



House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

## DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

**Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy**

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

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

### Third Session

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2017**

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**HALIFAX, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2017**

**Sixty-second General Assembly**

**Third Session**

**9:30 P.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Kevin Murphy

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

Mr. Gordon Wilson, Mr. Keith Irving

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

The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege.

Last night during late debate, towards the end, the member for Halifax Atlantic made some derogatory statements about me. It is part of an escalating theme wherein the last session he made some gestures to me, some obscene gestures. Last night he made clearly some derogatory statements to me. He questioned my integrity and he questioned my honour. He questioned my motives as a member of this House.

According to the House of Commons Rules, remarks directed specifically at another member which question that member's integrity, honesty or character are not in order and according to *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, it says that in the House of Commons a member will not be permitted to impute to any member or members unworthy motives for their actions in a particular case.

During last night's late debate the member for Halifax Atlantic stood up and said a number of things but towards the end he said, "I would just like to say this. The member for Pictou East is that type of person. He's not driven by values. He has you all fooled. He's driven by power and votes and will stick his knife . . ." and then I couldn't pick it up from the noise in there. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that it was definitely his intention to impute motive to me and question my integrity.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. What you have there, honourable member, is a point of order on an issue of decorum, it is not a point of privilege.

The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: I stand tonight on a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker. I regret to say that this government willingly impeded my ability to do my parliamentary duty. In this government's race to deny democracy and railroad Bill No. 75 back into this House, they denied my right to hear at least 75 per cent of those who sought to appear before the Standing Committee on Law Amendments.

Through a late night motion, strong-armed through the committee by a gaggle of Cabinet Ministers, the Government House Leader arbitrarily cut off the time available to hear presentations at 8:00 p.m. The time available for presenters was not sufficient for a member who truly wanted to find solutions and potential amendments to the bill to hear from enough of those persons who wish to provide their views.

The arbitrary nature of the time allotted certainly weeded out voices that should have been heard, voices that I wanted to hear from. As a result, the government has not afforded me the right and privilege to formulate an informed position on the government bill nor any possible amendment.

At last count, Mr. Speaker, 400 people requested time in front of the committee. A small fraction were given the opportunity and we heard primarily from Halifax-based people who were able to make it through difficult conditions to be here and heard. The government's haste also made it highly probable that persons with disabilities were unable to come to the committee in the snowy conditions.

If people from outside HRM wanted to appear today they would have to go against the warning of TIR and EMO about dangerous road conditions. Mr. Speaker, not only was I prevented from hearing hundreds of presenters, the actions of this government prevented me from having my say at the committee.

I would like to point out that my right to speak in this place, whether at committee or in this Chamber, is circumscribed by only under rare circumstances. It has happened here. What the Government House Leader did in the Red Room at the Law Amendments Committee is an absolute affront not only to the people he silenced but to our privileges

here in the House - my privileges. We have the right to speak, we have the right to use due process in this House. That is what a member's privilege is about.

The time limit on presentation time and that number of presenters meant that there was no time for members of the committee to present amendments. The motion will also deny me from voting on the motion to refer the bill back to the House. Specifically, the motion stipulates that at 8:00 p.m. Bill No. 75 is deemed, without further motion, to be referred to the House of Assembly. With that one motion under the cover of darkness, the Liberal majority took away my right to vote on whether or not this bill could come back to the House.

Throughout this process the government has shown contempt for teachers by muzzling their voices, the government has shown contempt for committee members by making their vote unnecessary, and the government has shown contempt for democracy by breeding cynicism, flaunting the Rules of the House and ignoring the people who we are charged with representing.

Mr. Speaker, I urge you to rule that the Law Amendments Committee be recalled to hear those Nova Scotians who want to voice their opinion and to allow the normal process which includes a vote by committee members to be held.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, you will recall yesterday on two occasions I tried to bring a motion to this Chamber that required the unanimous consent (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Government House Leader has the floor.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out, there were two attempts yesterday by myself as Government House Leader to bring motions to the House that would have required unanimous consent where we were prepared to have a subcommittee of the Law Amendments Committee meet in the Committee Room and be able to meet concurrently which would have allowed us to double up on the amount of presenters that could have taken place last night, that could have taken place a full 12 hours today. In fact, had there been consent given by the Opposition on the reporting requirements under our legislative rules, we could have extended that period of time even longer.

You will recall yesterday when you asked for consent the Opposition clearly denied it and weren't prepared to do something which would have been a first in our province that the government of the day was prepared to actually have two Committees of Law Amendments, to have more Nova Scotians be able to present. Clearly, that was denied. That committee motion was made, debate took place on that motion, and . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Government House Leader has the floor.

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, the motion was introduced last night at the committee, the chairman allowed debate to take place on that motion, members were free to speak on that motion, a vote was held on that motion, and the vote was in the affirmative. This is a motion that has happened in the past, and there have been no issues with the parliamentary process that was employed at that point.

I share that with you, Mr. Speaker, and with all Nova Scotians of the attempts that were made to try to have more Nova Scotians be able to make presentations. In fact, there was even an attempt tonight after 8:00 p.m. to have more presentations heard which unfortunately was opposed by the Opposition as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable New Democratic Party House Leader.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, even if the Government House Leader got his will yesterday to create a baby committee of the Law Amendments Committee, without really knowing the rules around what would pertain to that committee - quorum, could you make amendments - it was very difficult to support.

On top of that, only 50 per cent of the people who called in, if that - less than 50 per cent would have been able to present today even if there were two committees. There would had to have been four committees created which is unrealistic.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, everything the Government House Leader just said is completely irrelevant. He never did put a motion that was in order before this House. He continues to defend what was a sneaky attempt to break the rules. We didn't even deal with that motion because it was not on the table in a proper format for delivery.

Mr. Speaker, what you are being asked to consider here is a subversion of democracy in Law Amendments Committee. The reason I say that is in a few minutes on in the daily routine you are going to be asking for reports from committees. A report is going to come from Law Amendments Committee and I submit to you that we need you to consider the point of privilege by my colleague before that time because for this House to proceed with that point of privilege outstanding means that that breach of the rules may continue to the point where it can't be repaired.

Mr. Speaker, if you need time to recess the House to consider the point of privilege, I encourage you to take it. I certainly respect that this is a complicated matter and you may want to take that time, but we really cannot proceed with the daily routine and reports from committees until the point of privilege is dealt with.



MR. SPEAKER: I just want to remind the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition that the word “sneaky” is unparliamentary.

Essentially, what this boils down to is the Rules of this House provide that without a report from the committee claiming a breach of privilege, the House cannot deal with a point of privilege arising from committee proceedings. There have been many rulings by Speakers in this seat that individual committee members may not raise a point of privilege about committee proceedings in this Chamber.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D’ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, during two occasions during the sitting of the committee I took the opportunity, and I know the member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River brought up the same privilege question. We tried to move that privilege issue at the committee. In my particular case, I was summarily dismissed by the Chair, that I couldn’t even put my motion on the floor.

We tried to follow your rules, we tried to follow what was suggested to us and, as such, I hope that’s taken into consideration as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable New Democratic Party House Leader.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, earlier this evening my colleague, the member for Queens-Shelburne, made a motion in committee that his rights and privileges were being impeded by not allowing similar to what the Progressive Conservative House Leader brought up a few minutes ago. He was not allowed to move that forward. How do we address an issue in the committee if the chairman of the committee and the majority members of the committee are from the government caucus? We will never be able to get a ruling back to the House if they keep disallowing motions in the committee itself.

The member for Queens-Shelburne brought this motion forward in committee and it was voted down. How do we address an issue if it’s unfair to our members or to Opposition members?

MR. SPEAKER: It is the privilege of the committee; it was raised, it was voted on, and the motion was defeated at the committee level.

We’ll now move on with the daily routine.

## **PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

## **PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

**Bill No. 75 - Teachers' Professional Agreement and Classroom Improvements (2017) Act.**

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

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

**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

**GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

**RESOLUTION NO. 903**

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

Whereas the late Grand Chief Gabriel Sylliboy, a courageous Mi'kmaq leader, was remembered today for defending his people's rights to hunt and fish; and

Whereas in 1927 he was arrested and convicted under the Lands and Forests Act for hunting muskrat and possessing pelts of skin, and faced racism and discrimination throughout the court challenge; and

Whereas after 90 years, members of his family today gathered at Government House to witness the granting of a Free Pardon to Grand Chief Sylliboy and to receive an apology from the province on his behalf;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House recognize the late Grand Chief Gabriel Sylliboy for his integrity and standing up for his people at a time when treaty and Aboriginal rights were not recognized as they are today in the Canadian Constitution.

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. (Applause)

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 78 - Entitled an Act to Limit Class Sizes in Nova Scotia Schools. (Ms. Lenore Zann)**

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

### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

### **STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

### **BILL NO. 75: LAW AMENDMENTS COMM. - RESTRICTIONS**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, this week throughout this ordeal the Government House Leader has trampled over the normal Rules of this House in order to deny 300 Nova Scotians their right to speak at the Law Amendments Committee. This government wants to push through Bill No. 75 without their voice, deeming it an emergency.

There is no emergency, Mr. Speaker. The only danger here is the Liberal Government's attack on democracy itself. Perhaps hearing about the reality of the education system today is too much for Liberal Government members. That is no reason to cut the people of Nova Scotia off.

I hope they consider the message they are sending to the students of Nova Scotia, that democracy does not matter to this government.

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

### **TEACHERS: WALKOUT - HISTORIC FIRST**

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, I want to take stock of the magnitude of this moment in the history of Nova Scotia politics. Never before, in 122 years

of teaching, have teachers had a province-wide walkout, until tomorrow. Never before has a government had to repeatedly use all-night sittings of the Legislature to push its agenda.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say that we have never before witnessed this level of protests around this Legislature. However, since the Liberal Government took office, I have seen health care workers by the hundreds appear before the Law Amendments Committee. I have witnessed film workers by the thousands outside this House protesting the cuts of this Liberal Government.

Mr. Speaker, this current Liberal Government is one of a kind and for this, I am truly thankful.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**BURTON, JOHN: PROMOTION - CONGRATS.**

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this moment to recognize someone who has dedicated more than 20 years of his career to youth in our community. John Burton has served as Executive Director for the Boys and Girls Club of Dartmouth and later Greater Halifax, when he oversaw the amalgamation of four of the city's clubs.

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate John on his recent promotion to the position of Regional Director of Atlantic Canada. John will be using his experience to manage an organization which assists in the lives of thousands of youths daily throughout Nova Scotia. I know his absence every day in the clubs will be keenly felt but he has built a tremendous team of staff and volunteers who will continue to care for the children and community just as well as he did.

Please join me in wishing John all the best in his new journey presented to him. I look forward to the continued support he will provide to my community of Dartmouth North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**BILL NO. 75: LAW AMENDMENTS COMM. - SHUTDOWN**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, this government does not respect the democratic process. Nova Scotians have the fundamental right to present to members of the Law Amendments Committee on bills before the House.

We saw the importance of this committee with the government's recent accessibility legislation failure and how crucial it was to hear from the people the bill impacted. We need to allow each and every person the opportunity to present to the

members their thoughts on these bills After all, representing the views of the people we represent is a foundation of our democracy. To do that we have to listen to them.

In the last week Nova Scotians have witnessed a shameful display of the Liberals misusing the Rules of the House and muzzling the voices of teachers by shutting down the Law Amendments Committee. It is a sad day for democracy in Nova Scotia. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**BILL NO. 75 - LAW AMENDMENTS COMM.: HOURS - EXTENSION**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, last night in the Law Amendments Committee I put forward a motion demanding that the committee's sitting hours be extended to ensure that every Nova Scotian who wants to speak about Bill No. 75 - the Blizzard Bill, the Slap in the Face Bill - is heard.

As you all know, the weather this morning was treacherous, much of the province was pounded with snow again last night. The roads this morning were greasy, sidewalks were not cleaned-up, and curbs had been turned into snowbanks again. Many people who wanted to attend the Law Amendments Committee were unable to get out of their homes.

My Liberal colleagues knew that the right thing to do was to extend hours. I watched across the room as three Cabinet Ministers and one backbencher nodded along and called for a recess to talk it over, but when the committee came back, the member for Cape Breton Centre had been substituted out and the motion was defeated.

Mr. Speaker, it's one thing to nod along to logic and reason, it's another to vote against them. Let it be known that once again that Liberals put politics over the safety of legislative staff, journalists, and members of the public - a shameful display of partisanship.

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

**COX-JARDINE, TAMI: LAW AMENDMENTS COMM.  
- PRESENTATION DENIED**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, too many people were denied the ability to present at Law Amendments Committee today. Not only were poor driving conditions a factor for many people, but others simply did not receive a time to present, despite registering with Legislative Counsel.

Tami Cox-Jardine is one of the many Nova Scotians denied an opportunity to speak their mind. She contacted the government on Monday to put her name on the list to present.

She followed up twice more this week and received no word on whether she could present. Given the importance of this issue and her incredibly valuable insight on the impact of this legislation, she made the drive and stayed in a hotel. She attended the committee all day, hoping she would get an opportunity to speak. Mr. Speaker, she did not.

Mr. Speaker, we had an impromptu meeting afterwards and some of the members of the Legislature sat and listened to Ms. Jardine who had some valuable insight. This is a story that we've heard from far too many people today - the government's choice to go forward in poor weather conditions and restrict the number of presenters flies in the face of the very purpose of the Law Amendments Committee and offends a fundamental part of our democracy.

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

#### **LAW AMENDMENTS COMM.: PARTICIPATION - CLARIFICATION**

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians deserve clarity around their participation in Law Amendments Committee. I have a constituent who called the Legislature on Monday to sign up for speaking time. Four days have passed and they heard nothing.

I asked the chairman for information about where things stand, about how many individuals have been contacted back and about where the cut-off point is, if one existed at all. There are no rules to structure this - no first-come, first-serve policy.

Today we learned there are not enough resources devoted towards dealing with these calls when a piece of legislation captures the public's attention. This, on top of the fact that this government wants to undemocratically speed through our legislative process, means that the voices of many will not be heard.

We need to remember that these individuals are our constituents, electors, and neighbours. We need to give them the time and the flexibility to give input when we ask for it. This is what you call democracy.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

#### **HOUSE OF AUTO DETAILS - HFX. C OF C AWARD**

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize a Bedford business that recently took home an honour from the Halifax Chamber of Commerce Business Awards. On January 26, 2017, the chamber celebrated the successes in our thriving business community. The House of Auto Details took home silver in the Small Business Category.

I've used the services of this business. The owners are professional and thorough and they say "we love when we make our clients so happy that it looks like they are going to cry." Owners Natalie Frederick-Wilson and her husband David are both graduates of the Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development, and they involve their young children in their company. They provide a terrific service and I'd like to congratulate them on this recognition. I wish them well in their business.

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

### **EECD - TEACHERS: WORK-TO-RULE - CONTINUATION**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the imposed teachers' contract bill, one supposedly important enough to convene an emergency sitting of the Legislature in a raging blizzard must be truly transformational, right? Everything will go back to the way it was in school, right? No way, it will get better, right? Well actually no, not even close.

Everything that teachers did voluntarily, things that were cut out during work-to-rule will still be voluntary. Not much will actually be different from work-to-rule after this. One main difference, teachers are now angry. Classroom changes and letters and committees, they expect teachers and parents to simply take the government's word. This Liberal Government has actually made things worse for our kids.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

### **NSTU DISPUTE: ALTERNATE PATH - CONSIDER**

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I said the other day that the government not getting its way does not constitute an emergency. While the situations in classrooms do need urgent attention and infusion of resources, we are operating in haste with no just cause when it comes to settling the dispute with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. In fact, work-to-rule has for the most part served the students of Nova Scotia at least as well, if not better, than the long, broken system operating as normal.

So, given that, I am imploring the members opposite to consider an alternate path forward - pause, take a time out and then, given that Nova Scotia is a leader in restorative processes, a facilitator agreed upon by both parties should be contracted to repair the relationship and restore the trust between the Government of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

**FERGUSON, NEIL - TRUE ROTARIAN AWARD**

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Neil Ferguson, a resident of Clayton Park West and known to us as the Chief Clerk of the House here at the Nova Scotia Legislature, on recently being awarded a True Rotarian Award. Mr. Ferguson is a member of the Rotary Club of Halifax Northwest which has undertaken numerous charitable projects in Halifax and around the world as well as focusing on fellowship activities and community and youth outreach.

Neil Ferguson was awarded the True Rotarian Award by his club for his work in one such outreach project, the Rotary Youth Exchange. With the help of dedicated Rotarians, such as Mr. Ferguson, young people are given the opportunity to spend a school year in a different part of the world learning new languages and cultures and becoming global citizens.

Please join me in congratulating Chief Clerk Neil Ferguson on this well-deserved award and thanking him and the Rotary Club of Halifax Northwest for their good works. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Congratulations, Mr. Clerk.

The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**BILL NO. 75: LAW AMENDMENTS COMM. - LIBERAL TACTICS**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, tonight, in the Red Room, we witnessed the best and worst of democracy. Liberal MLAs thought their heavy-handed tactics would silence the voice of teachers who wanted to present at the Standing Committee on Law Amendments. They were wrong; the teachers would not be silenced. When the Liberals walked out, the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg took the chair and Tami Cox-Jardine began her presentation.

We sit here to represent the views of our constituents. It's an honour and it's a privilege we should never take for granted. I will admit that I have been disappointed in the last few days by the tactics employed by the Liberal Government. To see teachers seize their democratic right to speak even when this government tried to take it away from them reminded me why I do this job.

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

**BILL NO. 75: POLITICAL STORM - APPROACHING**

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, as a Canadian, as a Nova Scotian, and as a former fisherman, I know we love to talk about the weather. However, yesterday,



during my speech on Bill No. 75, I began talking about the most common ways to start a conversation. Yet, I was told several times that I may be close to crossing the line and using unparliamentary language by speaking about the weather in this House. Would I not be allowed to talk about sunny ways in this House? I checked the forecast for the next week, and it seems that there's a political storm on the horizon. The weather affects our lives on a daily basis. The political storm is brewing over Bill No. 75 and will surely have an effect on the provincial Liberal Party.

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

### **EECD - EDUC. ACTION PLAN IMPROVEMENTS**

MS. PAM EYKING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to our government's education action plan improvements. Our government has been taking real action to improve classroom conditions and give students the tools they need to succeed. Our efforts to modernize the province's education system include a streamlined Primary to Grade 6 curriculum with a greater emphasis on math literacy, the early introduction of coding to help today's students become more career ready, a greater focus on financial literacy, homework standards, and more support for young children. Strategies in math, literacy, and coding will provide a framework for a lifetime of learning.

As part of building a modern education system, there is also a greater emphasis on helping students to be career ready. The new strategies will involve a series of targeted initiatives to help students succeed. The following initiatives were introduced in 2016: a new career education framework that will include all students from Grades 4 to 12; a Business Education Council; workplace training for graduating students; more class caps to reduce class sizes; more Reading Recovery support; and new policies for . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for the member's statement has expired.

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

### **N.S. TEACHERS: PROTESTS - REASONS**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: As I reflect on the members of this House, I know that teachers have had quite an influence on all of us. Now as we prepare for the first province-wide strike of teachers, I've asked myself, how did it come to this? In this place the Speaker presides and very often reels us back to be sure our words and our actions are going to be respectful of each other.

Nova Scotia teachers are taking to the streets and it is cold out there. They know this government will pass this bill regardless, but they want to send a message because they do feel devalued. I personally am disappointed that we do not have a bright future ahead

because the teachers need to be at their very best in order for our children to be at their very best.

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

**BILL NO. 75: LIBERAL MEMBERS - SUPPORT WITHHOLD**

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, sometimes it is not about the mistake, it's about the recovery. The decision to impose a contract on teachers was a mistake back in December, it is still a mistake today.

Mr. Speaker, back in December there were members of the Liberal caucus who knew that this was not the right course of action. There are likely members across the aisle who are still feeling uneasy about supporting this bill. It's not too late - it was not too late to pull it back in December, just like it is not too late now, when this government has tried to make changes in the Pharmacare that would have increased premiums by thousands of dollars and they pulled it back.

I ask the members of the Liberal caucus to think hard about the choice that lies ahead. You do not have to support this bill and, if you do, you will find that . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member not to refer to other members directly but to refer your comments through the Chair.

The honourable member for Kings West.

**BAGNELL, HUGHIE: BELL LET'S TALK DAY RUN - THANK**

HON. LEO GLAVINE: On January 25<sup>th</sup>, citizens across the country participated in Bell's Let's Talk Day, a national mental health initiative that aims to end the stigma around mental illness, foster communication, and drive action in the arena of Canadian mental health supports.

To mark this day, citizens of Kings West organized and participated in a five-kilometre run as one team for mental health. Although the weather was damp that evening, the event had a great turnout with many enthusiastic participants.

After some words were shared, the run commenced, along with my granddaughters, my constituents and even my staff members, we completed a run and spent some time recovering and conversing with each other at the Green Elephant Café in Kingston.

In closing I would like to thank for the opportunity to give a very special thank-you to Mr. Hughie Bagnell, who was the chief organizer of this event. Your enthusiasm and passion for mental health initiatives was an inspiration to everyone. Also, I would like to

express my gratitude to the staff and management of the Green Elephant Café in Kingston for your generosity, hospitality and your support after the run. Your establishment is a wonderful and welcoming place to come together and communicate on this special day.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

### **LAW AMENDMENTS COMM. - CLOSURE**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Nobody is listening. It's a common thing that people say about the government - what difference does it make, nobody is listening. Anyone who sat in the Law Amendments Committee today and listened to the emotional stories would absolutely be able to sympathize with those people who say that nobody is listening. We had the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board sitting on the committee, challenging witnesses, trying to make political points that his government has made things better in education. He wasn't listening to the stories from the teachers.

We had a Liberal member just stand up and talk for a minute about all the wonderful things they've done in education. She wasn't listening to those stories on people, the people of the Law Amendments Committee today. Now we had a government, as we closed Law Amendments Committee today it's quite customary when the committee closes for members to vote.

As a member of this House in Opposition, I know my vote is often defeated by this majority but I like to cast it. Tonight they didn't even let me cast my vote. They closed the committee and assumed that they would have their way. No wonder people say nobody is listening, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

### **BILL NO. 75: LAW AMENDMENTS COMM. - PRESENTERS THANK**

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the teachers, principals, and parents who have shared stories of students ill-served by a broken system and how they, with their time and their education and their love, have tried and sometimes failed to fill the gaps. I thought I had learned a lot about education in conversations with teachers over the past several months. I learned a heck of a lot more today.

I welcomed their honesty, I value their wisdom and experience, and I welcome the opportunity to work with them and provide our children the education they deserve.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

**AFRICAN HERITAGE MO. (02/17) - LAUNCH**

HON. RANDY DELOREY: On January 30<sup>th</sup>, I was proud to participate in the launch of African Heritage Month in Antigonish. The theme of this year's month-long celebration is Passing the Torch: African Nova Scotians and the Next 150 Years, which I think is very fitting, given the multi-generational aspect of the event.

To see elementary students, seniors, and every age in between come together to celebrate and reflect on African Nova Scotian history, culture, and contributions to society was truly heartening. A particular high point for me, Mr. Speaker, was hearing Abena Amoako-Green's poem, Blazing Hope, a homage to the contributions of the writers, thinkers and others who have inspired her over the years.

I would also like to note the hard work of Michael Fisher and Lorraine Reddick in organizing the event. Michael and Lorraine in both their professional and personal lives have done tremendous work to support and strengthen the African Nova Scotian community in Antigonish. This launch was just one small example of some of the important work they do.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating the organizers and attendees of the Antigonish launch of African Heritage Month on a successful and enlightening event.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**BILL NO. 75: LAW AMENDMENTS COMM. - SHUTDOWN**

MR. JOHN LOHR: One of the things that makes me proud to be an MLA in the Nova Scotia Legislature is the Law Amendments Committee, where any Nova Scotian who wants to can come and have a say on any bill before the Legislature - but not today, Mr. Speaker. We saw the Liberal Government shut down the Law Amendments Committee. Democracy was tarnished in this House of free speech and the birthplace of responsible government.

More than 300 Nova Scotians wanted to come and have a say about Bill No. 75, but the Liberal Government, plus a winter storm, prevented that. The Liberal Government made sure that they would not have that opportunity tomorrow.

Not listening has become a hallmark of this government and that's a shame, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

**DISCOVERY CTR. - REOPENING**

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: I rise today to congratulate the Discovery Centre on the recent reopening in its beautiful new location on the Halifax waterfront, which I was fortunate enough to visit last week. Growing up, it was a dream of my father to see a science centre established here in the Maritimes. I spent many summers visiting science centres across Canada, and I'll admit that at the time I did not hold the same appreciation for them as my father.

Now, as a father with two daughters, I am so grateful that we have such an amazing resource right here in Halifax. The Discovery Centre is passionate about its mission to bring STEAM - which is science, technology, engineering, arts, and math - to life through fun, interactive learning experiences. New features and exhibits are testaments to this.

From its beginning as a travelling science show - which my dad would lead from Scotia Square to Barrington with me in tow - to the spectacular new home on the Halifax waterfront, the Discovery Centre has grown significantly over the last 30 years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask everybody to thank and congratulate my father for sharing his dream and making his dream a reality in Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**TEACHERS STRIKE (02/17/17) - RESPONSIBILITY**

HON. PAT DUNN: Tomorrow, Friday, Nova Scotians will be experiencing their first teachers strike.

There were many opportunities for the Liberal Government to settle the impasse. In fact, there were a number of improvements that would not cost any dollars that would have been welcomed by the membership of the NSTU.

The bill that government is determined to push through the House will definitely break any trust between the teachers and the government. In other words, Mr. Speaker, the total responsibility for tomorrow's strike lies on the shoulders of this Liberal Government.

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

**BILL NO. 75: LAW AMENDMENTS COMM. - EXCLUSIONS**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, our responsibility as MLAs is to represent the people who we are so lucky to represent. The Standing Committee on Law Amendments is an important place to hear the views of Nova Scotians.

Trudy Bunker wanted to share her views about Bill No. 75 at the Law Amendments Committee. She followed all the rules, but she was denied the right to speak her mind. Sadly, Trudy was just one of the 300 Nova Scotians who this Liberal Government didn't care enough about to take the time to listen to.

Mr. Speaker, this government owes those 300 people an apology. This government has failed those people.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

**MACDONALD, SANDRA - SUCCESSES CONGRATS.**

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, tonight I would like to recognize Sandra MacDonald of Rines Creek. She is a prolific artist and entrepreneur.

She enjoys painting with oil, acrylic and watercolour and paints and teaches at her home studio, as well as travels and teaches. She enjoys photography and often refers to her photos for her painting.

Sandra's work has won the Annapolis Highland Vineyard wine label (2011) and numerous other awards. Her paintings are held in private and public and corporate collections all around the world, including the Office of Tourism in Kumamoto, Japan. She has worked at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia in their ArtsSmarts Nova Scotia program, is currently a Director of Art 1274 Hollis Gallery, past Chair of the Hants County Arts Council and East Hants Fine Art and past manager of the Winding River Art Gallery.

I would like all members of this House to join me in congratulating Sandra on her successes and wish her well in future endeavours.

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

**CHASE, JAYLENE: LAW AMENDMENTS COMM. - EXCLUSION**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening on behalf of Jaylene Chase because the McNeil Government didn't give her the opportunity to speak on Bill No. 75. Jaylene is a mother and a teacher who teaches Grade 4/5 language arts and Reading Recovery. She signed up on Tuesday to speak at Law Amendments Committee but was told she would receive a call back with the time.

On Wednesday, when she had not heard back from the committee, she called to confirm that she was indeed on the list. She was told that they were continuing down the list and they would let her know. Jaylene travelled from Bridgewater to speak to Bill No. 75. Jaylene is frustrated and upset with the McNeil Government and how unfair they are being to the people of Nova Scotia. The Liberal Government should be ashamed.

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

### **PROTESTERS: DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS - EXERCISING**

MS. LENORE ZANN: The heavy-handed actions of this government demonstrate the importance of the democratic process. This government would like nothing more than to pass this misguided bill as quickly as possible with as little opposition as possible and hopefully no witnesses. However, Mr. Speaker, there are rules to be followed. Opposition MLAs are doing their best to voice their concerns at length and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Speaker, hundreds of members from the public signed up to appear before the Law Amendments Committee and some of them were even lucky enough to present. But teachers, parents, and students are organizing peacefully, albeit quite loud sometimes. They are protesting the actions of this government and to do so is their democratic right, thankfully so.

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

### **RCL BR. 81 (GUYSBOROUGH) - SUCCESS CONGRATS.**

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring the attention of the House to the hard work and accomplishment of the members and executive of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 81 at Guysborough. These dedicated and brave souls are determined to keep their tradition alive and the good works of their important community activities intact.

Through continuous hard work they have recently completed a major upgrade to the facility. The communities rely on this facility for their weddings, community gatherings, fairs, bingo and the ubiquitous Chase the Ace.

Their most important task is to preserve and honour the memory of our veterans, past and present, whose sacrifices gave us this wonderful province and country we are so privileged to enjoy today. I want to thank the members of Branch 81 and all the other branches of the Nova Scotia Legions for their continued success.

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

### **WORK-TO-RULE - NEW NORMAL**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has failed - and in the Premier's own words, three separate times and two different executives - to reach an agreement with teachers. In a unilateral attempt to re-establish what we call normal life,

the Premier has succeeded in mobilizing teachers, parents, friends, families and others who have been on the ugly end of this Premier's cuts and tactics.

In the dead of winter, they are marching in the streets outside Province House. Their numbers are growing by the day. For the first time in our history, Mr. Speaker, this Premier has caused a province-wide strike by teachers. He will attempt to blame everyone else but himself.

Mr. Speaker, because every Liberal MLA voted for Bill No. 75, what used to be called work-to-rule is now the new normal.

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

### **TEACHERS: STRIKE - HISTORIC FIRST**

HON. DAVID WILSON: Since 1895, under 21 governments, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union has been able to negotiate a contract with government, Mr. Speaker. In about an hour and a half, after 122 years, we will see the first teachers' strike in Nova Scotia. I wonder if the Liberal MLAs across the way will be proud to break that streak.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

### **MORRIS-POULTNEY, D'ARCY: CECILIA CONCERTS - SUCCESS CONGRATS.**

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the hard work and passion of Armdale resident D'Arcy Morris-Poultney. D'Arcy, a proud father of two, serves as executive director of Cecilia Concerts, a Halifax-based organization dedicated to bringing beautiful classical music to the people of the HRM.

Each year, Cecilia Concerts puts together a full program of local, national, and international artists who delight and amaze with their performances. For more than 25 years now, their mission has been to make classical music accessible to people in our communities. Through their community outreach program, Cecilia Concerts provides free tickets to local children, youth, and music students, allowing them to get a taste of the thrill of live performance. Since becoming executive director, D'Arcy has reinvigorated the organization, greatly expanding its presence.

I ask all members to join me in thanking D'Arcy for helping to foster a love and appreciation of music in audience members young and old. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Portland Valley.



**CROSBY, SIDNEY - SUCCESS CONGRATS.**

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the significant achievement reached by a well-known Cole Harbour resident and native, Sidney Crosby. Sidney joins hockey's elite after earning his 1,000<sup>th</sup> point. Sidney is the 11<sup>th</sup> youngest to reach this plateau. He did this while missing 201 games due to injuries and lockouts. This is early in his career.

I ask the House to join me in recognizing and congratulating Mr. Crosby on his success and continued success. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**CLASSROOMS - NORMAL STATUS**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has stated that he wants classrooms to return to normal. "Normal" equals textbooks from the 1990s. "Normal" equals parent volunteers fundraising to provide necessary items that should be provided by the system. "Normal" equals trying to teach coding with no training, using outdated technology with unreliable wi-fi. "Normal" equals teachers, students, and support staff being verbally abused repeatedly with no consequences to the offender. "Normal" equals evacuating the entire class to an alternate location because a student is throwing chairs. "Normal" equals teachers and support staff being hit, punched, spat upon, and bitten.

The Premier wants Nova Scotia classrooms to return to normal. "Normal" equals habitually abusive students being allowed to remain in class to continue their verbal and physical assault on staff and classmates.

The Premier wants Nova Scotia classrooms to return to normal. Really?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**BENTON, CATHY - JUDICIAL APPT.**

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, Cathy Benton has worked tirelessly for the past 22 years as a Nova Scotia Legal Aid Commission lawyer. Ms. Benton has effectively managed the Bridgewater office for the last several years and is highly regarded in the legal profession and the community and among those she has helped directly. Last year, Ms. Benton received the Queen's Counsel designation in recognition of her outstanding service in the legal profession. It was also recently announced that Ms. Benton has made history by being appointed Nova Scotia's first female Mi'kmaq judge.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the loss that we are all sure to feel as she will no longer be part of the Lunenburg-Queens Nova Scotia Legal Aid Commission

team. I would like to congratulate Judge Cathy Benton on her appointment and wish her all the best in her judicial career. Thank you.

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

### **EDUC. - NO-FAIL POLICY**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, there seems to be an unwritten rule out there that students cannot fail. I feel they're being set up to fail now. Students are going from one grade to another, and they can't do the work in the previous grade. Many young people leave school without learning accountability or responsibility for their own achievements or their behaviours.

This is not what they will face when they go out to university or work, and then they will find themselves completely unprepared. We need our children prepared to take over from us.

MR. SPEAKER: 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 STRIKE: PREM. - RESPONSIBILITY ACCEPT**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is to the Premier. The Premier called for this emergency session when, in fact, there was no emergency. Teachers were teaching, and students were learning in the classrooms across the province. What he really wanted was an excuse to legislate the teachers' contract, but what he got from his tactics is the first general strike in our schools in this province's history. His tactics backfired badly, and parents and students are about to pay the price for his actions tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier take this opportunity to take responsibility for the strike that's going to happen in our schools tomorrow?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): It is indeed regrettable that students will not be in class tomorrow. It's my hope that the honourable member and his colleagues will join us and move this bill through quickly, so that we can ensure that kids get back in classrooms as soon as possible.

MR. BAILLIE: No, we won't, Mr. Speaker, because it's the Premier's actions that have led to that strike tomorrow by bringing in this bill in the first place. This is not the first time that he has caused a closure in our schools.

Mr. Speaker, he chose to lock the students out of our schools last December, again employing these tactics and putting his agenda ahead of the families and students of this province. That was a decision of this Premier. Nova Scotians saw through it. Will he now take responsibility for closing our schools last December as well?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I've said many time in this House and across the province that I had eight superintendents provide those letters and tell us on the phone on Monday that they did not feel that schools would be safe. We reached out to the union leadership. They would not assure us. I think any reasonable Nova Scotian would expect me to act to make sure kids were safe.

If I hadn't, and the honourable member heard about me having those letters, he would have accused me of not doing my job, quite frankly.

We went to the union, and the following Monday, the union said that they would make sure the kids were safe. Mr. Speaker, we then left the bill. We've now gone through a period of time at the table looking for a negotiated settlement. We had three tentative agreements with two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. Work-to-rule was beginning to impact students, and we're here today.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is right that I believe he is not doing his job. His job is to bring reasonable contract negotiations to a conclusion without resorting to unconstitutional legislation or provoking a strike in our schools. He is the first Premier in the province's history who has failed to do those things. It is correct that he is not doing his job. That's why we're here in this emergency session.

The Premier's tactics led to a closure of schools on December 5<sup>th</sup>. His tactics backfired badly in this session, leading to a closure of our schools tomorrow. Will the Premier at least apologize to the parents and students who are being put out tomorrow because his tactics have backfired so badly?

THE PREMIER: The honourable member was on with Steve Murphy tonight saying that, in fact, he agreed with the wage pattern - more or less I think is how he described it. Which is it: more or less? Does he actually agree with the position we put forward?

He looks for an opportunity to stand in the House and grandstand whenever he gets up . . .

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

THE PREMIER: The honourable member was on TV tonight saying that he agreed more or less with the wage pattern. Which is it: more or less? I think he owes that to the teachers whom he has been out saying one thing to and then turning around and saying something else when they're not listening.

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

**PREM.: STATE OF PROV. ADDRESS - DIRECTION**

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier also. Listening to the Premier's State of the Province Address, I could hardly believe my ears to be where we are today and hear the Premier of this province say, "But no one can deny the fact that this province is moving in the right direction."

Mr. Speaker, what does the Premier say to the thousands of teachers, students, and parents who think the Premier is clearly headed in the wrong direction with this imposed contract?

THE PREMIER: What I would say to teachers is that we heard them. On three different occasions, we had tentative agreements with the union that represented them, with two different executives. Each time, they obviously have not felt that their voice has been at the table.

What we provided in this piece of legislation is direct access for teachers to come and tell our government what it is that they want to see changed inside of their classrooms across the province. We're prepared to work with them and deliver on that change.

MR. BELLIVEAU: In the State of the Province Address, the Premier said that no matter what people may scream from the street, there is no denying that we are moving in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, people are screaming in the street because they feel disrespected by this government; they are in the street because this government would not let them speak at the Law Amendments Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask the Premier to truly listen to what is being said and withdraw this bill.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I've heard from Nova Scotians across the province. They are proud of the fact that we had more people choose Nova Scotia as home. Last year - the first time since the Second World War - we had over 5,000 people choose this province.

We've seen start-up companies, Mr. Speaker. We have seen 40 companies start. At Volta, over 200 Nova Scotians working in those companies; 80 per cent of those companies are still growing in this province. We're seeing them move in a positive direction.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, is they've seen this government invest in public education every year after that government cut money from public education.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, this spin is not working. While the Premier may not want to withdraw this bill, I have the feeling that there are a few backbenchers who would, backbenchers who are growing tired of taking heat to support the Premier's agenda.

Mr. Speaker, these backbenchers have heard from the nurses, they've heard from health care workers, film workers - and now we can add teachers to the list. So, I ask the Premier, will he let the members of his caucus vote their own free will on this misguided piece of legislation?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation will end work-to-rule and it will put kids back in classrooms. I hope every member of this House will support that bill.

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

#### **PREM. - STUDENT SAFETY: COMMENTS - APOLOGIZE**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Last December the Premier caused a province-wide panic when he told parents that their children were not safe in schools. That was an insult to the teachers of the province who, of course, keep students safe and are required by law to do so - and they do that every day, Mr. Speaker. He used the teachers as an excuse to do what he really wanted to, or tried to, which is to impose a contract on teachers, but people saw through it.

Will the Premier now apologize to teachers for even suggesting that children were not safe in our schools?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member for the question. If he actually paid attention to the answer, it was eight superintendents across this province who have said that and presented it to our government.

We had to respond. We reached out to the Teachers Union to clarify that. They chose not to, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BAILLIE: Even now, the Premier is quite comfortable to imply to the parents of the province that teachers were not keeping students safe. That's simply not the case, Mr. Speaker. No teacher would leave a student unsafe.

Nobody buys this story about the superintendents because that whole excuse went away within hours when this House was called back last December 5<sup>th</sup>, a flip-flop the Premier has never properly explained.

What does the Premier have to say to students and their families now who are once again scrambling to find daycare because of these tactics that the Premier is employing with our schools?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member. He would know that those letters are public from superintendents. They were not my words; they were superintendents' words who raised the issue with us.

Again, I want to say to the honourable member that we reached out to the Teachers Union to clarify, to make sure that we would ensure on Monday. When we did not get that assurance, we came to this House following being here under a number of conversations with their lawyer early in the morning, another conversation with the executive director of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. They reassured us and kids were back in school.

I hope the honourable member will do the right thing and support this piece of legislation so we can get kids back in school.

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

#### **BILL NO. 75: LAW AMENDMENTS COMM. - SHUTDOWN DIRECTIVE**

HON. DENISE PETERSON-RAFUSE: Mr. Speaker, during the Law Amendments Committee our caucus put forward a motion to allow the committee to continue to sit until everyone who wanted to speak had an opportunity to do so. This motion was voted down by government members.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Premier is, who in his government gave the directive to shut down the Law Amendments Committee and stifle public debate on this misguided bill?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As she would know, yesterday there was an opportunity to create two committees that could operate in parallel at the same time, to allow more people to be heard, Mr. Speaker.

Her Party voted against that. We heard from teachers today, and this bill is being reported back so that we can go to Committee of the Whole House tonight.

It's my hope that all members will support this, to allow this bill to go through so that we can ensure the kids will be in class on Tuesday.

MS. PETERSON-RAFUSE: I believe that the people and the teachers know that was just a red herring to push this bill through as quickly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, members of our caucus have asked, but have been unable to get an answer from the Premier, about whether his caucus will be able to vote their conscience on this bill. In a recent interview the Premier said he didn't tell anyone how to vote. Can the Premier clarify if he isn't telling people how to vote, is anyone else telling government members how to vote, or will they be able to vote their conscience?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As I said earlier, I've had three tentative agreements with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, two different executives that we negotiated those with. Work-to-rule began to start in December. We were at the bargaining table; it was clearly rejected by the membership. The president of the Teachers Union said they'd be going back to work-to-rule to continue to enforce that. We had to make a decision - this was impacting students.

The bill is before the House and it's my hope, Mr. Speaker, that all members of this House will vote for the bill.

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

**PREM. - TEACHERS/HEALTH CARE WORKERS: RESPECT**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, before he was elected the Premier was a big defender of bargaining; in fact, he scolded the previous NDP Government for legislating a settlement for health care workers. He said at that time: "It has been my experience that every health care provider has entered into that service because they want to provide service to people of this province. They want to be part of the solution. They deserve the respect of bargaining."

Mr. Speaker, why doesn't the Premier believe teachers deserve the same respect as health care workers? I'll table that quote.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I believe teachers and all members of collective bargaining across this province deserve the respect of government and the opportunity to have free and open collective bargaining.

We were at the table, I want to remind the honourable member, of two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, we had three different tentative agreements that were negotiated at the table and every time I moved away we continued to move, made more concessions at the bargaining table, Mr. Speaker. But now this is impacting classrooms across the province and I hope the honourable member will support this piece of legislation so that kids can get back in school.

MR. BAILLIE: Well once again, no, I won't support this legislation, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the Premier at that time, back in 2013, actually talked about how hard it is to do collective bargaining. He didn't use that as an excuse then to excuse the government of the day for turning to legislation like he is now but he did say: "I can only imagine how difficult it is on both sides to sit down and basically negotiate and hammer out terms in an agreement of a path forward in this province."

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier admit now that legislating this contract for teachers is an admission of failure on his part in the hard work of collective bargaining?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the honourable member; these are difficult times at the bargaining table. I want to again remind him that we negotiated three different tentative agreements with two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. It has been challenging. Teachers obviously have felt their voices were not heard at the bargaining table, they were not being represented at that table by either side, quite frankly.

What we have before us is a piece of legislation that will ensure that we hear directly from teachers when it comes to making those improvements in classrooms across the province.

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

### **TEACHERS CONTRACT: LEGISLATED CONTRACT - REASONS ADMIT**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier admits that collective bargaining is hard and yes, it is, but it's still important. He is now the first Premier in Nova Scotia's history to resort to a legislated contract for the province's teachers.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier finally now admit that we're only here because he couldn't get done what every other Premier in the history of Nova Scotia has gotten done, which is to work out his differences with teachers without resorting to legislation?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Again, I want to remind him that we had three tentative agreements with two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. (Laughter)

I'm not sure that they heard me, Mr. Speaker. We had three tentative agreements with two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. Each time teachers responded. They've obviously felt that their voice was not at that table. They have been, quite frankly, upset at both sides at the table. What we have before us is a piece of legislation that will allow teachers to have direct input on the changes that will come in their classrooms. I hope the honourable members will support this piece of legislation so that classroom teachers can be heard.



MR. BAILLIE: Once again, no we won't, Mr. Speaker, for many reasons, including that because the Premier failed where every other Premier in our history succeeded, he is now condemning Nova Scotia taxpayers to a decade of legal challenges and millions of dollars of legal expenses. That's going to be the legacy of this Premier's failure to conclude an agreement. He may have had three tentatives but he had zero actual and that's the problem.

I'd like to ask the Premier, why has he given up on bargaining, as hard as it is, and condemned us to millions of dollars of fees which could have been put in the classrooms in the first place?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I don't necessarily agree with the honourable member's assertion there. The issue about the court challenge, that will be a decision by the union. Their own lawyer will tell him it is going to be difficult. There was an open bargaining process that we've allowed to go through this. We had three different tentative agreements with two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. That is bargaining at the bargaining table.

We've also heard from teachers across the province that have also felt that their voice was not heard at that table, not represented by either side. That's why this bill provides them with an opportunity to come and speak directly to governments.

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

### **EECD - TEACHERS: INITIATIVES - OVERLOADING**

MS. LENORE ZANN: During Law Amendments Committee we heard from a teacher who said she found out about a new piece of the curriculum coding on the same day it was announced to the public. As we heard from teacher Peter Day, there is some good in many of the initiatives that are introduced but it is like when you go to a buffet and you overfill your plate, it won't all fit and there's no room for dessert.

If the minister is going to keep giving teachers more initiatives, they cannot keep everything on their plate, so what does she expect teachers to give up?

HON. KAREN CASEY: We recognize there are many tasks that teachers are asked to do. When we wanted to talk to teachers about how we can streamline the curriculum to make it more manageable they came into the department, they worked with us, and it was the teachers who decided how that curriculum would be streamlined.

We did that for Primary to Grade 3, we did it for Grades 4 to 6. We value the input that classroom teachers can give us and we'll continue to work with classroom teachers to make sure they have a manageable task in front of them.

MS. ZANN: I'm glad to hear that she cares about classroom teachers and she'll listen to them, but there's about 1,000 of them outside right now and there's going to be more here tomorrow so she doesn't seem to be listening very well.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say this is typical of the government's approach to education. They keep shoving things down teachers' throats, they've refused to listen to the people who are working in the classroom every day, and they are obsessed with pushing forward their own agenda.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain how forcing this contract on teachers will actually help them deliver the many initiatives in their classrooms?

MS. CASEY: The first meeting I had with the provincial executive of the NSTU, back in the Fall of 2013, there were some issues that teachers raised at that point and I asked them what could make your work better, what could make the classroom better? There were three things they told me: the size of the class, a more manageable curriculum, and data collection. We're responding to all of those, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

#### **EECD: FREEMAN REPT. - COMMENTS**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: One of the reasons that parents, teachers, and students say that we don't need more committees is because the government has already had committees report to it. In fact, Myra Freeman told the government in 2014 that "... the flood of emails, reports and written comments reviewed by the panel form a compelling case that all government departments with a mandate for children must act quickly."

The report also said, "We need to ensure that teachers have the ability to focus on instruction by redirecting all available resources to support other essential programs and services." So what happened?

HON. KAREN CASEY: When we did the comprehensive review of public education, the first time in 25 years that that had been done, there were many things that teachers, parents, and other members of the community told us that we were doing well, but there were a lot of things that they told us that we needed to change, so we began that process.

It's important to note that one of the most important things that was brought to our attention was the need for more time on math and literacy, two fundamental skills that our students need and we've directed a lot of our resources - human resources and financial resources - to math and literacy so that our kids will have a good foundation.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Speaker, between that report and the minister's Working Committee on Absenteeism and Classroom Climate, both done within the past couple of years, almost every issue listed for these proposed committees is covered with recommendations that say they should be done urgently. Yet, here we are two years later.

Freeman said teacher workloads are too high, the paperwork and non- classroom-related expectations take time away from working directly with students - exactly what teachers are telling us today. Freeman also found that inclusion was very important but lacked the funding to ensure a continuum of resources to ensure successful implementation. That report was delivered to the minister in 2014. Yet the committee the minister wants is going to address the same issues. So why more committees - why not just implement the same recommendations that teachers are asking for?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm really pleased that the member mentioned inclusion. It certainly is a topic that no other Premier has ever gone to the public about. We have taken the initiative to do that, and we want to hear from all of our publics about how the best way it is for us to respond to the needs of every student in every class in every school.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

#### **HEALTH & WELLNESS: GOV'T. BARGAINING - MIN. STANCE**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness.

In the summer of 2013, the minister was a passionate defender of the collective bargaining process. He scolded the government of the day for thwarting a negotiated settlement. He said, and I'll table it, "The signals have been there for this government to have taken some steps, some processes, which could have prevented us from arriving at the Legislature to deal with an issue that could come to a head at 12:01 a.m. tomorrow . . . They've had two years to work in the best interests of Nova Scotians and have paramedics given the respect, the compensation, the advancement of their profession in a way that should not have had them, you know, out doing information pickets and ultimately a possible strike." Sound familiar?

My question is, does the minister stand by these statements, does he agree that this government didn't bargain in good faith?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Kings North for the question, and I believe very strongly that each situation has very different elements that are at work, and I certainly proposed in that context to deal with that situation.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, back in 2013, the minister had strong words for the failure of the government of the day to avoid crisis. He said, which I just tabled, "I disagree with anyone who says government had no other choice. Government had a choice two years ago to deal with what was a pending crisis in the province. What it really speaks to and I feel, and what NDP people in my riding tell me, it's a further abdication of NDP principles and practices not to have a thoughtful, planned, collective bargaining process unfold in relation to paramedics. It signals to many others that this could now be the way of the future with this type of interference."

My question is, does the minister stand by his comments today and does he truly believe his government respected the collective bargaining process?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I certainly have engaged with a lot of teachers over the last couple months in particular, I've gone into classrooms and certainly understand many of the issues that are at hand here, but in reference to the context that the member proposes, what I can say with certainty is I don't agree with parking-lot negotiations.

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

#### **PREM. - SCHOOLS: HUMAN RESOURCES - LACK ADMIT**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question, through you, is to the Premier.

It was very clear while listening to teachers at Law Amendments Committee that we do not have enough resource teachers, educational assistants, and psychologists. So my question to the Premier is, will the Premier admit that the government has failed our students for not providing the proper human resources?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to tell him we've made investments in public education in every budget that I brought in. I've said this publicly - obviously, we missed the mark in some places. We're hearing from classroom teachers; they are obviously not happy with what has taken place at the bargaining table by either side. We provided in this bill an opportunity for them to speak directly. There will be nine classroom teachers on this committee; they will have ownership of this committee. We want to hear directly from them. I want to continue to make investments in classrooms, and I want to continue to provide those supports that teachers and students need.

MR. MACLEOD: We also heard in Law Amendments Committee that there have been enough committees. It's time for action. Teachers continue to tell us that there were a number of improvements that could have been offered to them that would not cost any government dollars - for example, a discipline policy, an attendance policy, reduction in any new initiatives, or a reduction in data input.

The question to the Premier is, the Premier continues to say he has been listening to teachers, so why hasn't he considered offering them the above examples, which cost your government no money but do good for the student in the classroom?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. He'll remember that when the minister announced that there would be a freeze on provincial assessments, it was not received well by the union. They felt like we were acting without them. What this provides is an opportunity for us to hear directly from classroom teachers across this province.

I want to say to classroom teachers that I want to hear from them. We will make and continue to make an investment in public education, and we will continue to work with them to streamline the things that are being asked of them, because they're absolutely right. We should be having these conversations.

We have a policy about attendance that we're in the final stages of, and because of work-to-rule, we're not having that conversation with teachers. This needs to be over. We need to hear from teachers to continue to implement and make those changes that they want and, quite frankly, that our kids deserve.

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

**LAE: BILL NOS. 100 & 148 - MIN. IMPARTIALITY CONFIRM**

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, over the last year and a half, we've been asking the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education to take action to end the impasse between the government and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union - for that matter, over the last three years on a number of labour issues. Every time, the minister has said that she is impartial and does not comment on labour disputes.

My question for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education is, was she acting impartially when she voted to support Bill No. 100 and Bill No. 148?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. He is right that as the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education I'm obliged to carry out my administrative duties in a neutral manner. For that reason, I don't comment on the actions of either party during a labour negotiation.

What I did do is look back at precedent to see what Labour Ministers have done in the past. In every case, it was clear to us that the minister had voted with the government. Thank you.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, the minister says she's not involved in discussion at Cabinet - she's mentioned that a number of times - but then she turns around and supports government bills stripping workers' rights of collective bargaining.

I would like to ask, will the minister be impartial when the vote for Bill No. 75 happens?

MS. REGAN: As I've indicated to the honourable member, for the last 25 years, 10 pieces of legislation, in every particular case, the Labour Minister has voted with the government. Thank you.

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

**PREM. - VIDEO: GOOD FAITH NEGOTIATIONS - DISPROVABLE**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. It's been clear that the government had no intention of bargaining in good faith with the teachers. In November, the Premier was caught pre-recording a video announcing that he was disappointed that talks with the teachers had broken down. The only problem is that he shot the video before the parties actually left the table.

Will the Premier admit that this amateur video foul-up is proof his government was not negotiating in good faith with the teachers?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, no. One more conspiracy theory by the Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia. The actual fact is that I've been at the bargaining table. We negotiated three different tentative agreements with two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. Each time we were there, we moved on our position; the position that we presented the first time was very different than the one we agreed to at the end.

What has become clear is that the work-to-rule that started in December and has gone on is impacting classrooms across the province. This piece of legislation will allow kids to be back in classrooms. It will allow us to put an agreement in place and will allow us to get an opportunity to hear directly from classroom teachers, who obviously felt that their voices were not at the bargaining table.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the Premier has been, but the kids have been in the classroom. They haven't been doing the extracurricular, but they have been in the classroom. There's no emergency to get them back in the classroom.

The Premier was more than prepared for the worst-case scenario, as his office also admitted they had not made a pre-recorded video in the event that the talks were successful. The Premier himself discussed similar back-to-work legislation, an anti-strike bill, and

criticized the government of the day for taking away collective bargaining rights. I'll table that. My question to the Premier is, why does the Premier continue to push this legislation and continue to negotiate in bad faith?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again, I want to remind the honourable member we had three tentative agreements with two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. We were at the bargaining table and it became very clear that teachers did not feel their voice was being represented by either side at the bargaining table.

What this bill will provide is an opportunity for classroom teachers to have direct input. They will actually have ownership of this committee and they will have direct input on the changes that will impact their classrooms. I look forward to that conversation, and I hope the honourable member will support this bill so we can make sure the kids are in class.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

#### **EECD: MENTAL DISORDERS - SCH. EXPERTISE**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Stats regarding youth mental health across Canada are staggering. Approximately 20 per cent of young people are suffering from some form of mental disorder. This translates to one in five students in the average classroom.

My question to the minister is, does the minister agree that the majority of Nova Scotia schools do not have the expertise required to address this need?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I think all teachers would recognize and I would be a teacher who would also recognize that the social issues that students bring to school, the mental health issues that they bring to school have increased significantly over the years. I would also be the first to say that teachers need support because they are trained to be teachers; they are not trained to be mental health clinicians.

What we've done is gone out to work with the Department of Health and Wellness to ensure that we have mental health clinicians as a resource to teachers so they can help work with students who do have some challenges and do need some extra supports.

MR. DUNN: Mental health of students is often overlooked. School personnel need to learn how to recognize and address adolescent mental health problems. Due to a shortage of properly trained specialists, some teachers are forced to ask a fellow student to take on the task of monitoring and following a student throughout the day. My question to the minister is, is this a practice that should be occurring in our schools?

MS. CASEY: Recognizing that we need expert advice when we're looking at how we provide resources and supports, we've reached out to Dr. Stan Kutcher who has worked with our department very closely. He has prepared some materials that teachers have - Go-To Educator Training, for example - where teachers can go to try to get some background information that will help them address and respond to and perhaps even identify some of the issues that our students are bringing to the classroom.

As I said, teachers are trained to teach, and we want to make sure that we have the professionals that they need whether it's through a youth help centre, whether it's through mental health clinicians, but that they have the expertise, the professionals in those areas to provide support for them because they are the educators. They're not the mental health clinicians.

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

### **EECD - TEACHERS: IMPASSE - APOLOGIZE**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, many teachers are watching these proceedings very carefully tonight, and a constituent of mine just sent me a message actually requesting that I ask the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development why initiatives are rolled out so quickly, underdeveloped, un-resourced, and under-supported, with no training provided.

In 2013, the Nova Scotia Liberal platform said, "Education isn't a line item in a budget, it's our future." I have to agree, but this government seems to know the price of everything and the value of nothing. Since our Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is also the Chair of the Treasury Board, I'd say the buck stops with her.

Teachers are staging a province-wide strike right now because of the mismanagement by the government and its minister . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

MS. ZANN: . . . so my question for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is, will she take responsibility for this impasse and apologize to the 9,300 Nova Scotian teachers that she has disrespected?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, what I would like to say to all members and to all teachers is that every budget since we were elected in 2013 has shown an increase in our funding to school boards. That money is used to support students and teachers in the classroom and initially, we had to try to repair the damage done when that particular government slashed money from classrooms, gave it to the teachers as a salary increase, and not a peep out of those people about what was going on in the classroom at that time.



MS. ZANN: I thank her for that answer. Actually, yes, I was very upset when the government did cut from education \$13 million, not \$65 million. So disrespecting . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River has the floor.

MS. ZANN: Yes, I was a backbencher who spoke up.

I have another question from one of my constituents. Ask Ms. Casey why teachers have to negotiate a review of the inclusion . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I would like to remind the honourable member that Question Period is not an opportunity to ask questions directly from constituents. If you could paraphrase or work around that.

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

MS. ZANN: My question is, why do teachers have to negotiate a review of the inclusion policy as part of the working conditions? Shouldn't this be best practice for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development? Mr. Speaker, disrespecting and dismissing concerns of the people who are at the front lines of education is just not the way forward. She has to stop blaming the past government. My question is, can she explain why she thinks that she should be allowed to continue in this role and lead the department in repairing the damage that has been done?

MS. CASEY: You know, I remember the four years of that previous government. I remember the NSTU slogans that were going around, Kids Not Cuts. I remember that member sitting on her hands during the whole proceedings. But guess what? She voted for a budget every year that took money out of the classrooms of our kids.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

### **EECD - WORK-TO-RULE: TEACHING - EFFECTS**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: My question is for the Minister of (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. (Interruption) Order, please. The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River will come to order.

The honourable member for Pictou East has the floor.

MR. HOUSTON: My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. We've all heard the Premier over the last few days say that it's

time to get back into school. On this side of the House, we think that children have been in school, and teachers have been teaching. I would just like to ask the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, have teachers been teaching since December 5<sup>th</sup>, or where have they been?

HON. KAREN CASEY: I think the member would recognize - maybe not admit but recognize - that there were many directives that came from the Nova Scotia Teachers Union to teachers that caused teachers some concern, caused parents a lot of anxiety, and caused students to wonder what they would be doing when they went to school. Would their teacher be there to help them? Would they be able to have a strong school spirit in their schools? I met with some high school students, and their first comment was, work-to-rule is destroying the school spirit in our high school.

MR. HOUSTON: One thing that teachers have been saying, though, is that in the last couple of months, they've had more time to teach. I've heard from a number of teachers that that's since they didn't have so much burden of PowerSchool and data entry and stuff like that. We have heard, and I'm sure the minister has heard a number of obvious changes that could be made pretty quickly.

The minister said back in December 2013, I think, that she heard from teachers and did make some changes. Over the last few months, more and more things are coming to light. Teachers are talking more and more about some of the obvious changes that they would like to see made. I think the minister referred the other night to having some letters ready to go when this is over.

I would just like to ask the minister, what's the holdup? Why hasn't this government made some of those obvious changes over the last few months that could have appeased teachers and avoided all of this? Why wait?

MS. CASEY: There's nothing I would like to have done any more than to work with teachers, talk with teachers on things like our attendance policy. We were not allowed. The directives that were given to the teachers - NSTU members received a directive that they were not to engage in meetings with staff from the department. They were not to do that. That was frustrating for us because we wanted to talk to teachers. We want their input. As the member has said, we needed to move on some things. We're ready to move on this and that is exactly why we want this resolved. We want teachers ready to meet with us, ready to work with us, and to do the things that the member has identified.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

### **HEALTH & WELLNESS: HORNE CASE - COSTS**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Given that a previous government disclosed that over \$1 million had been spent

on legal bills by 2007 and given that the public has an ongoing right to know how public funds are spent, I would like to ask the minister what the sum total is for taxpayer money disbursed to outside law firms in the course of the Dr. Gabrielle Horne matter, during his tenure as minister. I would like him to include legal fees for secretaries, lawyers, meetings, court costs, preparation, and all related matters.

Can the minister tell us, what is the sum total of legal fees that this government has spent during just his tenure as minister?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is talking about an issue that now goes back 14 years with the former Capital Health district that continues to move forward with the NSHA and is currently under appeal before the courts.

MR. HOUSTON: I thought the minister might be reluctant to talk about how much has been spent in legal fees. I'm sure the amount of money is absolutely staggering, the fact that the courts have decided what happened here now - and this government is continuing with an appeal.

I know in the corporate world a lot of times when you're looking at a legal situation, the parties will look at what the probability is of success. I know three or four instances right away that make me wonder if this government's determination is the probability of the individual citizen on the other side kind of giving up and throwing in the towel because everyone wants a fiscally responsible government. Nobody wants a callous government and when we see these situations - appeals, appeals, and appeals.

I would like to ask the minister, by what date in the future can we reasonably expect this government to disclose in the interests of transparency how much money they've spent on this case?

MR. GLAVINE: I certainly believe that any time taxpayer money goes for legal fees, that it should be disclosed to the public; it will be done in due course. The member should realize, however, she's not an employee of the Department of Health and Wellness. She is an employee originally of the Capital Health district, now with the Nova Scotia Health Authority. It is their prerogative in terms of continuing to reach a settlement. I know a settlement will be reached, but that's for the courts to determine.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

### **EECD: SCH. PSYCHOLOGISTS - FUNDING INCREASE**

MS. LISA ROBERTS: My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. The minister just recognized that teachers are not mental health clinicians and yet we heard at the Law Amendments Committee just this evening that the

ratio of students to psychologists in the Nova Scotia systems is three times what is recommended as best practice.

We have psychologists in Nova Scotia responsible for more than 3,000 students. Will the minister take another initiative off the plate and invest in more psychologists?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, initially when funding is allocated to boards we have a ratio that we consider for a school psychologist, for a speech-language pathologist, for resource teachers, and we have to go back to that ratio because if that ratio is not right, then we need to increase the funding. What we're hearing from teachers is that it's not right, so we will have to re-do that.

MS. ROBERTS: Well, what I have heard consistently over the last number of months and we heard it again today is that students are waiting two to three years for psych-ed assessments. While they are waiting, they are often not learning. Those psych-ed assessments are essential for students learning how to read, learning how to function in a classroom. Is the minister aware of the situation and what steps has she already taken to address it?

MS. CASEY: Two to three years wait-list is unacceptable, I will admit that. What we've done every year is to provide more funding to school boards and to suggest - not suggest, but to tell school boards that they need to make sure that they use their resources to provide supports for our most needy kids, and those would be kids who are needing some psych-ed assessment or who are needing speech-language.

As I said, we have a ratio that we use but that certainly may need to be changed. But we certainly do not condone a wait-list of two to three years for a psych-ed assessment. That's unfair to the student.

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

#### **EECD - ÉCOLE WEDGEPORT: SCH. CONST. LIST - OMISSION**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question as well is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Almost two summers ago now I had the opportunity to meet with the minister and with a local parent association member, Blair Boudreau. At the time we talked about École Wedgeport which I know the minister has visited on a couple of occasions. We talked about either a replacement or a full renovation of that facility because it is in a sorry state.

As you know, Wedgeport is a small francophone community in my constituency. There's about 100 children who go to that school.

My question to the minister really is, we did what the minister asked as we were able to make sure that the CSAP had it on its list, as a matter of fact it's number one on its school construction list, and we're just wondering why it didn't show up anywhere in the last construction list.

HON. KAREN CASEY: I do remember the meeting; I do remember the passion that the community and the member have for that particular school. No different, Mr. Speaker, than every member would have an interest and a passion for the community schools in their constituency, no different than the passion the parents have.

One of the things that I think we have to recognize is that we use a number of factors to determine which schools will be added to the capital plan. We have an envelope that we have to live within and when we do that, certainly there are going to be communities that are disappointed. There are also going to be communities that are happy.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: To the minister, we understand there has to be a decision made on which schools go forward and which ones don't, and I don't diminish those communities that have gotten schools - good for them. I know that this school has been asking for a major renovation. I know the CSAP has been working hard to make sure that it is on its list for probably the past 12 years now and every time it never seems to get to the department's list.

How can it be on the CSAP list so long and never, ever make it to the department's list?

MS. CASEY: I can't answer for the previous government as to why it didn't make it on their list but I can speak to the criteria that are used when we make our decisions for schools that will be added to the capital plan and they certainly include the whole notion of needs of students, condition of the school, is it a consolidation with other schools, is it an A&A, is it a new school, regional fairness, all those things that have to be considered.

I would love to give every school that's on the list, every community, a new school. That's fiscally not possible but it certainly is a process. I would encourage the CSAP board to take advantage of the maintenance capital money, if they need some short-term repairs, and to continue to identify that school through their school board.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

### **CCH - PUBLIC LIBRARY BUDGETS: CUTS - DETAILS**

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage. Earlier this month an article appeared in the *Nova Scotia Advocate* about our public libraries across Nova Scotia, and the article states that a lack of funding from the province is forcing libraries to reduce staff, cut back on hours,

and even close branches. Public libraries are essential to supporting literacy and especially early childhood development.

Mr. Speaker, my question is, how much has this government cut from public library budgets?

HON. TONY INCE: Thank you for that question. Yes, you are correct, libraries are very important to our province and to the people and to communities. The government does invest \$14.4 million in libraries for operations but we also provide lots of other funding through other grants through my department that libraries can apply for, for special projects or other investments.

We will continue to support libraries and we will continue to support those hubs that are important to all those communities.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers has expired. We'll now move on to Government Business.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: That concludes the government business for today. We will be calling the House back on Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, from the hours of 12:01 a.m. until 11:59 p.m. Following the daily routine and Question Period, the House will resolve into Committee of the Whole House on Bills on Bill No. 75.

With that, I move that House do now rise to meet again at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, until 11:59 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn.

There has been a request for a recorded vote.

We will ring the bells for one hour.

[11:20 p.m.]

[The Division bells were rung.]

MR. SPEAKER: Are the Whips satisfied?

Before we proceed with the recorded vote, I'll just remind all members to remain completely silent while the Clerks record your vote. I'll remind all members to stand up with a simple "yea" or "nay."

The Clerks will now proceed with the recorded vote on the motion to adjourn.

[The Clerk calls the roll.]

[12:21 a.m.]

**YEAS**

Mr. Churchill  
Ms. Bernard  
Ms. Regan  
Mr. Samson  
Mr. McNeil  
Ms. Whalen  
Mr. Glavine  
Mr. Delorey  
Ms. Casey  
Mr. MacLellan  
Mr. Horne  
Mr. Stroink  
Ms. Miller  
Mr. Hines  
Ms. Diab  
Mr. Ince  
Mr. Kousoulis  
Mr. Furey  
Mr. Farrell  
Mr. Maguire  
Mr. Porter  
Ms. Lohnes-Croft  
Ms. Eyking  
Mr. Irving  
Mr. Gough  
Ms. Treen  
Mr. Wilton  
Mr. Rankin  
Mr. MacLeod  
Mr. Dunn  
Mr. Baillie  
Mr. Orrell

**NAYS**

Mr. d'Entremont  
Mr. David Wilson  
Mr. Belliveau  
Ms. Zann  
Mr. Houston  
Mr. Younger  
Mr. Lohr

Mr. Gordon Wilson  
Mr. Mombourquette  
Mr. Harrison

THE CLERK: For, 35. Against, 7.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

The House now stands adjourned until 12:35 a.m. We do need a few minutes to reset Legislative Television for the next proceeding, and we do have to clear the galleries.

The House now stands adjourned until 12:35 a.m.

[The House rose at 12:24 a.m.]



**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 904**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas Georges Mrad, Aida Hachem Mrad, Melodi Mrad and Stephanie Mrad - natives of Lebanon and residents of Halifax Armdale - received their Canadian citizenship on Wednesday, October 5, 2016; and

Whereas a beautiful ceremony was held at Government House and presided by our Lieutenant Governor, Brigadier-General the honourable J.J. Grant; and

Whereas I had the privilege to give remarks and congratulate the Mrads during the ceremony where I was delighted to learn that a total of 24 new Canadians from 10 different countries chose to become citizens of this wonderful country;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating the Mrad family on receiving their Canadian citizenship and wish them many more years of active service as a Canadian citizen living in Nova Scotia.

**RESOLUTION NO. 905**

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 constituency of Halifax Armdale is blessed to include the beautiful Northwest Arm, which the people of Halifax have appreciated for its functional, recreational and aesthetic value since the city's founding; and

Whereas the Northwest Arm, the surrounding communities and the historical sites scattered around Armdale, Jollimore and Purcell's Cove have a long and fascinating history; and

Whereas community members volunteering with the Northwest Arm Heritage Association put considerable time, talent and energy into researching our area's history and sharing interesting facts, historical information, artifacts, artwork and photographs with other members of the community through events and their Facebook page;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly sincerely thank Northwest Arm Heritage Association member Peter Efthymiadis as well as all board members and volunteers for everything they do to further Haligonians appreciation and enjoyment of our Northwest Arm.

**RESOLUTION NO. 906**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas this year marks a half century that the St. James Anglican Parish's present church in Armdale has stood at the head of the Northwest Arm welcoming community members to join a parish family that has strong liturgical, pastoral and teaching ministries and 160 years of history in our area; and

Whereas the St. James community today remains lively and committed to the parish's growth and providing spiritual and social support to the community while sharing their space with local Cub Scouts, anonymous support groups, men's and mother's groups as well as the Social, Cultural, Recreational Inclusion Society; and

Whereas I have been happy as the MLA for Halifax Armdale to support the church's members as they planned and executed the installation of a platform lift to make their church hall more accessible to the community and am looking forward to supporting them again at the Dingle painting party they will hold in March to raise funds for the church;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in acknowledging the long history of St. James Anglican Church and thank Reverend Rachael Parker, Alice Nicholson, Sarah-Jane Raine, Patricia Pye, and other church members for the efforts they've put into making the church an even more welcoming, supportive and inclusive place.