



House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

## DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

**Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy**

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### Third Session

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2017**

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House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2017**

**Sixty-second General Assembly**

**Third Session**

**8:00 P.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Kevin Murphy

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

Mr. Gordon Wilson, Mr. Keith Irving

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

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

**PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

MR. SPEAKER: As Speaker of the House of Assembly, and pursuant to Section 163 of the Elections Act, I am pleased to table the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Proceedings of the Halifax Needham By-Election held August 30, 2016, Volume I: Statement of Votes and Statistics.

The report is tabled.

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

**GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**RESOLUTION NO. 887**

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

Whereas a massive snowstorm has hit our province, covering parts of Nova Scotia with over 50 centimetres of snow and extremely high winds, resulting in power outages, school closures, coastal flooding, and impassable roads; and

Whereas the severity of this weather event is unusual for our province and has required a coordinated response from various government departments and private organizations; and

Whereas staff at the Emergency Management Office, Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, other government departments and agencies, as well as private partners including Nova Scotia Power, have worked diligently around the clock since Saturday to prepare for and respond to this terrible storm;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly thank our provincial government staff, outside partners, line crews, and all Nova Scotians who took it upon themselves and helped their neighbours during this demanding time, putting in tremendous effort over the past several days to keep people safe.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 75 - Entitled an Act Respecting a Teachers' Professional Agreement and Classroom Improvements. (Hon. Karen Casey)**

**Bill No. 76 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1994-95. The Education Act, Respecting Expectations for Student Performance. (Hon. Jamie Baillie)**

**Bill No. 77 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1995-96. The Education Act, Respecting Discipline. (Hon. Jamie Baillie)**

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

### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

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

### **RESOLUTION NO. 888**

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 on January 24<sup>th</sup>, the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal ruled that changes made to the province's electoral map in 2012 violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, a situation that requires a prompt remedy from the House of Assembly; and

Whereas the House of Assembly Act requires the appointment of an independent electoral boundaries commission and the issuance of its terms of reference by a select committee of this House and requires that the terms of reference provide that the commission is broadly representative of the population of the province, the commission prepare a preliminary report and hold public hearings prior to preparing the preliminary report, and following the preparation of the preliminary report the commission hold further public hearings prior to preparing its final report; and

Whereas there is sufficient time to appoint a commission and right the injustice highlighted by the Court of Appeal decision;

Therefore be it resolved as follows:

(1) That pursuant to Section 5(3) of the House of Assembly Act and the Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly, this House constitute a select committee to determine no later than March 31, 2017: (a) the composition of the independent electoral boundaries commission, and (b) the terms of reference for the commission;

(2) That the select committee be composed of five members of the Liberal caucus, two members of the Progressive Conservative caucus, and two members of the NDP caucus;



(3) That the select committee consult as many interested persons as it reasonably can, including persons of Acadian, African Nova Scotian, and Mi'kmaq communities;

(4) That pursuant to Section 36 (1) of the House of Assembly Act, this House declare that the select committee is not dissolved by prorogation of the House and authorize the select committee to continue its inquiries after the House is prorogued; and

(5) That the House request that, pursuant to Section 80 of the House of Assembly Act and the House of Assembly Management Commission Act, the House of Assembly Management Commission provide the select committee, its members, and staff with such facilities and funds as are required to carry out their duties.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

#### **STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

#### **EECD: TEACHERS CONTRACT - IMPOSITION**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: This House is in emergency session today because the Premier missed every opportunity to make real classroom improvements. Teachers, students, and parents expected new classroom reforms, but the Premier did not listen. He wants to impose a contract on teachers instead of dealing with the underlying issues in our schools.

His approach is mean spirited and short-sighted. It is also unconstitutional. It will cost taxpayers millions of dollars in legal fees in the years ahead. That is money that could have gone into improving our classrooms for the next generation of Nova Scotians.

Mr. Speaker, teachers, students, parents, and taxpayers deserve much better than the misguided scheme the Premier is forcing on them in this House this week.

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

**EECD: TEACHERS CONTRACT - LEGISLATION**

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, the Premier said he did some soul searching before deciding to legislate a teachers' contract. I too have been doing some soul searching over the weekend, and I have come up with my own conclusions about the proper course of action the Premier should take.

First, the Premier should review his 2013 open letter in which he promised to protect labour rights. Next, he should repeal Bill No. 148 and request the Nova Scotia Teachers Union return to the bargaining table. Finally, the Premier should re-establish the Electoral Boundaries Commission - this would create time to get things right before going farther down the wrong path.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Liberal MLAs to do some soul searching before supporting this misguided bill.

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

**EECD: TEACHERS CONTRACT - RAMIFICATIONS**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, imposing a contract on teachers is not going to address the fundamental issues that plague our classrooms today. This government can ram legislation through the House and impose a contract on 9,300 teachers but hasn't considered for even a moment the ramifications.

The Premier says he wants the classrooms to return to normal. Well, what is the new normal? The dynamics of classrooms across the province have been significantly altered because of the work to rule. The imposition of a contract will do nothing to fix the toxic relationship between this government and our teachers. Notably, imposing a contract isn't going to mend the underlying issues troubling the system.

The Premier has proven real reforms to classrooms were never a part of his agenda.

MR. SPEAKER: Just before we move on to the next Member's Statement, I want to remind all members that Members' Statements should not be used to debate any legislation or resolution currently before the House so just keep that in mind with your future statements.

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

**EECD: TEACHERS CONTRACT - RESPONSE**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier and Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development sure have a fine way of showing teachers

love this Valentine's Day. No flowers or chocolate-covered hearts here - just an imposed contract - and during Teacher Appreciation Week no less.

Well, teachers have been returning the favour. From open letters to Facebook groups to organized rallies to calling for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development's resignation, teachers, students, and parents are showing their passion for the Premier and his minister.

In fact, I have a Valentine's Day card from the students of Nova Scotia they've asked me to deliver to the Premier which I will place in his mail slot. So, I want to wish a Happy Valentine's Day to all of the hard-working teachers across the province. Hang in there, teachers. We love you.

MR. SPEAKER: I want to also remind members not to use Members' Statements to speak directly to constituents.

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

### **HANN, DEBORAH/JOURNEY TO WELLNESS - SUCCESS WISH**

MR. BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw your attention to Journey to Wellness, a local business run by entrepreneur Deborah Hann. Deborah started her business in 2010 with a goal of making a difference by offering fitness classes and personal training. In 2011, she expanded an online program and has clients throughout North America.

Deborah is making a difference in our community by strengthening relationships between her clients and making active living and healthy eating a new lifestyle. Deborah says, "I love knowing that I am helping people reach their goals."

This year, Deborah has had one of the most successful years with clients achieving amazing results in their health, fitness, and confidence. Please join me in wishing Deborah Hann and Journey to Wellness continued success in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

### **EECD - TEACHERS' REQUESTS**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, the Premier continues to tell Nova Scotians that he wants things to go back to normal. That is exactly what the teachers do not want. Why? Because going back to normal means overcrowded classrooms, lack of resource support, behavioural issues not addressed, ineffective use of teachers' time, no-fail policy, endless and non-productive data entry, lack of consequences related to attendance, no requirement for timely completion of assignments, and very long wait times for speech, language, and

psychological assessments. These are today's standards. This is a typical day in every school, a day that is less than normal, Mr. Speaker.

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

**PREM.: LEGISLATURE PROCEEDING (02/13/17)  
- CANCELLATION DELAY**

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I have to take a minute and express my anger and frustration with the Premier's unwillingness to cancel activities at the Legislature yesterday until the eleventh hour. While government offices were closed, buses were pulled off the road and the police were advising everyone to stay home, the Premier continued to refuse to cancel proceedings at the Legislature. In doing so, the Premier demonstrated that he thinks his agenda is more important than the safety of those who work and are associated with the activities taking place in this House.

Mr. Speaker, to have the Premier show such a lack of common sense is scary, and I think he should apologize to all of those whom he needlessly put in harm's way yesterday.

MR. SPEAKER: I just want to remind the honourable member - where did I just see it? One moment while I get used to my new bifocals, please.

I want to remind the honourable member that a statement may not be used to raise a matter falling under the administration of the Speaker, or to criticize the Speaker or any other occupants of the Chair. I remind that the decision to delay the House opening falls under the Speaker's responsibility.

The honourable member for Hants East.

**KING, SGT. DALE - MEM. GOLF TOURNAMENT**

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, January 23, 2000, Staff Sergeant Dale King of the Enfield Detachment of the RCMP was repairing a snowmobile when the throttle malfunctioned, sending it across the yard and into a tree. Unfortunately, he died the next night.

In the Spring of 2000 the East Hants RCMP organized a golf tournament in Staff Sergeant King's honour. On May 25, 2017, at the links of Penn Hills in Shubenacadie, the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Dale King Memorial Golf Tournament will be held. In addition to the rounds of golf, participants are provided with dinner and a chance to win prizes.

With the generous support of the business community, the sponsor, and prize donations over the past 17 years, this tournament has raised over \$113,000 for local food banks and crime prevention associations.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend and thank organizers Herb Minard, Cheryl King, co-chair of the tournament and wife of the late Dale King, all the volunteers and businesses that have made this event such a magnificent success.

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

**NATL. TEACHER APPRECIATION WK. (02/13 - 02/17/17):  
TEACHERS - THANK**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, February 13<sup>th</sup> to February 17<sup>th</sup> is National Teacher Appreciation Week. Most of us can go back in time to when a teacher made a big difference in our lives. But, sadly, we are convened here, against teachers' wills and wishes, to impose a contract. Regardless of where each of us sits in this place, I have to believe that we want our kids and grandkids learning in the best classes possible with the most prepared teachers we can provide.

We have all learned in the past few months how much our kids depend on the extras from teachers. So, from my whole caucus I say thank you teachers, and we will back you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**EECD: TEACHERS - LOVE EXPRESS**

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I searched my soul for the best use of my 60 seconds here and I think the best thing I can do on this Valentine's Day, and in the midst of Teacher Appreciation Week, is express my love for teachers.

Like many people, I can trace parts of my life today back to teachers. I wouldn't have entered a public speaking contest in Grade 10 if a teacher hadn't more or less assigned it to me. I wouldn't have run in and lost my first election for student council president if a teacher hadn't encouraged me. I wouldn't have developed my skills as an editor if a teacher hadn't volunteered countless hours to help me begin a school paper.

From the many conversations I've had over the past four months with teachers, they have not changed. Their vocation has not changed - they still seek to educate, to inspire, and to nurture. The path forward for a better education system for Nova Scotians should be charted by them.

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

**SHERBROOKE VOL. FD: GOOD WORKS - CONGRATS.**

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring the House's attention to the good works of the Sherbrooke Volunteer Fire Department. This small but mighty group of dedicated men and women embarked on a journey about two years ago to replace their aging fire station, which, though serving valiantly for many decades, had long since become inadequate for their modern professional requirements.

Working closely with their community and local Municipality of the District of St. Mary's, they set a goal to relocate to a new facility and a fundraising goal of \$500,000. On February 3, 2017, their goal was achieved with the announcement of a \$242,000 contribution from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

Congratulations to the Sherbrooke fire department and all the other volunteer fire departments in our province who risk their lives to keep us safe.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

**EAST. SHORE DIST. HIGH - CONST. LIST**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, on March 30, 2016, the Halifax Regional School Board approved Eastern Shore District High as a priority for a new school or addition and alteration. Eastern Shore was built in 1965, and it's showing its age: no potable water, asbestos, and sewage issues are among the concerns about the school. In fact, it costs more than \$50,000 every year to have drinking water trucked in every day.

Despite very real problems, Eastern Shore was passed over by the McNeil Government, which preferred instead to build new schools in the constituencies of the Premier himself, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, and the member for Halifax Atlantic, even though none of those schools were prioritized by their own school boards.

Mr. Speaker, after some soul searching, I can only conclude that we should return to the normal: a normal where new school construction should be based on the needs of the students, not internal Liberal priorities. Thank you.

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

**PREM.: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROCESS - STANCE**

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, in 2013 the current Premier wrote an open letter to union members of Nova Scotia. In it, he explicitly stated that the Nova Scotia Liberal caucus believes in the collective bargaining process and protecting workers' rights.

My, Mr. Speaker, how these words ring hollow a few years later. Since it was first elected, this current Liberal Government has trampled on workers' rights as if they are entitled to do so.

Being able to take a person at their word is at the core of any trusting relationship. Mr. Speaker, the Premier's unwillingness to respect the commitment he made to workers while trying to get elected speaks volumes. This is not a Premier or a government that Nova Scotians can trust.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

### **RAINE, SARAH-JANE - COMMUN. CONTRIBUTIONS**

HON. LENA DIAB: I rise today to congratulate Halifax Armdale's Sarah-Jane Raine. Sarah-Jane is quite a fixture in our community, and her contributions are noticed and appreciated. She currently serves as treasurer at Saint James Anglican Church on Joseph Howe and has worked closely with Alice Nicholson and others to secure provincial funding for the platform lift they've installed to make the church hall more accessible to the wider community.

Sarah-Jane also serves as commodore of the Armdale Yacht Club, a position she happily agreed to continue in for another year this past December. A committed member of the club, she also took on the role of treasurer last year, but was happy to secure a full committee to assist her in 2017.

An avid lover of sailing in our Arm, Sarah-Jane volunteers as a teacher with Halifax Power and Sail Squadron.

I ask all members of the House to join me in applauding Ms. Raine's community contributions and wishing her and her husband, Norman, a very happy 53<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

### **PREM.: TEACHERS NEGOTIATIONS - TACTICS**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, throughout this ordeal, the Premier has consistently demonstrated that he is tone deaf to the needs of Nova Scotia's teachers. The Premier had multiple opportunities to negotiate in good faith, to show that he respects the hard work that teachers put in every day across the province. Time and again, the Premier instead chose to see teachers and students as adversaries, rather than as the key to this province's future.

The Premier's hardball tactics have destroyed morale in the education system and sent only one message loud and clear: that the Premier is more than happy to play politics

with education professionals and Nova Scotia students. This Premier clearly values political expediency over vibrant, modern, and sustainable classrooms.

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

### **PREM.: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING - ATTITUDE**

MS. LENORE ZANN: “. . . the real foundation of any collective bargaining is the fact that the employer and employee have to be at the table feeling equal, feeling that they are both feeling respected, feeling that they are both having their voices heard, and negotiating and working out what is an agreement that will potentially last for years down the road. In order for that agreement to have any kind of substance, both the employer and the employee have to feel valued at the end of the day when that agreement is finished. It is never easy.”

Mr. Speaker, I know that the Premier is not big on following the advice of others. However, perhaps he will follow his own advice, for these words are his own, spoken in 2013 when he was trying to convince workers that he respected the collective bargaining process. Alternative facts or fake news or does it really matter?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

### **LUN. CO. JR. ACHIEVEMENT GROUP - RECOGNIZE**

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, the members of Lunenburg County's Junior Achievement group have been working hard. Their idea is a way to help local business with a loyalty card they've named Discounty. The group is comprised of 15 students who attend Park View Education Centre and Bridgewater Junior Senior High School. Their idea is a way to help locally-owned businesses compete against the big box stores. The card offers discounts to participating businesses, recognizing how important small business is to our community with a buy local flavour.

The Lunenburg County Junior Achievement group competes with other regions around the province as they each pitch their ideas. I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize this outstanding group of young people and to wish them good luck as they compete for the best idea.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

### **EDUC. SYSTEM - GOV'T. APPROACH**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, over the last number of months we have heard from teachers, parents, and students about their concerns about where this



government is taking the education system. They have received no indication that things are going to get better and the government's approach has only worsened the relationship.

The education of our young people should not be used as a pawn in a political game of posturing. This government needs to take a hard look in the mirror and come to terms with the fact that they have done nothing to improve labour relations in this province and have done it at the expense of the very people who elected them.

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

**GOV'T. (N.S.): COLLECTIVE BARGAINING - APPROACH**

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: It has often been said that it takes a village to raise a child. We know there are few in the village as important to the child's development as the teachers, and teachers are willing to go that extra mile to ensure that our children have the skills they need to succeed.

The government's heavy-handed approach to collective bargaining with teachers has created a public dialogue about many different aspects of the education system. However, I hope what is not lost in all of this is that most teachers just want to be given the space and resources to offer our children the best education possible. For this, Mr. Speaker, we are forever grateful.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

**NORTHSIDE/HARBOURVIEW HOSP. FDN.: WORK - CONGRATS.**

MS. PAM EYKING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the Northside Harbour View Hospital Foundation which, in 2017, will be celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The foundation, which was incorporated in 1992, works with residents, businesses and other groups in the community to raise funds for both the Northside General and the Harbour View Hospital to improve the health care for approximately 30,000 residents.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank everyone involved with the foundation for their hard work and dedication and congratulate them on all their successes and wish them continued success in the future.

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

**PREM.: TEACHERS CONTRACT - IMPOSITION**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, it's safe to say that I didn't expect to be spending Teacher Appreciation Week and Valentine's Day here with all of you. While

Nova Scotians are digging out, the Liberal Government is digging in. Come blizzard or high water, the Premier will charge ahead, imposing a contract on teachers, but at what cost? Demoralized teachers, parents who are forced to find ways to fill the holes left when teachers reduce their volunteer activities, students caught in turmoil, and a troubled atmosphere.

The Premier has guaranteed that things will not be normal any time soon. The Premier may win this battle but he will lose the war.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

### **LEGISLATURE: RECALL (02/14/17) - RATIONALE**

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, although I'm glad to be back in this Chamber, especially since it sat fewer days last year than any other Legislature in Canada, I must question the rationale for us being called together, at short notice during a snowstorm, and at considerable expense to the taxpayers of Nova Scotia.

One would think it was an emergency, that the teachers of Nova Scotia working to rule, as they have done since December, constituted an emergency. But no. The emergency is in classrooms, where teachers are struggling to meet the diverse needs of students without sufficient support or resources, and that emergency has not been acted on. The government could be addressing the emergency now, building some goodwill, and preparing to really negotiate with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union.

The fact that this government did not get its own way is no emergency.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

### **SINGH, DR. AV/CTR. FOR SMALL FARMS FACULTY - DEDICATION THANK**

MR. KEITH IRVING: The Centre for Small Farms in Grand Pré - beside Just Us! Coffee - is a very unique gathering place for growers, processors, and eaters committed to exploring and implementing sustainable food practices. It was born out of a desire to bring home the relationships and social advocacy Just Us! Coffee has created in the global south.

Av Singh, who lives beside the farm and holds a Ph.D. in agriculture, is the volunteer chair for the centre's facility. The centre shows people interested in farming that small-scale operations are worthwhile and integral to our global food security. In the centre's first two years of existence, it has attracted thousands of visitors.

On behalf of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, I would like to thank Dr. Av Singh, the faculty of the centre, and the founders of Just Us! Coffee for their dedication to inspiring the growth of healthy and sustainable food and communities.

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

### **GOV'T. (N.S.): BEHAVIOUR - RESULTS**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Some teachers do not have any intention of abandoning their work-to-rule plan. That is because the government has paid them zero respect during the collective bargaining process.

What the government does not realize is how much their behaviour has damaged the morale of our educators. By showing such disrespect, they have ignored the fact that much of the work done by teachers is on a volunteer basis. All their political game has done is cost their children their coaches, after school activities, mentorships, extra help, and counselling.

That shows no leadership, Mr. Speaker. All it says to Nova Scotians is that their political agenda is more important than actually taking the time to ensure our young people get the services generously afforded to them by these teachers.

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

### **FRASER FAM./SOUTHEND COMMUN. CTR.: MIRA RD. SCH. - ACQUISITION**

MR. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I rise in my place to recognize the Fraser family and the Southend Community Centre. I was honoured to be with the Premier and my Cape Breton colleagues for an announcement a few weeks ago that saw the former Mira Road school handed over to the Southend Community Centre.

As many people know, the Southend Community Centre is a very integral part and a very integral organization within the south end of Sydney and due to the Thanksgiving flood, received significant damage to the point where the building had to be demolished. It was an exciting day for the community to see the Southend Community Centre be handed the keys to their new facility and home, the former Mira Road Elementary School. It's a very exciting announcement for the entire community as they continue to expand their programs and support youth within the CBRM.

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

**LES AMARREUSES - QUILT DONATIONS**

MR. GORDON WILSON: I rise today to recognize Les Amarreuses, or the knotters, a group of friends who meet to make knotted quilts and give them to people in hopes of raising their spirits. It all started when they met to make some quilts for one of the member's grandchildren. When they were delivered, the group decided to continue making quilts for others.

The first were given to a family whose house had burned down. The quilts were a special gift to start replacing the precious possessions that the family had just lost. Soon people were giving them materials to make quilts as well as suggesting people who would really appreciate such a gift.

Last year, they met one week over the winter and early Spring and completed 18 quilts. This winter, they decided to surprise the residents of le Maison Jerome, a nine-bed group home for adults, and give each resident a quilt. Each of them named the quilt in the name of the recipient of the quilt.

What a kind gesture. They made quilts for people and in return only hope that the gift made the recipient happy.

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

**ARGYLE-BARRINGTON MLA: WIFE - VALENTINE'S DAY WISHES**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: I thought, here we are on a Tuesday night, Valentine's Day, away from our loved ones, so I thought I'd take the opportunity to wish my wife a Happy Valentine's Day. But, do you know what? She's a teacher and she's expecting me to be here for this job, to make sure that we oppose everything the Liberals have put forward in their disrespect for schoolteachers right across our province.

To her, I wish a Happy Valentine's Day and I want to wish a great big thank you to all the teachers in our schools, teachers' assistants, all the folks who provide so much care to our children during the school day, and all the education they do in all of Argyle-Barrington. There are some phenomenal people who work on behalf of all of us.

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

**HIGGINS, BRIAN: VOLUNTEERING - THANK**

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Brian Higgins of Timberlea. For as long as I can remember, Brian has been involved in community sports. He has coached and inspired thousands of children and youth, sharing his time, talents and

love of sports with many, including myself. He has coached baseball, football, softball, hardball and many levels of basketball.

Brian is tireless. Volunteering is part of his DNA and he is a pillar of the BLT community. I would like the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in recognizing the enormous positive influence Brian has had on so many people, and the community as a whole, and to wish him and his family all the best in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

### **PREM. - EMERGENCY AGENDA**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: On Sunday night, as every meteorologist was forecasting a strong nor'easter, school boards were advising of province-wide closures and government offices were following suit, the Premier was doing some soul-searching. He was looking for the state of normal and he was insisting that there was an emergency at hand that must be dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, absolutely no one outside of One Government Place understood why. Maybe he was praying for more snow, more and more snow, so that nobody could come here and see this sausage being made, because it's not going to be pretty. It puts the Premier's agenda ahead of better education. It poisons forever the relationship between the Premier and the teachers, and for what end? After this, sports and trips and so many other things teachers do voluntarily may still be cancelled, as if work to rule was still happening.

What is the point, Mr. Speaker? Months and months have passed and we're nowhere.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

### **WEATHER (02/12 - 02/14/17): ESSENTIAL SERVICES PROVIDERS - THANK**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, given the intense weather of the past few days that resulted in treacherous road conditions, I am pleased to rise to recognize and thank all essential service providers in Nova Scotia. Many Nova Scotians were fortunate to be able to stay at home. However essential service providers such as nurses, doctors, EMS, and caregivers were out in the weather, travelling the roads, getting themselves to work.

We owe these men and women our gratitude because in many cases they are meeting the care needs of the most vulnerable, those who are ailing or sick and unable to care for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, once again I would like to extend my gratitude to all the essential service providers in Nova Scotia and let them know that they truly are appreciated.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

**SPRINGVALE ELEM. SCH. - FEED N.S. DRIVE**

HON. LENA DIAB: I rise today to express my gratitude to the generous and inspiring students at Springvale Elementary.

In November, the Springvale community started collecting non-perishable food donations for Feed Nova Scotia at the school. The goal was simple but ambitious - to inspire enough donations from the community to completely stuff a Halifax Transit bus.

This was the school's 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Stuff a Bus campaign and kids, parents, and staff, all pitched in to make it a success. By December 2<sup>nd</sup>, they had amassed an amazing 54 boxes of food. On that date Santa and his elves pulled up in a festively decorated bus and, with the help of the sixth graders, packed up the boxes as students cheered on. As a form of thank you to all the students who helped to make the holidays more comfortable for those who are less fortunate, the kids were allowed to wear their PJs to school and, needless to say, they were all very excited to participate.

I ask all to join me in applauding the generosity of the Springvale community and thank C100, Scotiabank, Transit Union 508, and Halifax Transit, for supporting and coordinating the campaign.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**CREASOR, RACHEL: POLITICAL PROCESS - DETERMINATION**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, today I am honoured to acknowledge Rachel Creasor of Kentville. Rachel is a resource and behaviour intervention resource teacher at Glooscap Elementary School in Canning. Monday, in a one-woman demonstration, she protested outside the Legislature building here in Halifax for hours during the peak of the blizzard.

Rachel Creasor believes that people who have been away from school for 15 years or more would not recognize it. Teachers are asked to meet the needs of students at the same time as collecting data about them. She believes there's not enough time to actually teach and reach every student in your class.

I am very pleased to publicly acknowledge Rachel's grit and determination to participate in the political process and her commitment to real change in the classroom.

Her commitment to her students and the education system is truly expressed by her showing up in the worst blizzard of the year. Thank you, Rachel.

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

### **LIBERAL MLAs: TEACHERS - SUPPORT**

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, here we go again. On December 5<sup>th</sup>, we saw the Liberal Government do the right thing, I think, and walk away from imposing a contract on the teachers of our province and show some respect for the teachers. We believe that still can happen.

I'm here in the Legislature today because of how past Progressive Conservative Governments treated health care workers, but I have to say I don't believe even Stephen Harper introduced this amount of anti-worker legislation. We have Bill No. 1, we have Bill No. 37, we have Bill No. 100, we have Bill No. 148, and now we have Bill No. 75.

I think the government should do the right thing. I ask the Liberal members from across the way that you can stand up for the teachers in your community and not support Bill No. 75.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank.

### **FESWICK, JUNE - CNIB KNITTING GROUP**

MR. BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize June Feswick, a Beaver Bank resident who leads a knitting group at the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. June became involved in the institute after her husband suffered a stroke, leaving him visually impaired. While volunteering, she would often talk to clients about their shared interest in knitting.

It was her husband who reminded June that while she knitted, she would do so without looking at her fingers, allowing her to carry out other activities such as watching TV or talking with him.

It was this observation that sparked the start of the group. Much of the work is one on one, and there are about 10 volunteers and 15 knitters. This group is the first of its kind in Canada and helps not only with practical issues like dropping a stitch or following a pattern, but allows participants to socialize and reach out.

I wish June and all the volunteers involved in this unique knitting group continued success.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**EDUC. SYSTEM - OVERHAUL**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, the educational system needs an overhaul. What is happening in our classrooms is not working or meeting the needs of students. Face-to-face teaching time has decreased. Overwhelming challenges are common in today's classrooms: student meltdowns, aggression, panic attacks, students and teachers being kicked and spit upon, objects thrown, and students missing classes.

There are solutions. Thousands of teachers face these challenges every day. They have solutions. All we need is a government that will listen to them.

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

**AUTON, EDITH - COMMUN. COMMITMENT**

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to shine a spotlight on a remarkable volunteer, Edith Auton. Edith is an active member of the St. Mary's District Lions Club. She serves on the catering committee and as a director. She contributes her time daily by working at bingo, selling tickets, helping with the Christmas Daddies fundraiser, assisting in the Canada Day celebrations, working the mobile canteen at the famous Show and Shine in Sherbrooke, and working at the community dances.

But that's not all this remarkable woman does. In addition to her work with the Lions, Edith is also the president of the St. Mary's Dart League. She organizes the teams, does set up and many other duties each week. Edith resides in Sonora and whenever called upon will volunteer at her local community centre by cooking, cleaning, baking, serving dinners, and much more.

I am truly moved by the dedication and commitment Edith has shown to her community. It's folks like her who are the true cornerstones of our communities and continue to make a difference in the lives of so many.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**LUN. CO. SLEDGE HOCKEY: VOLS. - WORK ACKNOWLEDGE**

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, last year the Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre hosted the World Sledge Hockey Challenge. This showcase has spawned an interest in sledge hockey and the creation of the South Shore Sledge Sharks team.

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, the Sledge Sharks hosted their first game at the LCLC against the Halifax Sledge Grinders. In a dramatic ending, the Sledge Sharks edged out the Sledge Grinders 2-1, scoring with only 20 seconds left in the game.



I would like to acknowledge the hard work of all the volunteers who have helped bring sledge hockey to Lunenburg County, the athletes who make it look easy, and the fans who came out and cheered on their Sledge Sharks. Congratulations on the win.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

### **PICARD, BRYAN - TIANS AWARD**

MS. PAM EYKING: I rise today to congratulate local chef Bryan Picard, owner of the Bite House restaurant in Baddeck Forks, on winning the New Tourism Business of the Year Award at the annual Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia awards.

Chef Picard purchased the house that is now his home and place of business in 2012, and the doors of the Bite House opened two years later. The restaurant features a five-course tasting menu and uses local seasonal ingredients that change monthly. The Bite House has been featured and mentioned in the New York Times, Travel Maritimes, Honest Cooking, and the Huffington Post.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate Chef Picard on this award and wish him continued success in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

### **HENSHAW, EARL - COMMUN. CONTRIBUTION**

MR. KEITH IRVING: Sometimes as MLAs we have the pleasure of meeting people who have quietly contributed to their community and never sought recognition.

Today I would like to recognize one such constituent, Mr. Earl Henshaw of Lockhartville. Mr. Henshaw, now 90, was born into a very large family of siblings and knows the value of sharing food and resources.

When he goes for groceries, Mr. Henshaw will often distribute onions, carrots, and eggs to others in the community who might appreciate them. Mr. Henshaw has even purchased suits for burial clothes for men in the community who may not have had formal wear in their own closet.

On behalf of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, I would like to extend sincere thanks to Mr. Earl Henshaw, who truly warrants and deserves our heartfelt recognition.

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

**SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM: STAFF - THANK**

MS. JOYCE TREEN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell you about the Shearwater Aviation Museum.

The museum is known for its military knowledge and exquisite displays, which include over 6,000 artifacts from across the country collected from people associated with the airbase in Dartmouth. The purpose of the museum is to acquire, conserve, organize, research, and interpret so Canadian Forces personnel and the public at large can study, educate, and enjoy those artifacts and documents. They serve to exemplify the history and the technology of the Canadian Maritime Military Aviation.

The museum is free to visit and does countless hours of fundraising to keep their doors open and available for us to enjoy.

I ask that all members of this House of Assembly thank all those involved in keeping the museum open and allowing so much history into the community.

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

**DIGBY FLAG DAY: ORGANIZERS - COMMEND**

MR. GORDON WILSON: The Canadian flag is an important symbol of our country. It is the flag that we wave when our hockey teams win and that we lower to half mast when a soldier dies serving our country.

Last February, I was honoured again to be asked to join the celebrations of Flag Day at Digby. It started with the marching in of the flags of our provinces and territories. A piper then led a parade of invited guests, representatives of the Legion, and members of the RCMP. It was followed by speeches, songs, and videos.

It is nice to see such enthusiasm for our country's important symbols, especially for the Maple Leaf. I would like to commend the organizers of the Digby area for hosting such a great tribute to our flag.

Another special presentation on Flag Day was the gift of a flag from the mayor of Digby to the Keenan family, a Syrian family spending their first Flag Day in Canada. To them, it must not only have been a symbol of Canada but also a symbol of hope for the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: May I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. BAILLIE: I would like to welcome to the House of Assembly tonight the HRM Councillor for District 13, former Deputy Mayor Matt Whitman, who represents Hammonds Plains-St. Margarets. I just want to welcome him on behalf of every MLA here to the House of Assembly and our proceedings this evening. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: In the absence of more members' statements, the House will now recess until 9:00 p.m.

[8:55 p.m. The House recessed.]

[9:00 p.m. The House reconvened.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We'll now move on to Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS**

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

#### **TEACHERS: PREM. MISTRUST - EXPLAIN**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Our teachers have been very clear that they no longer trust this Premier. They don't trust him as a negotiator, they don't trust him to address our classroom needs, and they don't trust him to do what's right for our students. In fact, to quote from teachers directly: they don't have faith in this Premier, they don't trust him to do what's in the best interests of our education system.

I would like to ask the Premier, why is it that Nova Scotia teachers no longer trust him?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question, and I want to remind him that our government negotiated three collective agreements with the executive of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union - two different executives, I might add.

We were at the bargaining table each time, and we made adjustments to the deal that was on the table. Most recently, when they rejected it, the union made it very clear they were going back to work-to-rule. The decision today is to act to make sure that activities in classrooms are meeting the needs of our students.

MR. BAILLIE: That's a lot of work, Mr. Speaker, but all the Premier has managed to do is alienate the teachers of the province. There are no classroom improvements for him to point to, and there is no agreement that has been negotiated in good faith so they can get back to work beyond the work that they are already doing now. All the Premier has managed to do is tear apart the government and the teachers and destroy the working relationship that parents and students need there to be if we're ever going to see classroom improvements.

How does the Premier ever expect to move forward with real classroom reform when he has destroyed his working relationship with the province's teachers?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I look forward to continuing to work with classroom teachers across the province, many of whom I represent, and looking forward to continuing to make sure they make investments in those classrooms. We continue to make those.

I've made it very clear, Mr. Speaker. The investments we've made obviously have missed the mark in the minds of some teachers. I'm looking forward to the committee on classroom conditions and we'll have nine teachers from across the province who will speak directly to the issues in the classroom. We have \$20 million on the table to make those investments and we'll continue to make those investments in classrooms to improve the learning conditions for students, and the working conditions for teachers.

MR. BAILLIE: The very fact that we're here in this session is proof that the teachers no longer want to work with that Premier - that's the problem. We need them to work together to make classrooms better. So he has to force his way, using this Legislature. That's the problem.

Teachers themselves have said, if the Premier is capable of misleading our members about two development days, then he is capable of misleading parents about the very \$20 million that he just mentioned. Teachers don't trust him.

I'd like to ask the Premier, how can parents trust him to do what's right for the education system when clearly teachers do not?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member - and there was no mistake, Mr. Speaker, those two days were for marking and prep directly to deal with the issues that teachers talked about. It was no vacation, no additional vacation days. They were directly related to prep and working conditions in those classrooms, continuing to work with teachers across this province, continuing the responses.

I'm looking forward to the teachers from across this province sitting down so we can continue to address the issues facing their classrooms.

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

**PREM.: TEACHERS CONTRACT - LEGISLATION**

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, my question, too, is to the Premier. In his statement on Friday the Premier said that the recent tentative agreement showed he wanted to work with teachers. I think the Premier may be a bit confused. I don't think the parents and the teachers and the students standing outside this Legislature tonight feel that the Premier is on their side.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier explain to Nova Scotians how legislating a contract is his idea of working with teachers?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the honourable member, and people listening, that I understand the frustration people are feeling across the province, the fact that the former government cut \$65 million out of classrooms without batting an eye. We reinvested that funding. I've acknowledged and teachers have said that those investments have missed the mark. We've heard that from them. We're looking forward to sitting down to work with them so they can continue to address the issues they face.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, the wage pattern in this legislation was rejected by the teachers in December 2015. The government is going back on improvements that were made at the bargaining table. The government is kicking teachers while they are down.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Premier, why did he decide to use legislation to punish teachers for their rejection of tentative agreements?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. If he looked at the deals that were presented and agreed to at the bargaining table by the executive of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, the deal he is referring to has received 40 per cent support from teachers across the province.

We looked at the issue around improving classroom conditions. We heard from teachers that they wanted to have a voice at the table, which in this bill is nine teachers from across the province representing elementary, junior high, and senior high. That's a direct voice at the table. For the first time in the history of this province, a Premier is talking about the fact that we need to have a discussion about (Interruptions)

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

THE PREMIER: We need to have a meaningful discussion about inclusion. I think all of us believe in inclusive schools. The model that we're using is not working for parents

or for students. We're prepared to have that conversation. If they look at the bill, the timeline has been shortened so we can continue to make those investments.

Let me be clear: at any point that we can continue to make those improvements, we will do so. Thank you.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, the Premier said he's done some soul searching, but no doubt there are other Liberal MLAs who are also doing some soul searching of their own about whether or not they can support this bill. These Liberal MLAs may have family or friends who are teachers - teachers who have rights that have been trampled on by this misguided piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier, will the Liberal MLAs be allowed to vote their own free conscience on Bill No. 75?

THE PREMIER: I have family who are teachers, Mr. Speaker. One end of this province to the other, this bill is about getting back to some normalcy in classrooms. This bill is about whether or not you're going to continue to allow work-to-rule to impact education. That's your choice.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

### **EECD - STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. The government is responsible for ensuring the academic success of our students. When students do not receive the best possible education in our schools, they are less competitive after graduation and it puts their future in jeopardy.

Where students are not held accountable for poor academic performance, failure to attend class, or disruptive behaviour in class, it affects outcomes for all students. It is the responsibility of this government to ensure that teachers are empowered to maintain a strong academic standard in our schools.

My question through you to the minister is, will the minister admit that a failure to hold Nova Scotian students accountable is damaging academic outcomes?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for the question. As teachers, both of us would recognize that holding students to a high standard is something that every teacher in this province does. They hold students to a standard that they know is within the students' ability to achieve. That's what brings success for our kids.

MR. DUNN: This government's refusal to empower teachers is selling short the future of Nova Scotia's children. No student can benefit from being passed to the next grade when they have not met academic requirements. Will the minister inform teachers in writing that students are accountable and that the impression that everyone passes is not correct?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the member opposite was at the briefing today, and I believe he should have heard about the letter that will be going to all school boards and the conversation that's already been had about the myth of a no-fail policy. That letter is certainly something that school boards and superintendents will be sharing with their teachers.

Where the notion of no-fail came from is something that we cannot find. Boards have policies of retention, promotion, and placement. Those are the responsibility of the principal, and that's where those decisions are made.

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

### **EECD: CLASS CAPS - INTRODUCE**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns that parents, students, and teachers have raised loud and clear is overcrowding in the classroom. As the new semester started, we heard about many high school classes with 35 and 40 students and students sitting on the floor until new desks could be brought in. Introducing class caps in all grades is a concrete step the government could take to show that they've actually heard what teachers are saying.

Would the minister agree today to introduce class caps in all grades?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, again, people are speaking to the bill. There was a briefing today. Class caps are very much a part of that bill.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the minister is just avoiding the question. I wonder if she has also heard of "alternative facts," since she and the Premier seem to be quite full of them.

The minister plans to establish a committee, we've heard, and it's not the same as capping class sizes. In New Brunswick, the agreement with the Teachers Federation has an article that specifically addresses class size for all grade levels. It defines the normal class size as 26 students with no class size exceeding 29 - and I'll table that, Mr. Speaker.

Can the minister explain why this can be done by a Liberal Government in New Brunswick but it can't be done by a Liberal Government in Nova Scotia?

MR. SPEAKER: Before the minister answers, I'd like to ask the honourable member to retract the phrase "full of alternative facts."

MS. ZANN: I don't know if that's in the dictionary yet, but I will retract it.

MS. CASEY: We certainly have acknowledged class sizes - one of the first things the teachers' union spoke to me about three years ago was the class size issue. We have capped classes from Primary up to the end of Grade 6 and, as we've stated, as funds allow we will move that cap beyond Grade 6 into Grade 7, up to Grade 12 and, as I said, very much part of the bill that was introduced today.

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

### **PREM. - CLASSROOM REFORMS**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

The Premier asked you to call us into emergency session today because he failed to work out something reasonable with teachers, even on the basics of classroom reform. The fact of the matter is that he didn't listen to teachers or parents or students, or anyone, who was telling him that we needed to have real, meaningful changes in our classrooms. Had he done that, we would not be here today. In fact, instead, we'd have something positive to debate instead of the bill that is coming before us later.

I'd like to ask the Premier, why are there no specific classroom reforms for us to debate in this emergency session of the Legislature?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question, and I want to remind him that our government actually negotiated at the bargaining table, three different agreements with two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. They went back. If he had been paying attention, Mr. Speaker, classroom teachers across this province have told us they want to have a voice at the table. They obviously felt that voice has not been at the table for them.

We've now set a practice where nine teachers from across the province - three from elementary, three at junior high, three at senior - can be part of putting on the table the direct impacts in their classrooms, and we're prepared to work with them to continue to improve classrooms.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, a committee is not an improvement in our classroom. A commission, a study, whatever you want to call it, the Premier can throw \$10 million at it, he can throw \$20 million at it, he can use it as a bargaining chip, but not a single, real classroom reform is coming to this House. That is the problem, that is the failure that he is asking you, sir, to cover up for. He didn't listen; that's why we're here.



Why does the Premier refuse, after 18 months of talking to teachers, to bring a real example of a classroom reform to the floor of this Legislature so he can do something positive for our students?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. If he doesn't want to listen to teachers, that's his prerogative as a member. This government is going to listen to teachers (Interruptions)

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

THE PREMIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We provided an avenue for teachers to come in and continue to make sure we improve classroom conditions. The teachers across the province have told us they want to have a talk about the fact of inclusion in their system. Teachers have said they support in principle the issue of inclusion in our schools but that the model we use is not working. We're prepared to work with those teachers to continue to improve working conditions and classroom conditions.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, three years in office, 18 months of negotiations, two years since the Freeman report came out that started the conversation about these things, and this Premier asked teachers to trust him because he wants to start to talk about things that they've been asking for real action on for all that time. No wonder the teachers put out a press release saying they don't trust this Premier.

The time for committees is over, Mr. Speaker, the time for action is now. We wouldn't be here if the Premier had taken that action; we wouldn't have this session if the Premier had taken some action.

Mr. Speaker, will he at least admit that the fact we're here with a bill to force a contract is an absolute example of failure on his part to get the job done in our classrooms?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to remind him, Mr. Speaker, that we have three tentative agreements that were negotiated with two separate executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union at the bargaining table. Obviously teachers have responded to what their executives have taken back to them.

Today is responding to the fact that work-to-rule is impacting students. We know that began in early December. It's impacting students and their education.

This bill we've brought forward puts a contract back in place but also provides an opportunity for teachers across the province to become involved in making sure that their direct input is at the table when it comes to improving classroom conditions that they want to see happen and our government wants to see happen.

MR. BAILLIE: Teachers should have been involved all along in these discussions about the table, not just in the last few weeks as the Premier couldn't get the job done.

The fact is that now he wants to start a committee. Well, it's too late. The trust is gone. Any confidence is gone. No wonder the teachers themselves said this is a Premier who knows the cost of everything and the value of nothing.

I would like to ask the Premier, what's the cost of fighting teachers to no end? What's the value that's being lost by his inability to bring forward real classroom reform for us to work on here this week?

THE PREMIER: I want to remind the honourable member that he has been in the House for every budget that I've tabled in this House and invested more money in education every time that I've (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: We continue to invest in classrooms across this province. We've negotiated three different agreements at the bargaining table with two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. We continue to believe in classrooms. We continue to believe in teachers. We've provided as part of this bill an avenue for classroom teachers to be at the table to continue to help us make those improvements in classrooms.

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

### **GOV'T. (N.S.): LABOUR NEGOTIATIONS - FAILURE ADMIT**

HON. DAVID WILSON: This government's track record with contract negotiations has been marked by protest and heavy-handed legislation. In 2014, this government recalled the Legislature in order to pass a law preventing a strike by home care workers. In 2015, we saw university professors mobilizing against Bill No. 100, a terrible piece of legislation that would see collective agreements suspended and strikes banned for up to 18 months. The longer we give this government, the more it seems their relationship with workers in this province goes from bad to worse.

I would like to ask the Premier, will he finally admit that the government's approach to labour negotiations has failed?

THE PREMIER: I want to remind the honourable member that 10 bargaining units have accepted agreements at the table.

Our government has negotiated three separate agreements with two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, all at the bargaining table. We're continuing at the bargaining table with our other partners, looking to find a resolution come forward.

I must tell you, Mr. Speaker, these are never easy discussions. It's never easy when the employer and employees are at the table, and we're talking about money and how we continue to improve the working environment, working conditions. We're making those investments. There's money on the table. There has been money on the table. There will continue to be money on the table.

We'll continue to listen to workers and those who represent them and continue to try to make the best investments we can.

MR. DAVID WILSON: I think workers of the province would think differently. According to the Public Service Commission website, the government has 313 expired contracts with public sector workers in our province. After three years, it's clear that this government does not support collective bargaining.

The Premier has said that the financial package is non-negotiable and has come to the table with Bill No. 148 in his back pocket. I would like to ask the Premier, will the Premier tell this House if he plans to legislate contracts on all public sector workers rather than negotiating in good faith?

THE PREMIER: I want to tell the honourable member we're continuing at the bargaining table with a number of our sister organizations, continuing those conversations. We're continuing to do so, looking for a deal that satisfies those members as well as satisfying the government and the taxpayers of Nova Scotia. I continue to look forward to those conversations.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

#### **EECD: CLASSROOM IMPROVEMENTS - EXPENDITURES**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. It's been reported that the committee looking at classroom improvements will have access to \$10 million per year. I believe she said that in the technical briefing today, and that it can recommend expenditures up to \$250,000 per issue. We didn't hear the \$250,000 mentioned in this morning's technical briefing, but we did hear it mentioned repeatedly over discussion of what's been called TA-3. Would the minister confirm whether the \$250,000 limit is correct, and would she release the letter referenced this morning in the technical briefing regarding these expenditures?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Certainly when we formed a committee where teachers would be able to come in and give us some advice on what we should be doing in order to

make improvements in the classroom we wanted to make sure there was a commitment of money there to fund whatever those recommendations were.

We have put \$10 million on the table each of the two years. However, we recognize that if those recommendations are more than \$10 million, if there are things that we believe will improve the classroom which teachers are telling us they should, then we will look to find those funds out of our budget.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, the minister did not respond to the \$250,000 limit which was widely reported over the past couple of weeks, a number which I might add is only one-quarter of the amount that was budgeted to fix a terminal and wharf in Portland, Maine.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister would explain why she has set up a committee on a number of issues that can actually be addressed immediately, such as ensuring that classrooms have enough EPAs to address the students with IPPs - a lot of acronyms there - or that they have actually the proper supports in terms of attendance, in terms of discipline and ensuring that when teachers and students get assaulted in classrooms that the supports are there for them? Why is there a committee to deal with that rather than dealing with those immediately?

MS. CASEY: I would remind the member that we did have a province-wide Code of Conduct which we approved and was forwarded out to all schools to be followed. That question of a teacher being assaulted is certainly something that would be covered under the Code of Conduct. That was something we did because we had a variety of Codes of Conduct, inconsistencies, and when you move from one school to another, one board to another, it was a different code. We took the initiative to have a provincial Code of Conduct and there's certainly very clear steps as to what teachers or students or any workers in the school do if they've been assaulted.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

#### **MUN. AFFS.: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING - MIN. VIEWS**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. In 2013, while in Opposition, the Minister of Municipal Affairs expressed some very strong views about the collective bargaining process on behalf of the Liberal caucus. At that time he said, “. . . collective bargaining is a fundamental process by which employers and employees are able to reach contracts together. There's a balance of power within that relationship that the collective bargaining process keeps and ensures that the outcome is fair . . .” Very intuitive words from the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Maybe that was then and this is now. What has changed?

I'd like to ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs, does the minister stand by his previous comments?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Of course I do. I've watched as this process has unfolded, three contracts that were negotiated. I've taken it upon myself to meet with teachers in Yarmouth. I've heard their concerns and I truly believe that their concerns and priorities in the classroom are reflective in the priorities of this working conditions committee.

I also believe that teachers want to be on that committee to ensure that their voices were heard and that they could have an impact because they have felt they have been without a voice. I'm very happy they are on that committee and that they will be able to contribute to this process.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, that same day the minister went on to defend the collective bargaining process and guaranteed the Liberal stance, he guaranteed it. He said that's what this caucus will continue to support - a fair collective bargaining process where the balance of power is in the middle, where neither side has an advantage over the other and where each side is able to use the tools in their employ to ensure their position is properly reflected - a balance of power. Maybe the minister is not aware of Bill No. 148 which was enacted before these negotiations started. Maybe he wasn't aware of the Premier touring the province saying, here's the wages, all you can get, before the negotiations.

I'd like to ask the minister, how does he reconcile Bill No. 148 with what he just said?

MR. CHURCHILL: I do appreciate the question. I'll remind the member opposite that collective bargaining did happen three times here. There were three contracts that were negotiated, that were supported by the union and by government. These contracts were supported by both parties, Mr. Speaker.

I think no one is happy about the current situation but we need to find a way to move forward. We need to find a way to ensure that kids are our priority because I know that through the course of this it's their voices that have been missing at that table.

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

#### **EECD - LEGISLATION: MIN. REFERENCE - SOURCE**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, in 2013 the Minister of Energy lectured the government of the day about negotiating with the public-sector unions, and he said that when government says everything was done and we had no choice, that rings hollow because of the fact that the parties haven't been at the table for a week. There are no discussions, there are none taking place, and yet we are bringing in this regressive

type of legislation. Some have referred to it as back-to-work legislation - it's not back-to-work legislation because there is no strike; no one has stopped working. This is anti-strike legislation from an NDP Government - call it for what it is. So, the Minister of Energy was very correct in Opposition.

I'm wondering - the question to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development - did the Minister of Energy advise the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development that she should refer to this bill as regressive anti-strike legislation?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the honourable member that I was correct.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, he's wrong now. During the debate, the Minister of Energy was reflective about his role, about the role employees would have on their own contract, and he said he wanted to make it clear it is not my place to judge what's good or what's not good for paramedics. Paramedics are to make that decision; that's why we have collective bargaining. And he concluded by saying we should be reluctant to judge what paramedics have done or how they've chosen to go through this bargaining process, because at the end of the day they're the ones who must look after the interest of their families, the well-being of their children, and their own future. The decisions that they make are theirs, and we certainly respect their ability to make those decisions.

So, my question to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is, does the minister believe that teachers should be held to a different standard than her Party held paramedics in 2013?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I think anyone who knows my background, my commitment to the profession, and my years of experience as a teacher, that I certainly respect and have great admiration for every teacher in every classroom.

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

#### **PREM.: CONTRACT LEGISLATION - CAUCUS SUPPORT**

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I don't know if it's just me or if anyone else is having a powerful sense of déjà vu. I remember it so well, the protests, the legislation, the overwrought disappointment from that side of the House. But, if I recall correctly, the last time it seemed it was much ado about nothing.

My question to the Premier is, this time, does he in fact have the support of all his caucus members to pass this misguided legislation?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Premier has the floor. The incessant heckling is starting to get to me, so if we can just let the question be answered, we'd appreciate that.

The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I might add this is the first question that I've received from the member since she has come back to the House and I want to, on behalf of our caucus, tell her how proud I am to see her sitting in the session.

I also want to tell her that all members of this caucus have been out listening to teachers, been out in their communities talking to teachers. She would know we negotiated three different agreements, two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. These are challenging times for teachers, for schools, for students. They've listened, we've listened to their concerns, we've listened to teachers, and this bill reflects that. I hope we can garner the support of the members as we go forward so that we continue to make those investments in classrooms.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Premier for his kind, thoughtful words.

We have heard welcome news from constituents of the member for Cape Breton Centre that he will not be supporting this bill. So, I would ask the Premier, can you confirm that the member for Cape Breton Centre will be voting against this legislated contract?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. It gives me an opportunity to actually express my great appreciation to the member for Cape Breton Centre. As we continue to go to meet with his constituents, meet with teachers, meet with parents, meet with members of his community, making sure that those voices and their concerns are being brought back to the table, he knows that we've negotiated three different agreements with two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. He's heard the frustration of teachers about this whole process. He recognizes, and teachers have told him, that they want to get back to some level of normalcy in the classroom, but they also want to make sure their voices are being heard, as we continue to make improvements in classrooms.

I want to thank the honourable member for his continued commitment and support.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**PREM.: LBR. RELATIONS - ATTITUDINAL CHANGE**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. In the past, the Premier had a lot to say about labour relations in our province. In fact, he said, "... the Liberal caucus will not support legislation that takes away workers' right to strike." I can table this. He went on to say, "We were the first Opposition Party to publicly declare our position and we will keep our word to Nova Scotians."

Mr. Speaker, why did the Premier say one thing in Opposition and do the exact opposite once he was Premier? Why did he break his word to Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to remind her that we negotiated three separate agreements with two executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. At no time - if they wanted to strike, they could have taken a strike action.

What we have here is impacting students today. This process began - this was impacting the education of our kids. That's why we're before this House today. The president of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union was very clear on Thursday after the rejection by her membership that she was going back to work-to-rule. That impact is happening on the education of our children.

I would hope that the honourable member would recognize that this government had to act to continue to make sure that the supports that students require to continue to make sure that they finish out this year, whether they are aspiring to go on to university or whether they need supports to continue into the next grade, will happen in classrooms across this province.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, what I do recognize by speaking to all the teachers and parents is that integrity matters, especially in this House. Back in 2007, the Premier said, "Our ailing health care system will not be fixed by picking a fight with the province's valued health care professionals."

Will the Premier admit that what he said eight years ago is still true today, and that our ailing education system will not be fixed by picking a fight with the province's valued educational professionals?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the honourable member that we've been at the bargaining table. We've had three different agreements by two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union that have been sent out to their membership. Work-to-rule started in December. This is impacting students across the province.



We'll continue to make those investments in classrooms across the province. I'm looking forward to teachers who will be part of this conversation to directly come to us and tell us what's happening in their classrooms.

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

**PREM.: TEACHERS NEGOTIATIONS - EQUALITY/RESPECT**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you will be to the Premier. In 2013, the Premier lectured the government of the day about negotiating with public sector unions. He said, “. . . the real foundation of any collective bargaining is the fact that the employer and employee have to be at the table feeling equal, feeling that they are both feeling respected, feeling that they are both having their voices heard . . .”

Mr. Speaker, my question through you, when it comes to negotiations with the province's teachers, does this Premier believe that teachers feel equal and respected, and that their voices have been heard?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the two different executives the teachers elected to represent them in the Nova Scotia Teachers Union agreed to three different bargaining agreements - three different ones that were negotiated at the bargaining table.

I want to remind the honourable member that the position the government took to the bargaining table was very different than the one we agreed on. We changed the wage pattern to an increase. We talked about the Long Service Award and a payout on retirement salaries. We continued to put money on the table that invested in classrooms.

All of that was done at the bargaining table, listening to the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. Obviously teachers have said very clearly that they didn't like what happened at the bargaining table. The work to rule that has been an initiative by the Nova Scotia Teachers Union is impacting students today. We were hoping that we would get a settlement.

Last Thursday, when it was clear that the union said they were going back to continue work-to-rule, we had a decision to make. We are before this House today with a piece of legislation that will respect that, to make sure that work-to-rule ends, and also provide an avenue for teachers to have their voices directly at that table.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I read his quote directly, and none of that was in it. I'm not allowed to say the word I'm thinking.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier's 2013 lecture on labour negotiations included this statement: “In order for that agreement to have any kind of substance, both the employer

and the employee have to feel valued at the end of the day when that agreement is finished.” They have to feel like they’ve been heard.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is very simple. When did the Premier change his approach to negotiations from respect and equality to strong-arm tactics? Was it when he changed seats in the House and went to the government side?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to remind him that it was at the bargaining table now for three different agreements, two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. We’ve continued to work. That was done at the bargaining table where both partners were equal. We gave at the bargaining table. Teachers have said that they weren’t happy with what their executive brought back to them.

The decision today is about the decision for work-to-rule in classrooms that’s impacting students’ education, and we’re responding as any responsible government should do.

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

#### **EECD: MIN. CONFIDENCE - PREM. CONFIRM**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, in the past few months the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development has frequently told the public about her disappointment. She has been disappointed with students, she has been disappointed in teachers, and she has been disappointed with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. Well, I think it’s fair to say that many Nova Scotians are disappointed with her.

My question tonight is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, does the Premier continue to have confidence in the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development?

THE PREMIER: Yes.

MS. ZANN: I’m glad for that short answer, because I have to say I’m very tired of hearing the Premier constantly trying to throw the union under the bus tonight.

Mr. Speaker, the Education and Early Childhood Development Minister’s mandate letter from the Premier indicates she was expected to invest in and improve classroom environments that benefit both teachers and students, but it is clear to parents, teachers, and students that she has failed in this responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier believe that someone who has poisoned the government's relationship with the teachers of this province should continue to be Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development for the continued work that she's done on behalf of students across this province. Since I've known the minister when she joined this House in 2006, she has continued to fight for public education in this province, continued to fight on behalf of teachers and students across this province.

I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, I'm equally happy to find out that the honourable member has finally found her voice in Opposition, because she didn't have it when was sitting on this side of the House and the NDP Education Minister was cutting \$65 million out of classrooms.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

#### **EECD: PROGRAMMING IMPLEMENTATION - COSTS**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

MR. DUNN: The education system appears to be broken and is in need of major reform. There are several policies the department can put in place that don't require extra funding to start creating an effective attendance policy, as well as developing programming to address behavioural challenges and supporting students coping with school demands.

Will the minister admit that her department could implement these policies at no extra cost?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the member mention the attendance policy. There is a draft attendance policy that we have ready to go at the department. I can tell you that during work to rule, teachers were told that they were not to engage in any conversation with anybody from the department.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, teachers have raised these concerns several times. Students should receive the marks they earn, even if it that means they fail. This helps reset a sense of personal accountability that students will need as they exit the school system into post-secondary education and the workforce.

My question to the minister is, why is this government creating another committee, using more taxpayers' dollars, instead of requesting solutions from classroom teachers at no cost?

MS. CASEY: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Engaging teachers in conversation is absolutely the way to get solutions to the problems that exist.

During the course of the last three years there have been attempts from my office and from me personally to engage teachers in those very conversations. Each time - and I think I tabled it here before - I was asked by the union to refrain from speaking to teachers, that the union would be the voice for teachers, so it was very difficult to engage teachers. We want to make sure that teachers are part of the solution here, and that's why you see in this particular bill that they have a seat on those committees.

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

#### **PREM.: TEACHERS NEGOTIATIONS - DAMAGE ADMIT**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: The people have recognized on a number of occasions that the Premier and the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development have not been bargaining in good faith.

Most recently during a scrum, the Premier mischaracterized commitments that this government made in the third tentative agreement. Specifically, the Premier's comments about two self-directed development days and the \$20 million outlined to improve classroom conditions caused mistrust and anger among teachers.

My question to the Premier is, why did the Premier take such a hostile and confrontational approach to dealing with teachers?

THE PREMIER: I disagree with the question.

MR. ORRELL: So I guess disagreement means we don't have to answer it, Mr. Speaker. That's pretty good.

Teachers, students, and parents have lost confidence in the government to resolve this contract dispute. Faith in this government is significantly diminished since the Premier inserted himself in negotiations.

Will the Premier admit that he has damaged the negotiation with teachers, and his angry confrontational approach has done this damage?

THE PREMIER: I want to remind the honourable member again, we had three agreements with two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. All of that was achieved at the bargaining table. All of that were changes (Interruption)

I want to remind the honourable member that we had three different agreements with two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. Each time they were negotiated at the table. There was movement on our part on every one of those agreements.

We continue, though, to hear the frustration of teachers across the province. Clearly, they want to have a voice that they didn't feel was there. We have now provided an avenue for classroom teachers across the province to have that voice heard.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**PREM. - HOUSE CANCELLATION (02/13/17): STAFF - APOLOGIZE**

MS. LISA ROBERTS: What happened yesterday was another example of the Premier thinking he knows best.

On Sunday, the Emergency Management Office and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal urged people to stay off the roads during the coming storm. That same day, the government announced the cancellation of the Law Amendments Committee. Sunday night, the decision was made to close all provincial government offices for Monday.

However, it wasn't until almost 2:00 p.m. on Monday that the resumption of the House of Assembly was postponed. Apparently, the Premier thought he knew better.

Will the Premier apologize to the Commissionaires, Pages, caucus staff and other . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I would like to remind the honourable member that it's not parliamentary to question matters that fall under the jurisdiction of the Speaker.

Do you have a supplementary question?

MS. ROBERTS: I do.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it a question for me? If it is, you can take your seat.

MS. ROBERTS: Can we decide together?

MR. SPEAKER: Give it a shot.

MS. ROBERTS: Thanks.

At the risk of sounding overly cynical early in my political career, I have to wonder what the Premier's motivation was for refusing to back down on recalling the Legislature during a severe blizzard. Was the Premier hoping no one would be able to see him plowing over teachers' rights during yesterday's white-out . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. That's a question for me.

The honourable member for Kings North.

**EECD - STUDENTS/TEACHERS: SYSTEM FAILURE - ADMIT**

MR. JOHN LOHR: My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. The current state of classrooms in Nova Scotia is dismal. Some of the issues at hand are overcrowded classrooms, too many learning differences and behavioural challenges for one teacher to address, and a lack of additional support outside the classroom. In fact, some report of shortages of desks. Given the classroom conditions, teachers aren't able to teach effectively, and students aren't able to learn.

My question for the minister is, will the minister admit they failed students and teachers?

HON. KAREN CASEY: I would remind the member opposite that when the class sizes were brought to our attention three years ago, we certainly began to limit the class sizes to put caps so that there would be a manageable number of students in the class. We have implemented that from Primary to Grade 6 and have made it clear that we are moving on into Grades 7 to 9.

We know that the funding that goes to school boards is based on a ratio of one to 24. So when boards make decisions to have classes larger than 24, I think the question should be asked of the board.

MR. LOHR: Students for Teachers and Parents 4 Teachers have been very vocal groups supporting educators and support staff. These advocacy groups with front-line workers demand reform in our education system. They've come to the realization that something needs to change because the current system is falling apart.

My question for the minister is, does this Liberal Government want to be remembered for their inaction and for failing the youth of our future?

MS. CASEY: I would say that one of the things this Liberal Government will be remembered for is that it is the only government in the last 10 years that has taken every

year and put (Interruption) - was the only government that every year consistently has invested more money in education than they did the previous year.

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

**PREM. - TEACHERS CONTRACTS/PSC CONTRACTS**

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I want to return to my question again that the Premier didn't answer, that 313 contracts within the Public Service Commission are still unsigned or negotiated. I ask the Premier if the attempt we see today with the contract being imposed on the teachers - will the Premier be doing that to the other bargaining units across the province? A very simple question.

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to tell him that we are at the bargaining table with our sister organization continuing to negotiate to find resolutions at the bargaining table and it's my hope that we'll find that resolution there.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, we heard from the Opposition members in questions earlier about how the Premier approached negotiations when he was in Opposition. I heard him when we were in government but yet today we've seen three years of this government attacking workers' rights in this province. With a hammer like Bill No. 148 in their back pocket, how does he expect negotiations to be fair across the Public Service if that's being held over their heads?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I know he know that Bill No. 148 is about arbitration, Mr. Speaker. Parameters aren't arbitrators, he would know that. He would also know and I know he has been following this very closely, that we've had three different agreements with two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union.

We continue to do at the bargaining table. He would also know that what he was referring to, Mr. Speaker, was when paramedics would be here. Paramedics did not exercise the right to strike, they imposed a contract without being at the table and allowing them to exercise their right. We've continued to allow them to exercise their right here.

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

**PREM.: WORK-TO-RULE - MENTAL HEALTH SERV. IMPACT**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, this government's obvious lack of respect for teachers and students has caused significant impacts on what is available to help young people. The counsellors and teachers put in more volunteer work to help students by mentoring them and offering support when they needed it. By failing

to negotiate fairly, work-to-rule has limited the ability to provide volunteer hours to help children who may be struggling.

My question to the minister is, what impact has work to rule had on the mental health services directly and indirectly provided to students?

HON. KAREN CASEY: I would be the first to say that the voluntary time that teachers give to their students is something that is to be commended. Teachers have done that for years. I did it as a teacher, I know the colleagues over there have done it as teachers. Teachers do that not because it's part of a contract, they do that because they care about the kids. There are many teachers who will want to return to that and we look forward to that because that's what makes a good relationship between a student and a teacher.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: We've spoken about supportive mental health services many times in this Chamber and all of us are aware of the risks associated with mental illness and the vulnerability of children in school. This is a critical time in their development and the volunteer services and trust relationships students may develop with their teachers, coaches and others are very important.

Mr. Speaker, as we look at the availability of these services, can the minister agree that by allowing the situation to persist over a number of contract negotiations, over a number of months and years, that they are potentially putting the health of students on the back burner?

MS. CASEY: I think we all recognize there are a lot of issues in our society where people are suffering from some mental illness or some issues that cause . . .

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

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: That concludes the government's business for today.

The House will meet again on Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, from 12:01 a.m. until 11:59 p.m. We will start with Opposition Day, which will run from 12:01 a.m. until 4:31 a.m. We will resume Government Business whenever Opposition Day concludes, which will see second reading of Bill No. 75. As well, I remind members that late debate is still scheduled for 5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. tomorrow, Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.



HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: For Opposition Business tomorrow after the daily routine and Question Period, we will be calling Bill No. 77, Bill No. 76, and Bill No. 23 for debate at that time.

I now move that we do rise to meet again tomorrow between the hours of 12:01 a.m. and 11:59 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for adjournment and for the House to meet tomorrow - Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> - at 12:01 a.m. until 11:59 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

The House now stands adjourned until February 15<sup>th</sup> at 12:01 a.m.

[The House rose at 9:52 p.m.]

**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 889**

By: Hon. Christopher d'Entremont (Argyle-Barrington)

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

Whereas Nova Scotians must be confident that their elections are fair, legitimate, and constitutional; and

Whereas Nova Scotia's Court of Appeal has ruled that the province's existing electoral map violates fundamental Charter rights; and

Whereas the Liberal Government has ample time before the next election to right this wrong and ensure our electoral boundaries are constitutional;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly call on the Liberal Government to work collaboratively with all political Parties represented in this place to ensure the next provincial election is contested on boundaries that are fair, legitimate, and constitutional.

**RESOLUTION NO. 890**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) provides invaluable support, education, and training to newcomers in our province, including help with interpretation, learning English, accessing health services, preparing for employment, starting a business, and much more; and

Whereas I was delighted to have the opportunity to join one of ISANS' Canadian Citizenship Preparation courses this past December, where I met a proud group of student newcomers from China, India, Colombia, Egypt, Iraq, and Ukraine; and

Whereas ISANS' success is due in no small part to the skill and dedication of volunteer instructors such as Halifax Armdale's own Chris Churchill, who welcomed me into his classroom;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Chris and his fellow instructors for the passion, time, and energy they put into helping our newest citizens feel comfortable and welcomed in Nova Scotia.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 891**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Orthodox Greek community make a significant contribution to the social, religious, and cultural vitality of the constituency of Halifax Armdale and the greater municipality; and

Whereas Halifax Armdale resident, Reverend Father Theodore Efthimiadis, has added substantially to this vitality through his years of service to his faith community in Halifax, while also serving the Greek Orthodox parishes of Glace Bay, Saint John, New Brunswick, and Saint John's, Newfoundland and Labrador; and

Whereas Father Efthimiadis will mark his 25<sup>th</sup> year in the priesthood in February of this year;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Father Efthimiadis on this tremendous milestone and thank him for the years of guidance, comfort, and inspiration that he has provided to the Orthodox communities across the Maritimes.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 892**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas Halifax Armdale resident Pamela MacKeigan, a graduate of Dalhousie University's Schulich School of Law, has acquired years of legal experience working with Nova Scotia Legal Aid; Crawford, Boudreau & Khatter; Blois, Nickerson & Bryson; and the Nova Scotia Justice Department's Child Protection Division, where she served as senior solicitor since 2008; and

Whereas our legal system is enriched not only by the appointment of brilliant legal minds but also by the selection of diverse judicial candidates, including women and members of historically underrepresented groups; and

Whereas federal Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould appointed Pamela MacKeigan to the Nova Scotia Supreme Court's Family Division last year, and she was officially sworn in on November 16, 2016, donning her robes shortly thereafter;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Justice MacKeigan on this well-deserved appointment and wish her the best as she rises to the challenge of a career on the bench.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 893**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Spryfield Business Commission has long played a vital role in the Spryfield community by promoting local businesses, partnering with and fundraising for our service organizations and local associations, offering marketing and networking opportunities, and helping to organize some of the community's most beloved events and festivals; and

Whereas our small business owners need support from both government and our companies to establish themselves, build their brands and customer base, and upgrade their skills, in order to compete and thrive; and

Whereas the SBC will again be offering free 11-week professional development courses to area employers and organizations this year, including effective communication skills; website setup, design, and optimization; and social media engagement;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize the SBC for their role in supporting our local businesses by offering these indispensable training opportunities, and thank Executive Director Bruce Holland, the SBC board of directors, and of course instructors Ann Divine, Jeff Brown, and Zoran Jokic for their contributions to the well-being of our communities.