.

Bill No. 130 - Emergency Health Services Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again I apologize for a little bit of a mess-up there but I know I had been given new speaking notes on this bill and I deleted the wrong ones out of my book. So you know what? Sometimes people are human when it comes to paperwork.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to stand today on second reading of an amendment to the Emergency Health Services Act. It is particularly fitting that this should come up in the House so soon after the Emergency Medical Services Week across the country. The proposed amendments establishes the Nova Scotia Long Service Medal for paramedics and other people who are involved in providing emergency medical health services.

I'm sure many of you can remember a time in this province when our ambulance system was very different. We have been lucky here in Nova Scotia to take part in a significant transition over the past decade from a fragmented ambulance system with many private operators to one of the best pre-hospital services in North America. I'd say the best in North America with an integrated provincial ground ambulance, air ambulance, medical first response program. Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite worked in one of those paramedic organizations, I know the member for Hants West worked as a paramedic in one of those organizations prior to the new system starting.

[\[Page 3738\]](#)

I tell people this story quite often that it was actually in southwestern Nova Scotia, in Yarmouth, where the two funeral homes ran the ambulances. People are incredulous when I tell them that. How can it possibly be? It's sort of a system that maybe wasn't based upon taking care of patients but trucking them off to somewhere else. Mr. Speaker, I think we've gone in leaps and bounds in the last number of years to the best pre-hospital system in North America.

EHS paramedics and staff worked very hard over the past few years to achieve accreditation for both the air and ground ambulance programs, an achievement for paramedics and providers and all Nova Scotians to be proud of. There are hundreds of men and women putting their significant skills, training and compassion to work each and every day saving lives, improving health outcomes and educating communities. It is for these people who have dedicated their life to helping others that I put forward the amendment for the establishment of the Nova Scotia Long Service Medal for paramedics and other people involved in the provision of Emergency Health Services.

[5:30 p.m.]

As I started off a little while ago when I incorrectly started this bill, I was thanking the member for Cumberland South for bringing this issue to my attention and the member for Hants West for bringing this to my attention. I think it's long overdue that paramedics do have that long service medal. With that, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 130.

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

MR. DAVID WILSON(Sackville-Cobequid): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand this evening and talk about Bill No. 130 especially since it pertains particularly to the great number of men and women here in our province who work as paramedics throughout this province in some of the smallest communities in this province to the urban centres like Halifax and Sydney. The paramedics are there to serve the people of this province and they should be recognized. Their work and their longevity in this service should be recognized because it is a hard environment to work in.

I spent eight years in the system before I got elected, and I know the member across the way for Hants West spent many more years in a system that wasn't great for your family, wasn't great for the individual. Even today with the pressures placed upon these health care providers, these paramedics, these men and women, who work every day and every minute of the day, on Christmas, on the Holidays, to make sure that they are there for their fellow citizens. Their working environment is extremely dangerous, extremely stressful and I'd like to take this opportunity to maybe talk a little bit more in depth around what paramedics in this province deal with on a continuing basis.

[\[Page 3739\]](#)

I stand in this House over the last five years at every chance I have to make sure that

the paramedics of this province get a voice here in this Legislature. For far too long, they were just consumed within the other health care workers. No offence to nurses and doctors but they seem to get the most of the headlines when government and Opposition members and anybody in the Legislature talk about health care workers. Those individuals, the paramedics in this province, are a key component to the initial stages of someone needing help in this province. Some of the problems that they've had over the years have been directly contributed to this government and other governments. Not recognizing this profession in the most appropriate way was an injustice to these individuals who work so much in this province.

I remember when I started my career, I worked 68 hours a week - 24 hours on, 24 hours off, and 48 hours in a row on every other weekend. Can you just imagine at the end of that 48 hours, having those paramedics arrive at your door to provide emergency care? I worked for Arsenault's Ambulance originally, in the old system. I was maybe fortunate enough - some might say I wasn't - to work in both systems, knowing the changes that needed to take place and knowing the changes that took place. I can honestly say, and I will say today that the system is better today than it was some eight, 10, 12 years ago.

The paramedics are appreciative of that, but they do have concerns. We hear about it every day. I talk to them all the time and I'm sure the member for Hants West talks to his colleagues and former colleagues and he knows, and the government should know, that they have concerns. For example, last year the contract for the paramedics was up and they went to arbitration for their wages and they were upset. They were upset that they felt they didn't get what they deserve. I know, for myself, I fought for years to be recognized as a profession here in Nova Scotia and to be recognized to have a fair wage and be treated fairly.

For a system we have here in this province, a province-wide system, to look at other districts that had similar sizes, similar call volumes and have a wage comparable to that, and we're still not there. One of the most frustrating things for paramedics is that they hear continuously from this government and from me - because I say it often - we have the best paramedic service in North America, and we do. I can honestly say that and the people of this province can be reassured that we do have the best paramedic service in North America. (Applause) But the problem when we hear this from the government, time and time again, is that if you ask paramedics if they think they have the best paramedic service in North America, they'll agree, but if you ask them if they're compensated like the best ambulance service in North America, they'll say no. They'll say no.

That's a role the government needs to play, to have a role in. They need to ensure that if they're going to promote our paramedics and our service here in this province as the best across North America, then they should ensure they're paid equally and they recognize that and they should work on that. I hope in the next round, when paramedics go for their contract talks, the government recognizes that.

[\[Page 3740\]](#)

The pressures I talked about earlier on the extended hours they work, the calls they go on - paramedics deal with life and death situations every day. In the middle of the night, 3:00 a.m., they could be on the side of a highway, in a ditch, trying to take someone out of a car who has a compromised airway who, if they do not do their work properly and get that individual out of there, will die. They deal with life and death situations every day.

What we hear from this government, continuously, when we ask the government around situations in the health care system, especially around the emergency room closures that we see throughout this province, the government continues - and the minister says, don't worry, those residents shouldn't worry in communities like Tatamagouche and Pugwash and Glace Bay and Digby and across the province when they have closures because we have the ambulance service there, call 911.

AN HON. MEMBER: Paramedics will take care of them.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Sackville-Cobequid): It's true. We do. But paramedics can only do so much. There are rules and things that have to happen within a certain amount of time to have a positive end result when you're dealing with emergencies. There's something called the "golden hour", when you have a critically ill patient who probably needs an OR, if you have a paramedic treating them they have about an hour to get them to a tertiary care hospital or an emergency room where they might need to have invasive procedures, surgery and other things.

So, I think, when the government continues to download, really, the responsibility of delivering health care in an emergency room setting to the paramedics, then they should recognize that and paramedics should be compensated for it. They're picking up a lot of

the slack in this province right now, Mr. Speaker.

They are, I can say, continuously preventing catastrophes in this province. Just think about if a bus overturned in Digby. I have been down there many times on that highway, starting to go over the bridge before you get into Digby, a bus of 30 or 40 people. Think about if that emergency room is closed and you have one, maybe two ambulances within a radius of that area, Mr. Speaker, what happens then? We try to plan for the emergencies that will take place in this province but the system status plan that we have for the ambulance service here in this province right now is really based on call volumes and meeting those targets. Emergency medical care needs to meet a certain call volume or response time.

We don't necessarily have a system status plan that will provide coverage to an emergency like I just said - a bus crash with multiple patients - and what happens, just what happens if that accident happens just outside Digby and that emergency room is closed? Those paramedics - two of them on one ambulance, Mr. Speaker, just two of them - have to triage and treat 40 patients. Then we have one helicopter and it's going to take some time to get from Halifax to Digby, even in a helicopter.

[\[Page 3741\]](#)

What we do is we call up other areas further down from your area in Clare, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker - those paramedics would be responding to that bus accident. The paramedics in Yarmouth, right around, probably Shelburne. We might even see the paramedic unit from Bridgewater crossing over to go to that major accident. What happens then is that those other areas have a reduced service. If there is another emergency, what happens if there are two buses that crash by Digby and one in Bridgewater? That's a situation that nobody wants to see but we have to recognize that it's the potential.

I was called late in the night when Swissair crashed off of St. Margaret's Bay and every ambulance, most of the ambulances in the province were going toward Peggy's Cove and that area to try to maybe assist any survivors which we ultimately know there weren't any. I was called at home to go down to the closest fire department and try to get some gear together, as much as I could, to ride on the apparatus of the fire service in case there were any calls. But fortunately, there were hardly any calls in the province. It was a quiet night and we were lucky. We were lucky, Mr. Speaker.

But those paramedics are there to work at any time, to respond to those emergencies like Swissair, like maybe a bus accident outside Digby or in a ditch off a highway in Yarmouth. Those individuals, those men and women who are working every day here in this province, put themselves in harm's way every day to, hopefully, protect every one of us here in this province. So it is important that we recognize that and it is important that we recognize the legislation that we have been working on for years.

As I mentioned in the previous bill, around the regulatory body or the legislation of a paramedic college here in the province, we passed that piece of legislation three years ago in 2005 but yet that regulatory body is still not up and running. What does that say to paramedics? What kind of message does that give paramedics? So when they see that happen, they are upset, they get angry, they are po'ed at the government. Because, ultimately, it's the government's responsibility when we pass legislation in this Chamber and it goes through the process, that they implement it. That's just one example of the frustrations paramedics have seen over years of, I think, not being recognized as a profession in an important part and component of the health care system here in Nova Scotia.

The paramedics' scope of practice, Mr. Speaker, has come a long way. The minister made mention, in the start of his comments about the old system where a lot of the paramedic services were out of funeral homes. I mean it's kind of ironic, you have a funeral home and then you have an ambulance service dealing with corpses and dealing with injured people. We needed a change and we saw that change. From those days, where an emergency medical assistant, I think, or technologist assistant, I think, EMS, emergency medical assistant, I think it was about a two-week course - EMA, sorry, Mr. Speaker, it was EMA - it was a two-week course. So you could be riding around this province in an ambulance on a two-week course providing medical care, kind of scary. But you know, some of those individuals have toughed it out, came through the changes that we've seen, upgraded, went

[\[Page 3742\]](#)

back to school, learned what emergency care really has to offer, especially the patients who we see here in Nova Scotia, and their scope of practice has changed dramatically over the last 10 years, 15 years, Mr. Speaker.

We have paramedics who can show up at your door no matter where you are, in the smallest little town in rural communities here in Nova Scotia, and restart your heart if your heart stops. They can give you medications to stop a seizure which, if left untreated, you could actually die. You have paramedics who can respond to the highlands and intubate an individual who has stopped breathing. We're talking about seniors, adults, children. The paramedics provide an extreme amount of service, their scope of practice has extended greatly and expanded over the last number of years and we continue to see more pressures added to them, but paramedics love it. They love to increase and become more knowledgeable on what the new procedures are in emergency care throughout the world. Many of them are workaholics. A lot of colleagues of mine work their regular shift and go in and work extra time. It's just in their blood, I guess, that they love the profession, and I did, too.

[5:45 p.m.]

When I said earlier in the start of my comments around working 68 hours a week, I would have done it all over again. I loved the fact that I was doing that job and I worked that many hours. I might not go back and work 68 hours a week, especially a 48-hour shift on the weekend, I must say I probably would never do that again. At the time I was younger, I was interested in the profession and I would have done it, and I would do it again if we could turn back time, Mr. Speaker.

Part of the problem and I think what we need to see and government needs to recognize, other than just recognizing the long service of paramedics, is the use of paramedics in this province. We can use paramedics from one of this province to address some of the concerns, and the immediate concerns, that we have in the delivery of health care, especially in emergency rooms, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if everybody knows, but paramedics work in the emergency departments in Nova Scotia. At the QEII down the road, they've been working there since the place opened. Previous to that, they were working in the old VG Hospital emergency room, working in triage, triaging patients coming in, assessing them and their acuity level of where they needed to go, who needed to see them and in how much time they needed to have that done.

They've been working in the city for a long time, but that was not the norm throughout the province, there is still - I think a lot of the emergency rooms across this province could utilize the expertise and the professionalism of paramedics in the emergency departments.

[\[Page 3743\]](#)

Quite recently one of my first partners, Mr. Speaker, and a partner of the member for Hants West, took a job, I believe, in the Dartmouth General Hospital, where they've started to have base paramedics working out of there. Those paramedics who work at the Dartmouth General Hospital and at the QEII provide a great service. They go around intubating people, they are on the crash team that will tend to somebody who might be in cardiac arrest or respiratory arrest. So they are playing an important role in the Dartmouth General Hospital now, and at the QEII.

I know my former partner - just before I left to get involved in politics - is working at the Cobequid Centre as an ortho technician, works on patients who might need casting and other things in that department. But that's the urban setting. Why can't we use that in more of the rural settings where we're seeing a problem with emergency closures, lack of health care providers to work in those facilities.

We need to exploit the paramedics of this province. We need to put them to work. Why do we have paramedics on the trucks in some areas that are very quiet when we should be putting them to work more? They might not like me for those comments right now - I don't mean take the truck and put them there, add another shift, add another paramedic shift to the hospital, for example, so that another paramedic might be in that area. I think it could work greatly in our rural communities. We look at Long Island and Briar Island where we have nurse practitioners working there with paramedics with an extended scope of practice. That pilot project, even though it's only one area, I do not understand why the Minister of Health and this government doesn't exploit that pilot project. Maybe it was the former Minister of Health two times over or three times over might have had some input in that, but why aren't we seeing that all over this province - nurse practitioners, paramedics?

These paramedics had an extended scope of practice and the satisfaction rate with the residents from that area is immense. Their numbers of hospital visits to emergency rooms have decreased. At first I must admit, and the minister and the government would know this, the residents of that area were uneasy thinking we needed a doctor and what do we have? A nurse and a paramedic. I can tell you it didn't take long for those individuals to warm up to the idea that these health care providers can provide a great

service. They can't replace a doctor, nobody can replace a doctor. But, when we have a crisis like we see in Nova Scotia where we have a limited number of physicians and the recruitment of physicians is so hard especially to rural communities then we need to use nurse practitioners, paramedics and other health care workers to fill those gaps. I'd much rather see a paramedic and a nurse working together on an island just off Nova Scotia to provide health care service than to see nothing at all. No physicians, no health care workers at all, relying on the ambulance service and 911 for any emergencies.

That pilot project should be utilized throughout this province. I've criticized the government a number of times around the lack of a vision, a lack of a policy around nurse practitioners. I'm hoping he's listening today around the possibilities of the paramedics and

[\[Page 3744\]](#)

their utilization in our rural communities and extend their scope of practice. That experience in Long Island and Briar Island should be a great model and I know other jurisdictions across the country have looked at and are utilizing that, so I don't know why this government hasn't done that.

I brought up a few of the examples of what paramedics are doing today, what their environment is all about and the need to truly recognize. . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Certainly it is very difficult for the Chair to hear the honourable member speak so I would ask the honourable members either to lower down their discussions or to take those discussions outside the Chamber.

The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

MR. DAVID WILSON(Sackville-Cobequid): Mr. Speaker, that's why I wanted to bring those to the attention of the government, the Minister of Health and all members around the important role that paramedics, the men and women that are here on duty right now across this province. They need to be recognized, they need to have government recognize the importance of their profession. Actions, really, speak louder than words when you're dealing with the health care system here in this province and when you're dealing with para-medicine across this province.

Bill No. 130 is great. We support it and our caucus supports it. I think everybody in this Legislature should support it because we need to recognize that profession, especially the long service of those who provide emergency care in this province. I hope the minister was listening and he should go back and talk to the friends he knows who work in this profession and ask them what they need. What is truly a fair equity package when it comes to their next negotiations so that we can all say, even him, that we have the best ambulance service in North America and they actually are paid just as well.

With those few words, I look forward to this piece of legislation passing through the Legislative process. I look forward to encouraging all of the paramedics in the province to make sure that they recognize this piece of legislation and they nominate anybody who has a long service here in Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): Mr. Speaker, allow me to summarize. The purpose of the amendment to the Emergency Health Services Act is to establish a long-service medal for paramedics and other persons involved in the provision of Emergency Health Services.

[\[Page 3745\]](#)

So, Mr. Speaker, it gives me a tremendous amount of pleasure to stand in my place and participate in this debate on Bill No. 130 because this is a good piece of legislation that will honour and respect what I consider to be some of the real unsung heroes in our health care professions. As the previous speaker has told us at great length, day in and day out, paramedics in this province are first to the scene of what can be sometimes very horrific situations. We ask them to administer health care quickly and professionally and then we ask them to safely transport those individuals to institutions for additional care.

We in the Liberal caucus are proud of these individuals and we are equally proud of the world-class emergency health care service that was established under a Liberal Government, Mr. Speaker - something that the previous speaker perhaps forgot to mention. I believe it was in British Columbia when two paramedics were honoured for their ultimate sacrifice when it was described that paramedics are part of a heroic brotherhood and sisterhood of keeping people safe. This particular piece of legislation enables us to recognize the dedication of paramedics and other emergency health personnel. We in the Liberal caucus are in full support of Bill No. 130 as it now moves to

the Law Amendments Committee process.

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

The honourable Minister of Health.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I thank the members opposite for their interventions. Just maybe a further comment to a Liberal Government that did give us this ambulance system, I do want to give full credit to Dr. Ron Stewart who was Minister of Health at the time for what he did and the forward thinking that he gave to this system, the information that he had, the knowledge that he had brought to this system. So I want to thank Ron personally for the work that he did on behalf of Nova Scotians.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I want to thank again the member for Hants West. I know as a paramedic and being a paramedic for about 17 years, I know he wants to say a few words on this one as well. I think he'll save that for third reading but I know he does have a lot to say about this bill and the benefit that it has on acknowledging such hard workers in our health care system. So with that, I move second reading of Bill No. 130.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 130. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

[\[Page 3746\]](#)

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 131.

Bill No. 131 - North American Labour Cooperation Agreement Implementation Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour and Workforce Development.

HON. MARK PARENT: Mr. Speaker, the bill is well-known to the critics and to the House and we had a chance through the bill briefing. So with those few words, I'll take my place and listen to what my critics have to say. Yes, I move it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have an opportunity to stand in my place and speak to this bill. I think that it's unlikely that I'll get through the remarks I have though before the moment of interruption. I'm not sure when you're looking at doing that but I would be happy to adjourn debate now for the moment of interruption and we can return to second reading after that.

MR. SPEAKER: The debate on Bill No. 131 is adjourned until after the moment of interruption.

The adjournment motion was submitted by the honourable member for Halifax Chebucto:

"Therefore be it resolved that the government increase the household income limits used to qualify low-income families in Nova Scotia for home repair programs."

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

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

COM. SERV.: HOME REPAIR PROGS. - INCOME LIMITS

MR. GORDON GOSSE: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place tonight to speak about an issue that's an issue all through the Province of Nova Scotia in dealing with the income levels for people applying for grants for home repairs, whether it's the Senior Citizens Assistance Program, the RRAP program or the home repair programs. I do know that the income levels that the department uses are done in co-operation with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Also, I do know that we have provincial housing programs.

[\[Page 3747\]](#)

[6:00 p.m.]

We have to increase the levels of income. I'll give you an example of a single mother who lives in my riding and has two children - one child is in university, the other child is in high school. She spoke about getting a grant and applied to the department for a grant. When she applied to the department for the grant, the department sent her back a letter saying she was ineligible. Now her daughter works in the summertime, she goes to university, so her daughter's income was included in this grant application. To my surprise the single mother's child tax credit was included in the income of that single mother. Here's a single mother with a daughter in university, another daughter in high school, in desperate need of housing repairs but when they did the income level - and it would be an income level for a three bedroom, which is under the table - she was over the limit - they included her daughter who works in the summer to put herself through university.

The mother works six months of the year at a gardening centre and is laid off for six months. They use the child tax credit plus the student's summer employment that she worked for eight weeks that put her over the limit. This is why I speak on this issue today to increase the household income limits so low-income families can qualify.

Now I'll talk about low-income seniors. If two seniors live in their own home in this Province of Nova Scotia, the income limit is \$22,000 for them to be eligible to apply for that grant. So if both seniors are getting Guaranteed Income Supplement, Old Age Pension, and a Canada Pension, the CPP, do you know that they are over the limit by just over \$1,500? This is what they're getting and they're actually over the limit anywhere from \$1,300 to \$1,500. That's two seniors living on low-income that are ineligible. Yet we talk as a government, we talk as a Legislative Assembly about helping seniors but yet this income level hasn't changed in 2007, it hasn't changed in 2008, it's the same level in 2007. All seniors across the Province of Nova Scotia, the cut-off limit is \$22,000.

We all as MLAs would know - and I'll give you an example of a letter I received just last week from a constituent of mine. She is a single lady, husband had passed away, she lives in the Ashby area, she called me to say look, Gord, I did what you said and I applied for the grant. I said that's good and she said but I got this letter back. She said I'm over by \$289.45. I went up and saw her just on the long weekend and asked her to give me the copy of the letter. Here she lives in a modest little three-bedroom bungalow in Ashby and she's over by that limit and she's 80 years of age. How do we get these people to qualify for those grants? The only way that we can get those people to qualify is if we up the limits, but there's such a drastic limit in housing.

The limit I think is around \$35,000 if you live in Halifax for a two-bedroom household to get a grant. If you live in Cape Breton the limit is \$23,500. What a difference in the income. My feeling on this is that we should have a level playing field for all across the Province of Nova Scotia. Whatever the levels of income are in the metro area, whatever

[\[Page 3748\]](#)

the levels of income are in the Yarmouth area, whatever the levels of income are in the Yarmouth area, whatever the levels of income are in Cape Breton, they should be level. There should be a level playing field for all the people in the Province of Nova Scotia.

Yet you discriminate by levels by saying, we have older homes in the community. There are homes in my community of Whitney Pier that are up to 100 years of age. There are homes in my community that have been there - and my colleague will speak later, the MLA for Cape Breton South, and talk about some of the homes in his riding are 60 to 70 to 80 years of age. How do you get those people to qualify for grants? It's an awful thing when you get a senior who is turned down because she makes \$200 over the limit. So what do you tell that lady? We're telling you, as elected officials, that we want you to stay in your home, we want you to be healthy, but yet your oil bill has gone up. We want you to be healthy, but your light bill has gone up. We want you to be healthy, but all of your food has gone up. All of these things have gone up around these people but yet their income has not gone up, their gross income.

What I'm trying to say is that we have so many seniors and low-income families who are falling through the cracks, Mr. Speaker, they are actually falling in the cracks, because the income level for 2007 was the same as it is in 2008. The point I'm trying to make here this evening, as I stand in my place, is that we have to do something to increase the levels for people to qualify for the home repair program. We have to do that in this province, if not for everybody but at least for the seniors, the most vulnerable in our society. They are the healthy people living at home and want to stay in their own home. They may need windows, they may need a furnace, they may need a roof.

What we have to do is we have to be able to increase those limits. I know the minister is going to get up in her place and say to me and say to all my colleagues in the Legislature here, that multi-millions of dollars, we put over \$18 million for a fact, and I know she is

going to say that. I'm not going to argue with how many millions of dollars she has put into the program. What I'm saying here tonight is those income levels for seniors and low-income families must rise. We have to change those so these people can qualify, for a \$5,000 forgivable loan for a grant.

Mr. Speaker, I know they're going to talk about millions of dollars that we spent, but what I'm saying is these are the people - we had a \$187 million surplus this year in the budget. How much of that would it have taken to raise the income for people to qualify? All I'm trying to say is, how much does it cost each and every year of the \$18 million that we have in the housing grant program and whatever else. How much more is it going to cost to raise that income level so these people can qualify? But not only raise the income level, but make it a level playing field. If somebody lives in the riding, and up until this year the old level would have been if you lived in the City of Sydney and you were a senior, your income level would have been \$22,000 but if you lived in Cape Breton West, in the old county, your income level would have been \$23,500.

[\[Page 3749\]](#)

This year the government decided to say okay, let's make everybody in Cape Breton the same, \$22,000. Cape Breton, \$22,000, the same, Mr. Speaker, in your riding and in my riding. At one time the seniors in your riding that were on Guaranteed Income Supplement and Old Age Pension would qualify for that grant because your limit was \$23,500 because you were in the County of Cape Breton, but the people in the City of Sydney were \$22,000 and would not qualify. So a senior living in New Waterford, a senior living in Glace Bay, a senior living in the county was eligible because the cut-off limit was \$23,500.

What the department did this year was it said oh no, all across the Province of Nova Scotia we're going to make that limit \$22,000. So, Mr. Speaker, you're going to have people in your riding and everybody else in here who represents people in Cape Breton or other areas, \$22,000 a year of income is now the cut-off for all seniors in the Province of Nova Scotia.

What I'm staying in my place tonight is they can put millions and millions of dollars in, and I know the minister is going to get up and say, for a fact, \$18 million, multi-million dollars, but what I'm saying is that we need to make sure when they sign that paper for the department to look at their income tax when they apply for that grant, that level has to be increased. That level should be the same as it is in Yarmouth, the same as it is in Sydney, and the same as it is anywhere else in this province, so everybody can have an equal playing field, everybody can have it. You know what I mean?

I just think that this income level is too low; seniors, \$22,000. Now you're going to see yourself, as a Member of the Legislative Assembly - and my colleague, the member for Cape Breton South, when people in his riding apply and say they're on Guaranteed Income Supplement and Old Age Pension and Canada Pension and they're ineligible for this program, what's he going to tell his constituents and what am I going to tell mine?

I tabled this in Question Period on Thursday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, the new levels. As of - and I tabled this in Question Period on Thursday - May 1<sup>st</sup>. I tabled that in this Legislature, the new levels. As of April 1, 2008, all seniors in the Province of Nova Scotia, their income level will be \$22,000. Unfair. Let's do something. Let's do it right. Let's make the limit a little higher so seniors and low-income families can qualify for home repair so they can stay in their home and live a good life in this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MANNING MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the debate this evening on the motion for the late debate, "Therefore be it resolved that the government increase the household income limits used to qualify low-income families in Nova Scotia for home repair programs."

[\[Page 3750\]](#)

I couldn't agree with that premise more. My colleague for Cape Breton Nova introduced it and for many years now we have been fighting the situation with the many, many people in our ridings. Cape Breton South and Cape Breton Nova and some of the other ridings in the Cape Breton area, that have experienced a serious situation with the housing stock. The housing stock, Mr. Speaker, in our area is old. The housing stock, some of the homes are 70, 80, 100 years old and inhabited by senior citizens who have had the homes passed on down to them and others have lived in these homes and have struggled to raise families in these homes. In order to avoid having to move somewhere else or having to move into a public housing unit or having to move into a seniors home or having to move with relatives, they have depended on the fact that they could apply to the

government to have a grant put in place for necessary repairs.

A house is no different than anything else. If you don't repair it, after a while it becomes more costly to repair and if you leave it go any appreciable period of time, then it becomes impossible to repair. Given that fact, Mr. Speaker, the facts are that the housing stock is old and I think there are probably three categories of calls that I receive on a regular basis. Of course, one is about housing. The others, of course, are about student loans and those kinds of things in our community and the third one would be about financial assistance to single parent families.

But most of my calls are concerning housing. Those calls are simply put, you have to give them the answer, well, do you meet the financial criteria established by the Department of Community Services? Many of them will say, as my colleague, the member for Cape Breton Nova alluded to, many will say I am \$100 over the limit or I am \$200 over the limit. There is no recourse for them to appeal that because the limit is the limit is the limit.

There are extenuating circumstances, Mr. Speaker, in all cases and certainly in the housing stock that we deal with in Cape Breton South, there are many extenuating circumstances, including the fact that a number of emergency repairs are needed on a regular basis in some of these older houses. As would have it, all of these things usually happen in the dead of winter. The furnace will break down or the roof gets damaged or the snow is coming through the windows in these houses. It never happens in July and August, it always happens in January and February.

The other problem we have is that by the time they apply and by the time they receive the assistance, it is usually two or three months because there is a protocol that has to be followed. Then the season is over, or the cold season is over and the emergency is still there, however, but the people have had to live through the coldest months of the year, in a lot of cases, without getting adequate assistance.

The income levels are too small by today's standards. They should be elevated. I don't think there is any question about that and I think probably the minister will address that

[\[Page 3751\]](#)

problem. There is a tremendous need for a quicker response time and a quicker turnover from the time that the person applies for the grant and the time the grant is actually given. I know there's a protocol there - there has to be an inspector sent out, there has to be quotes received and all of that has to go back to the department for analysis and then a decision is made.

But, what has been happening is that while an analysis is being made, we call up on behalf of the client and we're told, well, we don't have any money. It'll have to be in next year's budget because we don't know what we're going to get in the budget. Of course, budget time is April 1<sup>st</sup>. They run out of money in January and February and the people that need it in January and February can't get it until the next budget year. Then they get in the queue to try to get the grant, but in the meantime, they're offered a loan. That's the quid pro quo there, they're offered a loan at interest rates that perhaps are consistent with the going rate in the area, but they're not.

The problem is, the people who are looking for the grant, if they could afford the loan they'd go to their Credit Union and get the loan. They went to the department of Housing for a grant, not for a loan. The alternative is, we can't give you the grant right now because we don't have any money. However, we're in the loan business, we'll loan you the money at an interest rate that we think you can afford and over a period of time.

That really upsets the people I deal with, a lot of them, because they're on minimal income and they can't afford to repay the loan. You know what? Senior citizens particularly are very aware of the fact that the programs are out there, but they don't want to appear that they can't take advantage of them. But, I'll tell you, what they do accept is the fact that if they're going to take a loan, they're going to pay it back. Senior citizens do pay their bills.

[6:15 p.m.]

In the case of the seniors that I deal with, they're reluctant to take the loan because they know they can't pay it back and they don't want to owe a debt. There are lots of people in our society who perhaps don't worry about that as much as senior citizens do, but I can tell you, senior citizens worry about debt. They worry about the fact that if they have a debt, it should be paid and they honour their commitments.

But they can't afford to pay it so they walk away from the department of Housing with

nothing. The loan is not acceptable to them because they can't pay it back and the grant is not available to them because either the department is, yet again, out of money. I go through this each year. The people in the department of Housing that I deal with are wonderful people and they want to help people. Particularly, a couple of people that I deal with there, but they say, look, they have a long waiting list because of the fact that, as I said earlier, our housing stock is old in our area. There are homes there that need a tremendous amount of repair and the people just don't have the money to do that.

[\[Page 3752\]](#)

What happens is, if you don't tighten up your house, your energy costs are higher. If you don't look after necessary repairs on a regular basis, then they become more expensive as time moves on. In the case of the people that I deal with on a regular basis, they simply can't afford it - \$20,000, \$22,000 a year to be eligible for a grant with the heating costs today, with the cost of living and the cost of groceries, travelling. They just don't have it. It's too small.

The limit should be upped to an arbitrary figure, I guess, would be a 20 or 30 per cent increase we've been told, in order to allow people the latitude to be able to get the repairs done and to be eligible for those repairs. I understand that could involve quite a bit of money. I understand those kinds of things would be incremental, that you couldn't actually do it in one year. I would encourage the department to give some consideration to incremental increases in those limits so that more people might be able to take advantage of it.

But more importantly, I think if the minister could do something for my colleague for Cape Breton Nova, myself and the other MLAs, who have older housing, is to try to expedite the turnaround time from the time the person actually applies to the time the loan is approved. There is an inordinate amount of time passes when the need is there. But actually accessing the funds to look after that need takes a long time.

That's probably nothing new about government bureaucracy, but in the case of wintertime problems, I think if we could turn around that time needed to get the money actually to the contractor to do the job, it would be appreciated. I know the minister hears what I'm saying there and if we could just encourage the people who are receiving the applications and everything that they would try to turn it around as quickly as possible, particularly in the cold season, I believe that that would go a long way to helping some of our seniors in particular.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West on an introduction.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable members for the short interruption. I want to introduce to the House this evening a former resident of Hants West, Mr. Victor Lawrence. Victor now resides in Pictou Centre. It's nice to have you here, Victor. He has been with us a few times here and is an avid watcher of Legislative TV. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. JUDY STREATCH: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my honourable colleagues, the member for Cape Breton Nova and the member for Cape Breton South for tag-teaming on me here this evening to discuss the very important issue of housing and repair programs. I'll do my best to defend the mainland here and to address some of the issues raised here this evening.

[\[Page 3753\]](#)

Housing is a basic necessity of life and no one will argue that. A good quality house shelters us from the elements and keeps us safe. A home that you can take comfort and pride in contributes to your physical, mental and emotional well-being. We understand that; each and every one of us in this House understands that. That's why we have a menu of housing programs to help low-income Nova Scotians maintain, buy, or rent affordable housing. Now it will come as no shock to my two honourable colleagues, who have both mentioned it, who know all too well about the high rate of home ownership and the oldest housing stock in the country. Although I don't have the statistics in front of me, I would venture a guess that both of my colleagues likely are in possession, in their ridings, of that old housing stock.

Mr. Speaker, we also have many seniors who want to remain in their homes and extended families that want to live together. Now this is why we have grants and loans for home repairs, modifications and additions, as well as mortgage funds to purchase or build modest houses. We work in partnership with all three levels of government to make our various housing programs available. In an effort to ensure we are helping those who need

it most, many of our programs have financial criteria that determine eligibility. Again, no news to the members who have spoken here this evening, our repair programs that are cost-shared with our federal partners, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, have income thresholds which are calculated by CMHC and accepted by the province.

Household income limits or HILs reflect the minimum income required for a household to afford appropriate accommodation without spending more than 30 per cent of its income for shelter. It varies depending on the size of the family and, yes, as my colleagues have indicated, the location. Household income limits were increased in January 2007, making more Nova Scotians eligible for our housing programs. HILs regulations for provincial repair programs, SCAP and PHERP, as we affectionately refer to them, were updated to match federal-provincial repair programs in July 2007.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reflect for a moment on an issue that was brought up during estimates, an issue that I've asked staff to have a look at, to provide back to me options for the very issue that the member for Cape Breton South raised, an issue of a sliding scale or an incremental threshold level. That's what both of my colleagues and that's what my colleagues on this side of the House say to me as well, that we recognize that there are opportunities for us to help individuals who are cut off at the knees because of, as my honourable colleague has indicated, in some instances a few hundred dollars which at the end of the day doesn't seem to make sense if what we are trying to do is to assist those families and assist those seniors in being able to stay in those homes even longer.

So the option of the sliding scale is one that I look forward to receiving; it's one that I look forward to presenting to my Cabinet colleagues; and it's one that I look forward to seeing implemented to ensure that we can address the issue of the location as well as the income limits as it pertains to seniors and to Nova Scotians in general. Of course, I indicated that during estimates to my colleague, the member for Cape Breton South, my colleague, the

[\[Page 3754\]](#)

member for Richmond, and under the leadership of the Premier and the Deputy Premier, who have also indicated an interest in seeing a program, such as a sliding scale. I look forward to being able to report that back in this House and to all members.

Now, Mr. Speaker, having said that, just because a homeowner is not eligible for a HILs-based program doesn't mean they're not eligible for any assistance. Homeowners not eligible under HILs may be eligible for assistance under the Small Loans Assistance Program. The income limit for this program is \$35,000.

Providing adequate, affordable housing is very important to us. We continue to invest more money in home repair programs. For instance, our repair programs to assist seniors have seen a major injection of new funds over the last year. Almost 1,600 low-income seniors will be able to stay in their homes this year thanks to provincial senior citizens home repair and adaptation programs.

Mr. Speaker, regardless of which political Party we represent, we will all agree that helping those additional 450 seniors over last year, because of the injection of this new money, is a welcome figure. We certainly know we can improve upon that figure, and no one would argue that either. So, again, indicating those 450 more than last year, was yet another great reason for supporting and for passing the budget of last week. The additional funds come from the Department of Health, through its Continuing Care Strategy. Last year the Department of Health transferred to the Department of Community Services \$1 million to assist seniors with home repairs. This year the contribution jumped to \$4 million.

I make reference to that specifically, Mr. Speaker, because it's an acknowledgment that we do not go it alone. We recognize that there are issues between the Department of Health and the Department of Community Services when it pertains to that Continuing Care Strategy, when it pertains to that aging in place of our seniors that is so very important and that quality of life. It is for that reason that we're able to partner with the transfer of those funds, and we will continue to do that.

Programs such as the Senior Citizens Assistance Program, which provides up to \$5,000 in funding for lower-income applicants over the age of 65 who want to remain in their own homes but are not able to afford necessary repairs, are allowing many low-income seniors to maintain their independence.

Grants are available for repairs, which ensure that health and safety standards are met, and may include repairs to roofing, plumbing and heating. Certainly the Home Adaptations for Seniors' Independence program offers grants of up to \$3,500 to help low-

income seniors pay for home adaptations that extend the time that they can live in their own homes independently. According to recent research, this is exactly what Nova Scotian seniors want.

[\[Page 3755\]](#)

In addition, a number of improvements were made to the department's Access-A-Home Program, which helps many seniors. In 2007-08, a total of - and my honourable colleague was anticipating the exact figure and I wouldn't want to disappoint him, Mr. Speaker - \$18.4 million will be provided through the home repair programs, helping almost 2,500 households, and a total of \$6.6 million will have been provided for programs for seniors. Again, without disappointing my colleague, I would also reference that it, of course, was approved in last week's budget.

This is a clear demonstration of the department's commitment to supporting affordable housing for low-income Nova Scotians. We understand that adequate shelter is a basic necessity, we want to make sure Nova Scotians in need have access to it.

We are all here to help. Do we wish we could do more? Absolutely. Resolutions are not enough, we need a co-operative approach, influenced by different levels of society, many sectors of the community, the very people who are working to make ends meet every day. This is the only way we will truly make Nova Scotia the best province to work and raise a family, and I look forward to continuing to do that as a unified House of Assembly in the days, months and years to come, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West on an introduction.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to draw the attention of your gallery. We have some guests this evening from Hants West. A young man who recently attended a music festival, Canadian Music Fest, in Ottawa last weekend, and brought home the gold. So we want to recognize and congratulate them. They're a young jazz band, Easily Distracted is the name, and I've heard them play many times at numerous events. This evening we have Patrick Lynch - maybe they would rise as we call their names out - Randi VanBlarcom, Cailun Campbell, Kelsey VanBlarcom, Mr. Kevin Barnes. Accompanying this youth band this evening we have Mr. Brian Johnston, long-time musician from the area and a former educator in the Windsor Regional High School days, Mr. Vaughn VanBlarcom, and we have Mr. Stephen Burns with us as well this evening. Welcome all of you to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: At the time prior to adjournment for the late debate, adjournment on Bill No. 131 was moved by the honourable member for Halifax Needham.

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

Bill No. 131 - North American Labor Cooperation Agreement Implementation Act. [Debate resumed.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

[\[Page 3756\]](#)

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak this evening on Bill No. 131, which is an Act to Implement the North American Agreement on Labour Cooperation. I had to admit when the minister tabled this bill I wasn't really clear about what the bill was referring to, so I've had an opportunity to get a copy from our Legislative Library of the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation.

[6:30 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, for the information of members of the House who were unable to attend the minister's bill briefing, the agreement on labour co-operation was an agreement that was signed between the Government of Canada, the United Mexican State, so the Government of Mexico and the Government of the United States, back in 1993. Indeed it's not a very lengthy agreement unlike some of the other NAFTA documents, but it's quite interesting. I found it somewhat ironic, I have to say, that this government is bringing forward a bill, which we do not oppose I should be clear about that, that empowers the province now as a signatory to this agreement to do the following things.

Mr. Speaker, I want to read a tiny bit from the agreement itself in terms of what the objectives of the agreement are. The objectives of the agreement are to improve working conditions and living standards in each party's territory; to promote to the maximum extent possible the labour principles set out in Annex I; to encourage co-operation to

improve innovation and rising levels of productivity and quality; to pursue co-operative labour-related activities on the basis of mutual benefit; to promote compliance with and effective enforcement by each party of its labour law; and to foster transparency in the administration of labour law. All of these objectives are laudable, but it's the second objective that we are subscribing to that I found quite interesting - to promote to the maximum extent possible the labour principles set out in Annex I.

Mr. Speaker, those principles are as follows. The first principle is the freedom of association and the protection of the right to organize; the second principle is the right to bargain collectively, which I've heard the minister stand in his place many times and talk about how his government fully supports the rights of working people to bargain collectively; and the third principle in this agreement, which I'm sure will come as no surprise to you, is the right to strike. So I thought how ironic that the Minister of Labour and Workforce Development is bringing forward a bill to implement the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation, which is an agreement whose heart - one of the central objectives - is to maximize to the extent possible, the labour principles set out in this agreement and one of those principles is, in fact, the principle of the right to strike.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the minister actually ever read the agreement, given that the government of which he is the Labour and Workforce Development Minister has a bill on the floor of this House - which I believe he is the sponsor of this bill - eliminating the right to strike of health care and other workers. It's very interesting, it's somewhat contradictory,

[\[Page 3757\]](#)

it certainly is very ironic that the minister has brought forward this legislation at the same time that we have this other bill in front of us.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are, I think, some other questions that I haven't actually heard the minister speak to and perhaps he will do this when he has an opportunity. I would very much like to hear him talk about his support for the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation, including those labour principles that are a central objective of this legislation. I also am wondering why it has taken the government so long to sign on to the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation. This agreement was passed in 1993 and I suspect - I've heard different references made - that some of the labour leaders in the province will be doing some work in the developing parts of Mexico, for example.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Cut the chatter down. It's very difficult to hear the speaker.

The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

MS. MAUREEN MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have heard some references from time to time that members of our labour movement here in the province will be travelling, will be doing some training in other territories throughout North America, probably in Mexico and certainly that is anticipated in this agreement that we will have exchanges between the various parties to this agreement, in a way to enhance our co-operation and in an attempt to not only have an opportunity to hold accountable our different administrations for the labour standards that exist in our jurisdictions but also so that we will be able to share information, hopefully best practices.

Mr. Speaker, there isn't probably anybody in this House who doesn't have concern for many of the working people in other parts of North America, particularly workers in the Machiladoras which we know, very often, are sweat shop conditions and very few labour standards exist for people who work very long hours for very little money, quite often live in sort of company-type slum developments on the outskirts of some of the major cities in Mexico and along border communities and with unsanitary water, housing and what have you. I think it is to our advantage to be entering into agreements where we will attempt to raise the standards of working conditions of people elsewhere but we also, I think, have to be very clear that we need to look at the kinds of best practices that exist in our own jurisdiction and sometimes we fall short ourselves. So it's important that we not see our own situation as having all of the answers.

The principles, as I said, the labour principles that are a central piece of this particular agreement are certainly principles that we endorse here in the NDP caucus. They include protection for migrant workers and prevention of occupational injuries and illnesses. Equal pay for men and for women, minimum employment standards and labour protections for children, for example. These are all very important principles and I think we would all agree

[\[Page 3758\]](#)

on many of these principles but it's obvious there are some principles that this government probably support more than others.

As I said, the third principle laid out in the agreement - which is a central part of the objective of this agreement - the right to strike is one that this government doesn't truly appreciate and that's too bad. So, Mr. Speaker, we have no opposition to the bill, to the implementation. We just did want to register our noticing that it is somewhat contradictory. Like so many other things this government does, it talks a good line but when you really start to unravel the threads, you can see that quite a bit of what is going on is talk and not a whole lot of action.

They don't seem to have a consistent approach as well. On one day they will feel quite justified in coming into the Legislature with sort of a retrograde kind of piece of legislation that has no regard for the human rights and the labour principles for working people in this province in our health care system. At the same time, they will turn around and they will introduce legislation, signing on to an agreement that seeks to advance the very principles that they intend to deny the working people in this province of. So I think this is the concern that we would have. It's more with the behaviour of the government than it is specifically with this piece of legislation, which we certainly will be supporting, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

MR. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I am going to be very brief with my remarks on this bill. The intent of the bill looks really good and it's nice to see that we are finally tidying up some of the issues that we have with the free trade agreement. Even though the free trade agreement sometimes causes some problems here in Nova Scotia, getting work and not being able to sole source sometimes when it would be convenient for the community to do that.

The only concern I have about this is, is this bill is already in place in Mexico? The reason I ask that is because labour rates are so much lower in Mexico and from talking to people I know in Mexico - sometimes the environmental issues that they address there, they don't address aggressively as we do in Canada. I would just ask the minister to answer that question when you get up, if you don't mind, if you possibly can. Other than that, we intend to support the bill. It's a good bill. It's a good bill for Nova Scotia and it's a good bill for labour in Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

MR. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to say a few words on Bill No. 131 which deals with labour issues in general and free trade.

[\[Page 3759\]](#)

Mr. Speaker, as you will recall, it is an opportunity to discuss an issue which I have raised in this House before and which, in fact, we have been able to get changes. It's the issue around pensions here in Nova Scotia and the lack thereof in so many cases. You will recall that we were able to have changes made to allow Nova Scotians to be able to access locked-in RRSPs under certain specific circumstances. I received a phone call just a few weeks ago from a lady who was actually from Antigonish and she called me because she said, I remember you were able to get changes made to the locked in RRSPs. She raised an interesting issue because she indicated that apparently here in Nova Scotia if you have a locked-in RRSP plan, once you turn 65 and you can draw on those RRSPs, we actually still put restrictions on you as to how much you can draw from those RRSPs.

The issue she raised with me, apparently in New Brunswick - we're looking into that right now - they will allow you to take up to a certain percentage of the total value of your locked in RRSPs to spend as you wish. The point the lady was raising with me is, we helped pay for our kids' education, going to university, we've made some improvements to the home. We're about to hit 65, we'd like to be able to take a lump sum out of those locked-in RRSPs and pay down our debt because we don't know how long we're going to live. We don't know how long we'll get to enjoy this pension money, but we want to make sure that we don't leave debt behind for our children.

Apparently, we don't allow you to do that here in Nova Scotia. I know that when we introduced some of the changes to the locked-in RRSPs, I know the Official Opposition voted against it, indicating they felt that people would be reckless in spending their money prior to their pension years and so they were very concerned about that and it's certainly a legitimate concern. We realize there are very strict guidelines as to how you can access that funding, but at 65? We're still telling people and we're still putting restrictions in place as to how people can handle their pension money?

[6:45 p.m.]

I was actually quite surprised about that and I certainly hope the Minister of Labour and Workforce Development and the Minister of Finance would be willing to look into that and see what other jurisdictions are doing on that issue and see if there is any way that here in Nova Scotia we can say we'll allow you to take so much out upon retirement at 65, a percentage, and you can spend it as you wish. I did want to take the opportunity to stand in my place and to raise that issue for the government to consider.

I think, as well, that the Minister of Labour and Workforce Development, through this bill and through the operations of his department, has a responsibility as well to look at the fact that in Nova Scotia - I'm sure he probably has some of the figures - we still have a tremendous amount of our population are working Nova Scotians who have no pension plan at all. In 2008, it's unbelievable that we still continue to see so many Nova Scotians work for so many years and have nothing at the end, pension-wise, to show for their work.

[\[Page 3760\]](#)

I look in my own riding and I'm sure it's no different in your area, people who worked at the local fish plant for 20 and 30 years and at the end of the day when they retire, all they have to retire on is the old age, the Canada pension and the good, old supplement. We all know the supplement, basically, is a means where the federal government will bridge what you're receiving through the Canada pension, the old age pension, to reach a minimum level of income. Right now, that's around \$25,000 for a couple.

When I see people that come in and they show me their tax assessment, they say, here's what I earn. These are people who worked all their lives, worked very hard and yet they have no private pension plan. When I look at Richmond County, I'm sure it's no different than many other rural areas, especially, that the people have no type of private plan upon their retirement. That affects our whole economy. When people are living on such a meager amount of money, their ability to spend and to help grow our economy is very restricted.

I know the government, ironically, again, as I reflect on my 10 years here - when we were in office, the previous Liberal Government, we had started the program with the leadership of my colleague for Cape Breton South, of the payroll rebate program. I remember at the time when we went into the 1999 election, the Leader of the Progressive Conservatives at the time, Dr. John Hamm, said that his government would not be in the business of providing grants or financial contributions to companies who wanted to come to Nova Scotia.

Well, that didn't last very long because I think the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, who then became Premier, quickly realized the competitive nature that we were facing in P.E.I., New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario and all the other jurisdictions and what they were offering. I think he quickly realized that Nova Scotia was not in a position to be able to say we're not going to offer any incentives to companies to come here.

Mr. Speaker, I'm curious, and maybe the Minister of Labour and Workforce Development can indicate this. I fully understand the Payroll Rebate Program and how NSBI and other agencies are trying to bring companies here but are we doing anything, as a province, to look at what benefits or what pension plan that these companies plan to offer their employees? If we're giving them public money, taxpayers' money to help them come here to start up their business and keep a workforce, could we at least put some restrictions in, saying if we're going to give you taxpayers' dollars, we expect a minimum level of benefits that are going to go to your employees?

I don't know why we're not looking at that because, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the government realizes our population is getting older. Soon we're going to have a significant portion of our population over the age of 65 and it's not in our province's best interests for that 65 and older population to be receiving the supplement because if they're getting the

[\[Page 3761\]](#)

supplement, it means they have no private pension plan for the most part or a very meagre one if they have one. So we have a vested interest, as a province, for our economy to try to ensure that there are more pension plans made available to Nova Scotia workers.

So, Mr. Speaker, again I could have raised this possibly under the previous bill - an amendment to the Public Service Act, dealing with the creation or the separation of the

Department of Environment and now the Department of Labour and Workforce Development - but I do hope that the minister will look into the issue I've raised about the locked-in pensions at 65, what's being done in New Brunswick, and what's being done in other jurisdictions. I do hope that the minister and the government will look at working through Economic Development, through NSBI, to see if there are not ways that we can encourage companies, when they do come to Nova Scotia, to make sure that they do offer a pension plan.

The days may be over of us seeing defined benefit plans here in Nova Scotia. Very few companies are still offering that type of pension plan and that is the best pension plan that one could ask for. Now we're seeing it more amongst the teachers, amongst government and very few industries. Some of the larger ones are still offering it, but I reflect on the fact when we had the legislation dealing with the Trenton railcar plant and Greenbrier and the pension plan for the workers, and I remember at that time when the chairman, former Premier Gerald Regan, made the comment that the legislation dealing with the Trenton railcar plant was going to send a chilling effect amongst businesses in Nova Scotia, and he even predicted that the days of seeing defined benefit plans in Nova Scotia were possibly over.

That's a statement that was of great concern to me and should be of great concern for us, as legislators, because we should be doing whatever we can to encourage more companies to set up these types of pension plans which are in the best interests of their workers and in the best interests of the families of those workers here in Nova Scotia.

So with that, I wanted to go on the record to raise those concerns. I do look forward to the comments from the minister as to whether he can address some of the issues. I know he's not specifically responsible for pensions, but if he can at least give us a sense of what his views are on the issues that I have raised. With that, Mr. Speaker, as mentioned by my colleague, we certainly will be voting in favour of Bill No. 131 moving forward on second reading and on to the Law Amendments Committee. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Labour and Workforce Development.

HON. MARK PARENT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just to respond very quickly, in the few minutes we have left, to the concerns raised by the critics opposite. I do

[\[Page 3762\]](#)

appreciate the comments made by the member for Richmond. We certainly do have a challenge that is shared by jurisdictions across North America on pension plans, and I would encourage him to contact my office and I'll put him in touch with the Pension Review Committee because he obviously has some interest and some expertise in this matter.

There is a Pension Review Committee chaired by Bill Black, including Mr. Pink and also Mr. Crawford, and they are looking at this issue because, clearly, all of us want seniors who retire to be looked after, and yet there are enormous sort of issues with pensions and many companies aren't offering them. So I'll certainly offer that to that member because he certainly has some expertise on it.

I'm not sure if the member for Preston - to respond to that, I'm not sure if Mexico signed on to this. I assume they have. I'll check that out and get back to him. One of the reasons we want to raise the labour and environment standards in other countries is to offer a fairer playing field for our own companies and because it's the right thing to do.

The member for Halifax Needham, I want to thank her for her comments. She asked why it has taken so long. I can't really respond to that. I do know that I've been trying to get this legislation forward for awhile now, and one of the reasons that was told to me was that there was some worry that there would be push back, where we wouldn't be allowed, or the Nova Scotia Teachers Union wouldn't be allowed to have the policy where anyone as a teacher had to be a member of the union. That was part of the concern, actually, that that might be challenged if we went forward on this. We did more legal work and found out that that wasn't the case and that wasn't a real worry, but that explains the delay over the past two years, that we wanted to make absolutely sure that we didn't harm teachers' unions.

Anyway, I do want to also respond to the principles on the right to strike. I've always upheld that right to strike, but the ILO, the International Labour Organization, has said that in very particular circumstances the right to strike can be replaced by fair and neutral arbitration, and that was what we put forward in the bill.

So I think with those responses to the points raised by the honourable members, I want to thank them for their support as we go forward with this bill, and I close debate on Bill No. 131.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 131. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

[\[Page 3763\]](#)

HON. CECIL CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 156.

Bill No. 156 - Land Registration Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

HON. JAMES MUIR: Mr. Speaker, in the few minutes remaining this evening, I'm going to say a few words about the Land Registration Act, the amendments to the Land Registration Act. Members of this House will know that the Land Registration Act was established to modernize the registration system for Nova Scotia's Land Title Registry, and what it means is legal documents related to land titles can now be submitted electronically and the system can be accessed on-line from anywhere in the world.

Mr. Speaker, the new system also made it easier to identify and correct errors relating to land title. Now having said that, it is a system that's used primarily by lawyers and surveyors, and the technicalities of this particular Act are best understood with them and were developed in consultation with them. That being said, the Act does affect all property owners in Nova Scotia. As I've indicated, the amendments being proposed were developed after a number of years working with the system and continuous consultations with the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society and other stakeholder groups.

Through the proposed amendments, the Registrar General will have the expanded authority to correct errors in the land registry, to hear and investigate complaints under the Act, hear appeals relating to a decision made by a registrar. What this means, Mr. Speaker, providing the Registrar General with the authority to hear appeals means that individuals will now no longer have to go to the Supreme Court for an appeal.

Other changes to the Act, Mr. Speaker, clarify that once a title to a property is registered at the new Land Registry, the time-consuming process of searching back through the historic record is eliminated. The amendments will also enhance the integrity of the land title system by improving fraud prevention and privacy measures while at the same time streamlining processes and requirements. The amendments also clarify the responsibility of lawyers certifying title to land as well as to clarifying wording to more accurately reflect the intent of the Act.

Mr. Speaker, with those few comments, I now move second reading of Bill No. 156.

MR. SPEAKER: With the lateness of the hour, could I ask the honourable minister to adjourn debate?

MR. MUIR: Excuse me. Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. In view of the lateness of the hour, I would move adjournment of the debate on Bill No. 157.

[\[Page 3764\]](#)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. CECIL CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise and meet tomorrow from the hour of 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. As we know, there are significant events occurring on either side of the House tomorrow and a major prostate event and the Red Rally in Bridgewater.

Mr. Speaker, the government's business following the daily routine would include Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill Nos. 79, 133, 163, 167, 168, 176; and Private Members' Public Bills for Second Reading including Bill No. 29, also Bill No. 150 and Bill No. 170. I so move.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

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

[The House rose at 6:59 p.m.]

[\[Page 3765\]](#)

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)

RESOLUTION NO. 3361

By: Hon. Leonard Goucher (Immigration)

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

Whereas Pinky's Ice Cream has been a part of the community in Bedford for several years; and

Whereas local entrepreneur Kevin Riles has given young people in HRM summer employment since creating Pinky's and has just hired his 200<sup>th</sup> student; and

Whereas the grand opening of Pinky's in Bedford, Timberlea, the Dingle, Point Pleasant Park and Sackville kicked off summer in HRM on Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup>;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate and thank Kevin Riles for his continuing support of the community and their students and wish his team at Pinky's another successful season.

RESOLUTION NO. 3362

By: Mr. Patrick Dunn (Pictou Centre)

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

Whereas a group of Pictou County schools became the first in Nova Scotia to join a new national safety program from the RCMP; and

Whereas the School Action For Emergency, or SAFE program, is a database of information about school buildings that might be needed during emergency situations such as flooding, fire or violence; and

Whereas the database also stores staff contact information and details about potential hazards and the locations of important devices like fuel shut-off valves; the SAFE program was originally piloted in northern Nova Scotia in 2006 and is now under development across the province;

[\[Page 3766\]](#)

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House send their congratulations and best wishes to the Chignecto-Central family of schools on being the first to take part in this co-operative and innovative approach to safety for Nova Scotia's school children.

RESOLUTION NO. 3363

By: Mr. Patrick Dunn (Pictou Centre)

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

Whereas the Town of New Glasgow recently received funding from the Nova Scotia Eco-trust for Clean Air and Climate Change to improve energy use at community centres, town hall and the fire hall/library building; and

Whereas the plans also include recapturing and using waste heat from ice making equipment at the town rink, all contributing to a considerable amount of energy savings; and

Whereas the Department of Environment estimates that New Glasgow will cut greenhouse gases by 148 tonnes per year in addition to extending the life of the town's facilities; the federal-provincial funding program will also offer technical and other support to businesses that want to become more energy efficient;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House honour the Town of New Glasgow and its initiative to take on environmental changes, ensuring a clean, sustainable future for its citizens and Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 3364

By: Mr. Patrick Dunn (Pictou Centre)

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

Whereas one young performer at this year's New Glasgow Music Festival took home prizes and some extra money; and

Whereas organist and flutist Sarah Svendsen took home the Rose Bowl at this year's competition after competing in classes with both instruments, earning an overall grade of 94; and

[\[Page 3767\]](#)

Whereas in addition to the \$800 scholarship as part of the Rose Bowl prize, she was awarded with an additional \$200, presented at the discretion of the festival's adjudicators to a senior student who shows musical promise;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House send a hearty congratulation to young New Glasgow musician and Rose Bowl winner Sarah Svendsen for a remarkable year at the 70<sup>th</sup> annual New Glasgow Music Festival.

RESOLUTION NO. 3365

By: Mr. Patrick Dunn (Pictou Centre)

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

Whereas Pictou County Special Olympics sent five athletes to the National Winter Games in Quebec City earlier this year; and

Whereas the event marked the first time all five athletes would be competing in the Games; and

Whereas David MacDonald, Shey MacDonald and Michelle Zuethoff competed in the snowboarding competition, while cross-country skier Shawn Bennett and figure skater Greg Massaro competed in each of those categories and, in all, Team Nova Scotia included 55 coaches, athletes and mission staff, with competitors hoping to earn a spot on the national team headed to the Games in Boise, Idaho, in February 2009;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House send their congratulations to the five Pictou County Special Olympians and members of Team Nova Scotia who competed at the National Winter Games in Quebec City earlier this year.

RESOLUTION NO. 3366

By: Mr. Patrick Dunn (Pictou Centre)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia Community College electronic engineering student Heather Brannen was singled out for her determination and latent ability to solder circuitry; and

Whereas Heather was selected as Co-op Student of the Year for her work with the Department of National Defence, her work placement employer last year; and

[\[Page 3768\]](#)

Whereas Heather worked with the navigational equipment on board Canadian naval ships for four months and spent most of her time in the navi-aid shop working on instrumentation, and she is hoping to head back to DND in a full-time position after graduation;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House send their utmost congratulations and best of luck to NSCC student Heather Brannen on her successful work placement term with the Department of National Defence and possible full-time position in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 3367

By: Mr. Patrick Dunn (Pictou Centre)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia Community College student Michael Tucker earned a bronze medal at the provincial skills competition held recently; and

Whereas the electrical engineering student soldered his way through six events that demanded he troubleshoot and reverse engineer circuit boards while being timed; and

Whereas the competition required a high level of precision and an eye for circuitry, and Tucker's third place finish was within five points of the gold medal - Tucker competed against technicians and technologists from all over the province in unfamiliar settings and without any meticulous preparations, making his third place win even more remarkable;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House send a hearty congratulations to NSCC student Michael Tucker on his bronze medal win at the provincial electrical engineering skills competition, demonstrating the talent and opportunities available to post-secondary students in Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 3368

By: Mr. Patrick Dunn (Pictou Centre)

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

Whereas Pictou County Health Authority showcased the many facets of health and health care recently at its Passport to Health fair; and

[\[Page 3769\]](#)

Whereas the event was held at NSCC Pictou Stellarton campus and featured more than 80 booths offering everything from fire prevention to new yoga positions to free blood pressure tests - and even smoothies; and

Whereas event organizers were pleased with the turnout, with lots of families taking part in the day, and with a focus on healthy lifestyle organizers were pleased to offer information on so many aspects of health, and they estimate that more than 1,000 people participated in learning about a healthy lifestyle;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House send congratulations to the organizers and participants of the first annual Passport to Health fair from the Pictou County Health Authority and hope that such a successful day can be held for years to come.

RESOLUTION NO. 3369

By: Mr. Patrick Dunn (Pictou Centre)

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

Whereas 13-year-old Stellarton native Megan MacPherson is one of two Pictou County teens who travelled to Ottawa earlier this year for the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Town Youth Participation Strategies national conference; and

Whereas Ms. MacPherson travelled with program coordinator Paul Corbin, who claimed that it was a excellent opportunity for all of them as they hope to bring back new ideas for the Stellarton Youth Centre; and

Whereas the conference allowed Mr. Corbin and his representatives to meet those involved with youth centres from across the country in an effort to avoid complacency, ensuring that the centre offers Stellarton's youth all that it wants and needs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Megan MacPherson and Paul Corbin on their attendance at the Town Youth Participation strategies

conference in Ottawa this year, taking the opportunity to build such an important element of small- town life in Nova Scotia into the best it can be.

RESOLUTION NO. 3370

By: Mr. Michel Samson (Richmond)

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

[\[Page 3770\]](#)

Whereas volunteers truly are the heart of our community; and

Whereas volunteers give freely of their time to help organizations throughout our country; and

Whereas on Friday, May 2, 2008, I joined Warden John Boudreau, Municipal Councillors and staff at a supper to recognize the 120 volunteers from throughout Richmond County;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House thank Richmond County Home Support Volunteer of the Year, Alex Mombourquette, for his hard work and commitment.

RESOLUTION NO. 3371

By: Mr. Michel Samson (Richmond)

Monsieur le Président, à une date ultérieure, je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que les bénévoles sont vraiment au coeur de notre communauté;

Attendu que les bénévoles donnent librement de leur temps pour aider les organismes à l'échelle de notre pays;

Attendu que le vendredi 2 mai 2008, je me suis joint au préfet John Boudreau, aux conseillers municipaux et au personnel lors d'un souper de reconnaissance des 120 bénévoles du comté de Richmond;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les membres de cette Assemblée remercient la bénévole de l'année du Festival acadien de Petit-de-Grat, Darlene Osmond, pour son travail et son dévouement.

RESOLUTION NO. 3372

By: Mr. Michel Samson (Richmond)

Monsieur le Président, à une date ultérieure, je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que les bénévoles sont vraiment au coeur de notre communauté;

[\[Page 3771\]](#)

Attendu que les bénévoles donnent librement de leur temps pour aider les organismes à l'échelle de notre pays;

Attendu que le vendredi 2 mai 2008, je me suis joint au préfet John Boudreau, aux conseillers municipaux et au personnel lors d'un souper de reconnaissance des 120 bénévoles du comté de Richmond;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les membres de cette Assemblée remercient la bénévole de l'année de la bibliothèque régionale Eastern County, section de Petit-de-Grat, Jalisa David, pour son travail et son dévouement.

RESOLUTION NO. 3373

By: Mr. Michel Samson (Richmond)

Monsieur le Président, à une date ultérieure, je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que les bénévoles sont vraiment au coeur de notre communauté;

Attendu que les bénévoles donnent librement de leur temps pour aider les organismes à l'échelle de notre pays;

Attendu que le vendredi 2 mai 2008, je me suis joint au préfet John Boudreau, aux conseillers municipaux et au personnel lors d'un souper de reconnaissance des 120 bénévoles du comté de Richmond;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les membres de cette Assemblée remercient la bénévole de l'année du conseil de la paroisse de l'Immaculée-Conception, Janelle Boudreau, pour son travail et son dévouement.

RESOLUTION NO. 3374

By: Mr. Michel Samson (Richmond)

Monsieur le Président, à une date ultérieure, je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que les bénévoles sont vraiment au coeur de notre communauté;

Attendu que les bénévoles donnent librement de leur temps pour aider les organismes à l'échelle de notre pays;

[\[Page 3772\]](#)

Attendu que le vendredi 2 mai 2008, je me suis joint au préfet John Boudreau, aux conseillers municipaux et au personnel lors d'un souper de reconnaissance des 120 bénévoles du comté de Richmond;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les membres de cette Assemblée remercient la bénévole de l'année du Comité des femmes en marche de Richmond, Thérèse Benoit, pour son travail et son dévouement.

RESOLUTION NO. 3375

By: Mr. Michel Samson (Richmond)

Monsieur le Président, à une date ultérieure, je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que les bénévoles sont vraiment au coeur de notre communauté;

Attendu que les bénévoles donnent librement de leur temps pour aider les organismes à l'échelle de notre pays;

Attendu que le vendredi 2 mai 2008, je me suis joint au préfet John Boudreau, aux conseillers municipaux et au personnel lors d'un souper de reconnaissance des 120 bénévoles du comté de Richmond;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les membres de cette Assemblée remercient la bénévole de l'année de la Coopérative Radio Richmond, Lena Samson, pour son travail et son dévouement.

RESOLUTION NO. 3376

By: Mr. Michel Samson (Richmond)

Monsieur le Président, à une date ultérieure, je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que les bénévoles sont vraiment au coeur de notre communauté;

Attendu que les bénévoles donnent librement de leur temps pour aider les organismes à l'échelle de notre pays;

[\[Page 3773\]](#)

Attendu que le vendredi 2 mai 2008, je me suis joint au préfet John Boudreau, aux conseillers municipaux et au personnel lors d'un souper de reconnaissance des 120 bénévoles du comté de Richmond;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les membres de cette Assemblée remercient la bénévole de l'année de la Maison, des jeunes de Richmond, Julien R. Boudreau, pour son travail et son dévouement.

RESOLUTION NO. 3377

By: Mr. Michel Samson (Richmond)

Monsieur le Président, à une date ultérieure, je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que les bénévoles sont vraiment au coeur de notre communauté;

Attendu que les bénévoles donnent librement de leur temps pour aider les organismes à l'échelle de notre pays;

Attendu que le vendredi 2 mai 2008, je me suis joint au préfet John Boudreau, aux conseillers municipaux et au personnel lors d'un souper de reconnaissance des 120 bénévoles du comté de Richmond;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les membres de cette Assemblée remercient la bénévole de l'année du Centre La Picasse, Shirley Martell, pour son travail et son dévouement.

RESOLUTION NO. 3378

By: Hon. Cecil Clarke (Justice)

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

Whereas students from Memorial High School enrolled in skills trades and technologies picked up fifteen medals at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Nova Scotia Skills Competition and Career Showcase; and

[\[Page 3774\]](#)

Whereas the skills were auto service, carpentry, plumbing, electrical wiring, worksheet safety, and TV/video production; and

Whereas the five gold medal winners will become part of Team Nova Scotia and will represent the province at the Canadian Skills Competition in Calgary in May - medal winners from Memorial are as follows: plumbing (gold) Chris Boutilier; (silver) John Ashford; (bronze) Kyle Ivey; carpentry (gold) Billy Sampson; graphic design (gold) Andrew Smith; (silver) Alysha Gracie; TV/video team (silver) Amanda Dauphney/Michael Fazekas; auto service (gold) Stephen Pilon; (silver) Colin Barrie; electrical (gold) Ryan Cholock; (silver) Travis White; (bronze) Pat King; and Destiny Pero won bronze in workplace safety;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in congratulating Kenny Collier, vocational coordinator, staff, students and medal winners from Memorial High School and wish them every success in Calgary.

RESOLUTION NO. 3379

By: Hon. Rodney MacDonald (The Premier)

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

Whereas the Heart and Stroke Foundation, a volunteer-based health charity, is a leader in eliminating heart disease and stroke through research and the promotion of healthy living; and

Whereas Long Point native, Juleen MacEachern, is one of Heart and Stroke's passionate volunteers, encouraging others to take up the foundation's cause; and

Whereas Juleen MacEachern is gearing up for her third year as team captain for the Heart and Stroke Big Bike Team, the NuStar Superstars;

Therefore be it resolved that this House commend Juleen MacEachern on her selfless commitment to the Heart and Stroke Foundation, serving as an inspiration to those around her.

RESOLUTION NO. 3380

By: Hon. Rodney MacDonald (The Premier)

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

[\[Page 3775\]](#)

Whereas preserving and promoting our culture and heritage is paramount throughout our province; and

Whereas engaging our youth in this process is vital to ensure generations to come benefit from this knowledge; and

Whereas Feis Mhabu, a Gaelic organization in Mabou, is providing fiddle lessons to young and interested people, ensuring this important musical tradition continues for future generations;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Feis Mhabu, and all other cultural organizations around this province, on recognizing the importance of encouraging youth involvement in efforts to preserve our heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 3381

By: Hon. Rodney MacDonald (The Premier)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia is blessed with gifted artisans; and

Whereas Kate Beaton of Mabou is one such individual; and

Whereas Ms. Beaton has been gaining attention for her comic strip work, turning down offers from publishers for now, all the while creating and turning out imaginative depictions of life and history in Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House congratulate Ms. Beaton on her artistic achievements and attention and wish her all the success in her future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 3382

By: Hon. Rodney MacDonald (The Premier)

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

Whereas loyal lifelong employees are shining stars in our communities; and

Whereas Michael Gillis was the smile that greeted you at the Irving in Inverness - a warm welcome for all patrons for decades; and

[\[Page 3776\]](#)

Whereas after 40 years of service, Michael Gillis is retiring from the MacInnis Irving in Inverness;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate Michael Gillis on his service, kindness, loyalty, and his genuine commitment to MacInnis Irving and the greater community.

RESOLUTION NO. 3383

By: Hon. Rodney MacDonald (The Premier)

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

Whereas the Royal Canadian Legion Friendship Award recognizes individuals for their contributions to the Royal Canadian Legion; and

Whereas local carpenter/contractor David H. MacLean, of Lake Ainslie, has selflessly donated his skills, business premises, and equipment to the Whyccomagh Legion Branch 123 for any work requiring workshop facilities, as well as donating the cost of materials used; and

Whereas on Saturday, May 10, 2008, David MacLean was presented with the Royal Canadian Legion Friendship Award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate David MacLean on this esteemed award and on his selfless good work to such a tremendous organization.

RESOLUTION NO. 3384

By: Hon. William Dooks (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

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

resolution:

Whereas Matt Bulger is a dedicated volunteer of the Musquodoboit Harbour Fire Department; and

[\[Page 3777\]](#)

Whereas through training, Matt Bulger is able to respond quickly and skilfully to emergency calls; and

Whereas with volunteers like Matt Bulger, we can feel the strength in our community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud the contributions of Matt Bulger and wish him continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 3385

By: Hon. William Dooks (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

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

Whereas Eric Hendsbee is a dedicated volunteer of the Chezzetcook Fire Department; and

Whereas through training, Eric Hendsbee is able to respond quickly and skilfully to emergency calls; and

Whereas with volunteers like Eric Hendsbee, we can feel the strength in our community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud the contributions of Eric Hendsbee and wish him continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 3386

By: Hon. William Dooks (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

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

Whereas Sarah-Marie Loupe is a dedicated volunteer of the Chezzetcook Fire Department; and

Whereas through training, Sarah-Marie Loupe is able to respond quickly and skilfully to emergency calls; and

[\[Page 3778\]](#)

Whereas with volunteers like Sarah-Marie Loupe, we can feel the strength in our community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud the contributions of Sarah-Marie Loupe and wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 3387

By: Hon. William Dooks (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

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

Whereas Murray Lunn is a dedicated volunteer of the Chezzetcook Fire Department; and

Whereas through training, Murray Lunn is able to respond quickly and skilfully to emergency calls; and

Whereas with volunteers like Murray Lunn, we can feel the strength in our community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud the contributions of Murray Lunn and wish him continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 3388

By: Hon. William Dooks (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

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

resolution:

Whereas Donna Mannette is a dedicated volunteer of the Chezzetcook Fire Department;  
and

Whereas through training, Donna Mannette is able to respond quickly and skilfully to emergency calls; and

Whereas with volunteers like Donna Mannette, we can feel the strength in our community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud the contributions of Donna Mannette and wish her continued success.

[\[Page 3779\]](#)

RESOLUTION NO. 3389

By: Hon. William Dooks (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

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

Whereas volunteers like Joe Mannette from Chezzetcook Volunteer Fire Department are a tremendous asset to our rural communities; and

Whereas through professional training, Joe Manette has gained the knowledge and skills necessary to save lives and properties during times of fires and emergency; and

Whereas with the efforts and sacrifice of volunteers like Joe Mannette, we can build strength in our communities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud the contributions of Joe Mannette and wish him continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 3390

By: Hon. William Dooks (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

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

Whereas volunteers like Keith Mannette from Chezzetcook Volunteer Fire Department are a tremendous asset to our rural communities; and

Whereas through professional training, Keith Mannette has gained the knowledge and skills necessary to save lives and properties during times of fires and emergency; and

Whereas with the efforts and sacrifice of volunteers like Keith Mannette we can build strength in our communities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud the contributions of Keith Mannette and wish him continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 3391

By: Hon. William Dooks (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

[\[Page 3780\]](#)

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

Whereas volunteers like Johnathan Miller from Chezzetcook Volunteer Fire Department are a tremendous asset to our rural communities; and

Whereas through professional training, Jonathan Miller has gained the knowledge and skills necessary to save lives and properties during times of fires and emergency; and

Whereas with the efforts and sacrifice of volunteers like Jonathan Miller we can build strength in our communities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud the contributions of Jonathan Miller and wish him continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 3392

By: Hon. William Dooks (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

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

Whereas volunteers like Ben Towns from Chezzetcook Volunteer Fire Department are a tremendous asset to our rural communities; and

Whereas through professional training, Ben Towns has gained the knowledge and skills necessary to save lives and properties during times of fires and emergency; and

Whereas with the efforts and sacrifice of volunteers like Ben Towns we can build strength in our communities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud the contributions of Ben Towns and wish him continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 3393

By: Hon. William Dooks (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

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

Whereas volunteers like Jennifer Whalen from Chezzetcook Volunteer Fire Department are a tremendous asset to our rural communities; and

[\[Page 3781\]](#)

Whereas through professional training, Jennifer Whalen has gained the knowledge and skills necessary to save lives and properties during times of fires and emergency; and

Whereas with the efforts and sacrifice of volunteers like Jennifer Whalen we can build strength in our communities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud the contributions of Jennifer Whalen and wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 3394

By: Hon. William Dooks (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

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

Whereas volunteers like Jodi Whyte from Chezzetcook Volunteer Fire Department are a tremendous asset to our rural communities; and

Whereas through professional training, Jodi Whyte has gained the knowledge and skills necessary to save lives and properties during times of fires and emergency; and

Whereas with the efforts and sacrifice of volunteers like Jodi Whyte we can build strength in our communities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud the contributions of Jody Whyte and wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 3395

By: Hon. William Dooks (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

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

Whereas the Chezzetcook Volunteer Fire Department is supported through volunteers like Sheenah Belanger; and

Whereas through skilled individuals Sheenah Belanger is able to obtain the training necessary to successfully answer emergency calls; and

Whereas with volunteers like Sheenah Belanger our communities can feel assured that they are in good hands;

[\[Page 3782\]](#)

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud the contributions of Sheenah Belanger and wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 3396

By: Hon. William Dooks (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

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

Whereas the Eastern Shore relies on volunteers like Melinda Bezanson from the Chezzetcook Volunteer Fire Department; and

Whereas through the dedication and volunteer efforts of people like Melinda Bezanson our communities can feel safe; and

Whereas volunteers give of themselves to undergo the training that is required to successfully answer emergency calls;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud the contributions of volunteers like Melinda Bezanson and wish them continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 3397

By: Hon. William Dooks (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

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

Whereas rural fire departments like Chezzetcook Volunteer Fire Department depend on people like Steve Conrad; and

Whereas through skilled individuals volunteers like Steve Conrad obtain the training needed to be able to serve his community; and

Whereas our volunteers give of themselves selflessly;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud the contributions of Steve Conrad and wish him continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 3398

By: Hon. William Dooks (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

[\[Page 3783\]](#)

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

Whereas Crystal Crowell is a volunteer with the Chezzetcook Volunteer Fire Department; and

Whereas Crystal Crowell gives up her family and personal time to train so that she is equipped and ready to answer the call of duty; and

Whereas without volunteers like Crystal Crowell, our communities would be at a loss;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud the contributions of Crystal Crowell and wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 3399

By: Hon. William Dooks (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

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

Whereas volunteers like Al Duchesne from Chezzetcook Volunteer Fire Department are a tremendous asset to our rural communities; and

Whereas through professional training, Al Duchesne has gained the knowledge and skills necessary to save lives and properties during times of fires and emergency; and

Whereas with the efforts and sacrifice of volunteers like Al Duchesne we can build strength in our communities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud the contributions of Al Duchesne and wish him continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 3400

By: Hon. William Dooks (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

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

[\[Page 3784\]](#)

Whereas Dawn Goldsworthy is a dedicated volunteer of the Chezzetcook Volunteer Fire Department; and

Whereas through training Dawn Goldsworthy is able to respond quickly and skilfully to emergency calls; and

Whereas with volunteers like Dawn Goldsworthy we can feel the strength in our community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House applaud the contributions of Dawn Goldsworthy and wish her continued success.



*Meet:*

[Denise Peterson-Rafuse](#)

MLA, Chester-St. Margaret's

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#### PEOPLE

Lt. Governor  
Speaker  
Members (MLAs)  
Offices

#### PROCEEDINGS

Hansard (Debates)  
Bills, Statutes,  
Regulations  
Daily Business  
Audio & Video  
Budget  
Throne Speech  
Journals  
House Rules  
Legislative Procedures

#### COMMITTEES

Standing Committees  
Committees of the  
Whole House  
Select Committees

#### LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY

Monthly Publications  
Catalogue  
Resources

#### ABOUT THE LEGISLATURE

Hours, Location,  
Contacts  
History  
Facts  
Employment  
Photos

#### CALENDAR

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