



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

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2017**

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS:	
<i>Miss Ally</i> : Loss - Crew Remember, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	2044
Teachers: Contract - Imposition, Mr. E. Orrell.....	2044
N.S. Lbr. Relations - Outdated Approach, Hon. S. Belliveau .....	2045
Cowan, Senator Jim: Retirement - Congrats., Mr. J. Stroink .....	2045
Bill No. 75 - Law Amendments Comm.: Cutoff - Apologize, Mr. T. Houston.....	2045
Gov't. (N.S.): Citizens - Listen, Ms. L. Zann.....	2046
Earle, Arthur: Death of - Tribute, Hon. Z. Churchill .....	2046

EECD: Sch. System - Mental Health Issues, Mr. J. Lohr .....	2047
Work-to-Rule: Students Needs - Served, Ms. L. Roberts.....	2047
Pelly, Sheila - Commun. Contribution, Hon. L. Hines .....	2047
Kent, Ian - Law Amendments Comm., Hon. P. Dunn.....	2048
Liberal MLAs: Legislation - Support, Hon. S. Belliveau .....	2048
Sajatovitch, Stephanie: Commun. Mindedness - Highlight, Hon. L. Diab .....	2049
Teachers: Legislated Contract - New Normal, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	2049
Bill No. 75: Law Amendments Comm. Hours - Extension, Ms. L. Zann.....	2049
S. Shore Radiothon: Vols. - Thank, Hon. M. Furey.....	2050
Bill No. 75 - Law Amendments Comm., Mr. L. Harrison .....	2050
Teachers: Assessments - Time Consumption, Ms. L. Roberts.....	2051
Alcoe-Holland, Jill: Scotties Tournament of Hearts (2017) - Qualification, Mr. K. Irving.....	2051
N.S. Legislature: All-Night Sitings - Hist., Mr. T. Houston.....	2052
Al-Rasoul Islamic Soc. - Bedford Commun. Visit, Hon. K. Regan.....	2052
Bill No. 75: Presenters - Listen, Mr. E. Orrell.....	2052
Stirling Fruit Farms - Anniv. (100 <sup>th</sup> ), Mr. K. Irving.....	2053
Bill No. 75: Law Amendments Comm. - Excluded Presenters, Hon. P. Dunn.....	2053
Franklin, Dr. Tamara: Achievements - Congrats., Mr. I. Rankin.....	2054
Bill No. 75: Negotiations - Alternate Pathway, Mr. J. Lohr .....	2054
Divine, Ann: <i>Atlantic Business Magazine</i> - Feature Congrats., Hon. D. Whalen .....	2054
Dahn, Dr. Jeff: Herzberg Gold Medal - Congrats., Mr. J. Stroink .....	2055

Hutchinson, Chris & Anna: PURE Maple Syrup Products - Success Congrats., Hon. L. Glavine .....	2055
Antigonish Affordable Housing: Riverside Estates - Congrats., Hon. R. Delorey .....	2056
Doherty, Dan: Success - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab .....	2057
Phinney, Debbie/Staggers Pub & Grub - Free Christmas Dinner, Hon. J. Bernard .....	2057
Cdn. Confederation - Anniv. (150 <sup>th</sup> )/Atl. Can. Intl. Airshow 2017, Hon. L. Glavine.....	2057
Risk, Dr. David/FluxLab - Greenhouse Gas Reduction, Hon. R. Delorey .....	2058
Sweet, Susan: Hants Co./Artistic Commun. - Advocate, Hon. M. Miller .....	2059
Spearing, Ken: Kennetcook - Historic Artwork, Hon. M. Miller .....	2059
Hamilton, Andrew - Scotia Scholars Award (2016-17), Mr. I. Rankin.....	2060
HOUSE RECESSED AT 1:16 A.M. ....	2060
HOUSE RECONVENED AT 1:34 A.M. ....	2060
ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS:	
No. 336, EECD - No-Fail Policy: Myth - Prem. Confirm, Hon. J. Baillie .....	2060
No. 337, Teachers Situation: Prem. - Apologize, Hon. S. Belliveau .....	2062
No. 338, Law Amendments Comm. Proc.: Prem. Response - Change Explain, Hon. J. Baillie .....	2063
No. 339, Law Amendments Comm.: Prem./EECD Min. - Non-Appearance Explain, Ms. L. Zann.....	2064
No. 340, Law Amendments Comm.: Presentation Access - Details, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	2065
No. 341, Teachers Strike: Gov't. MLAs - Blame, Mr. E. Orrell.....	2066
No. 342, Work-to-Rule - Students: Attention Adequacy - Confirm, Ms. L. Zann.....	2068
No. 343, EECD: No-Fail Policy - Existence Confirm, Mr. A. Younger.....	2069
No. 344, Prem.: Boundaries Commn. - Strike, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	2070
No. 345, EECD: Classroom Improvements - Produce, Hon. P. Dunn.....	2071

No. 346, EECD: Sch. Psychologists - Funding, Ms. L. Roberts.....	2072
No. 347, Com. Serv. - Reunification Mechanisms, Mr. L. Harrison .....	2073
No. 348, Law Amendments Comm.: Excluded Presenters - Apologize, Mr. E. Orrell.....	2074
No. 349, Prem.: Fed. Funding Agreement - Details, Hon. David Wilson .....	2076
No. 350, EECD - EAs: Classmate Fill-ins - Confirm, Mr. J. Lohr .....	2077
No. 351, Health & Wellness: Hospital Underspensing - Risk, Hon. David Wilson .....	2077
No. 352, Health & Wellness: Weymouth - Physician Shortage, Mr. J. Lohr .....	2078
No. 353, EECD: Coding - Support Inadequacy, Ms. L. Roberts.....	2079
<b>GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:</b>	
HOUSE RESOLVED INTO CWH ON BILLS AT 2:29 A.M.....	2080
HOUSE RECONVENED AT 2:20 P.M.....	2080
CWH REPORTS.....	2080
ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Tue., Feb. 21 <sup>st</sup> at 12:01 a.m. ....	2081



House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2017**

**Sixty-second General Assembly**

**Third Session**

**12:35 A.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Kevin Murphy

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

Mr. Gordon Wilson, Mr. Keith Irving

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

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

**PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

**GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**NOTICES OF MOTION**

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

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

**MISS ALLY: LOSS CREW - REMEMBER**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, tonight, the 17<sup>th</sup> of February, is the 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the loss of the *Miss Ally*, that was out fishing for halibut four years ago and got caught in a storm, losing all hands on board.

I know it's a tough situation, I know the member for Queens-Shelburne spoke about this at the time, and the community of Woods Harbour and the whole community of Barrington will be mourning the loss of those five fishermen again today.

I want to maybe ask for a moment of silence in a few moments so we all can commemorate them. I want to remember the names of Katlin Nickerson, Tyson Townsend, Steven Cole Nickerson, Joel Hopkins, and Billy Jack Hatfield, to make sure that we pass on our warm wishes and our thoughts to their friends and family.

With that, I would ask for a moment of silence.

MR. SPEAKER: Would all members rise for a moment of silence to remember those fishers lost on the *Miss Ally*.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

**TEACHERS: CONTRACT - IMPOSITION**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, if you talk to teachers, pretty much any Nova Scotian teacher will tell you that the system is collapsing under the weight of administrative requirements, a revolving door of outcomes, PowerSchool, TIENET and constant expectations from so many sources. This imposed contract on teachers adds insult to injury.

This Premier is not listening. Everything the government wants is in this bill and it happens now. What teachers want is ignored or punted to letters and committees. Teachers are expected to hope for the best. Would anyone in this place be even open to trusting that everything will be okay if the contract is imposed or punted or ignored and belittled or rejected? No, Mr. Speaker, we would not like that.

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

**N.S. LBR. RELATIONS - OUTDATED APPROACH**

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, over the last three years we have all watched the Premier try to turn back the clock on labour relations in this province. However, it seems he thought Nova Scotians would believe his pre-recorded video discussing talks breaking down with the Teachers Union was just an example of a man ahead of his time, or perhaps the Premier was simply sticking to daylight savings time as part of his fiscal plan.

Whatever the case, Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians saw the light. Now it's time to put Nova Scotia's outdated approach to labour relations back where it belongs, in the Dark Ages.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

**COWAN, SENATOR JIM: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.**

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate long-time resident of Halifax Chebucto, Senator Jim Cowan, on his recent retirement from the Senate of Canada, after serving in the Upper Chamber for 12 years.

During his time as Senator, Senator Cowan championed Senate modernization, tabled legislation to prevent genetic discrimination by employers, and proposed legislation that would properly address mental illness in the criminal justice system. Despite his retirement, Senator Cowan shows no signs of slowing down. With his new-found extra time he has said he will continue to work on public policy issues, including those just mentioned. His tireless dedication to Canadians is admirable.

I invite all my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Senator Cowan on his long career and on his contributions to the Senate and wish him all the best in his retirement.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

**BILL NO. 75 - LAW AMENDMENTS COMM.: CUTOFF - APOLOGIZE**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, our responsibility as MLA is to represent the people of the province in every way we can. The Standing Committee on Law Amendments is an important place to hear the views of Nova Scotians.

Audrey McGowan wanted to share her views about Bill No. 75 at Law Amendments Committee, possibly a relation of the Senator who was just referenced - I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker. She wanted to present at Law Amendments Committee, she followed the rules and yet she was denied her right to speak her mind. Sadly, Audrey is

just one of about 300 Nova Scotians that we are aware of who this Liberal Government didn't care enough about to make the time to listen to them.

Mr. Speaker, it was a completely artificial deadline of 8:00 p.m., completely unnecessary, just because this government didn't want to hear the people of the province, their comments on this piece of legislation. This government owes those people an apology because it has failed them.

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

### **GOV'T. (N.S.): CITIZENS - LISTEN**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Carol Tredwell is a constituent of mine who stayed up until 3:00 a.m. watching, on Eastlink, the members of this House begin debate on Tuesday. Carol is a senior, a former federal employee, and is described by her family members as "a fixer."

She wrote to tell me about her frustrations with this government. It is 25 years since her husband passed away and his former students still stop Mrs. Tredwell in the streets to tell her what an impact his teaching had on them. She can't believe that she is now watching this government disrespect Nova Scotian workers in such a callous manner. Her blood pressure goes up, she says, when she hears the minister or the Premier insult teachers on the floor of this House.

Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the frustration that Mrs. Tredwell and so many others who have written to my office are feeling. Will this government ever start listening to the people of this province?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

### **EARLE, ARTHUR: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Recently our community lost a wonderful person who actually happened to be my neighbour, Arthur Earle, at the age of 83. He is one of Yarmouth's most decorated firefighters. He was a leader in the fire service and involved in the association province-wide. He was a consummate gentleman, a caring person who always treated others with respect and kindness.

I know his memory and legacy will live on in his wonderful wife, Ruth, and his beautiful family, and the lives of all those in our community and beyond whom he touched. I just want his family to know that they are in my thoughts and prayers, and I am very thankful to have had the opportunity to get to know Art and be his neighbour.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.



**EECD: SCH. SYSTEM - MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to light an issue that often goes unaddressed in our community at large, especially in our school system. There has been a frightening increase in the number of students dealing with mental health difficulties. However, as we learned in the Law Amendments Committee, this increase is not reflected in the student support available to these students to address their needs.

The current system is failing these students. I hope the government realizes their inaction will have deep-rooted consequences. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**WORK-TO-RULE: STUDENTS NEEDS - SERVED**

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I want to share an “aha” moment for me that happened during Law Amendments Committee. I’ve had many conversations with teachers over the past few months but I still learned so much from the presenters who were able to get on the speakers list.

I’d need Hansard to attribute the remarks accurately, so I apologize for not giving credit to the presenter. He was a teacher who said it would make a world of difference to him if he could just spend the first five minutes of each high school class welcoming students at the door, connecting with them, checking in with them. Instead, he is at his computer on his desk, across the room, putting attendance data into PowerSchool.

This was the moment when I understood why many teachers feel like work under work-to-rule has been better. Students need connection. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development needs data. Under work-to-rule teachers have been serving the needs of students.

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

**PELLY, SHEILA - COMMUN. CONTRIBUTION**

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring the attention of the House to the outstanding work of Ms. Sheila Pelly, an exemplary member of the African Nova Scotian community of Lincolnville. Sheila, as she is known to all, has served her community steadfastly for decades.

A great-grandmother, Sheila is passionate about helping her communities of Lincolnville, Sunnyville, and Upper Big Tracadie - income tax, community services support, grant applications, and president of the Lincolnville Community Association, she

is a very busy lady - but not so busy that she cannot work as a municipal councillor for District 2, and following being re-elected in 2016 for a fourth term to the council, she was recently elected as the deputy warden of that municipality, the first African Nova Scotian woman to hold that post.

Thank you, Sheila, for all you do, and it is people like you who make Nova Scotia the wonderful place that it is.

MR. SPEAKER: I'd like to remind all members not to use members' statements to speak directly to constituents, but to direct your thank-yous through the Chair.

The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

### **KENT, IAN - LAW AMENDMENTS COMM.**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, Ian Kent and his wife are teachers from Queens County and they have two young children enrolled in the public school system. Mr. Kent called the Legislative Counsel Office on Wednesday at 2:00 p.m., as soon as the times for the Law Amendments Committee were made public. He was told his name was on the list and he would be given a time to present. Mr. Kent has received no answer, despite attempts to reach the office.

He drove into Halifax from Queens, through a blizzard, so that his voice could be heard. Why are Mr. Kent and his family being denied their chance and democratic right to speak to the legislation? His first-hand expertise and knowledge as a teacher should be invaluable to this government; instead, he is being silenced.

Mr. Kent's experience is a clear indication of how much this government values and respects teachers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **LIBERAL MLAs: LEGISLATION - SUPPORT**

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, the Premier said that he did some soul-searching before making the decision to impose a contract on teachers. Well, it seems that teachers across this province have done soul-searching on their own. These teachers have come to the conclusion that the actions of this government are unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, the night is young, there is still time for the Liberal MLAs to do some soul-searching as well. These Liberal MLAs need to think about their legacy that is in this House. They were elected to represent the people of their constituencies, not the Premier's agenda. It is not too late to do the right thing.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

**SAJATOVITCH, STEPHANIE: COMMUN. MINDEDNESS - HIGHLIGHT**

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the community mindedness of Stephanie Sajatovitch of Fleming Heights. Last year Stephanie, inspired by a friend who helped organize the Westmount Wallabies Soccer League, decided to start a small summer soccer league for the children of Armdale.

Together with a group of neighbourhood parents, Stephanie oversaw the organization of once-a-week soccer games on the community field at John W. MacLeod. They were able to recruit 15 volunteer coaches and 60 kids from ages 3 to 6, including two of Stephanie's own. They all got the chance to have a lot of fun. The group committed to keeping registration costs as low as possible and were thrilled to have so much interest that they had a wait-list.

This year Stephanie is coordinating the Fleming Frogs League and hopes to welcome a minimum of 60 kids. With the help of dedicated coaches, including many young children from our community, including my own grandson, they will have an opportunity to learn the new sport. As a soccer mum myself, I commend Stephanie for all her efforts.

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

**TEACHERS: LEGISLATED CONTRACT - NEW NORMAL**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, sports coaching, field trips, arriving early or working late, purchasing classroom supplies to supplement what is needed and not provided, mentoring kids at lunch, before school, and after school - these are just some of the things that teachers have done voluntarily. They were done out of care and goodwill and we all took it for granted because we considered it normal.

The Premier says that this so-called normal is what the imposed contract with teachers is supposed to re-establish. What the Premier has done though, having failed three times to reach an agreement with teachers, is create a new normal where teachers are angry and demoralized, a new normal without these things we took for granted - and the ones hurt the most are, of course, our children.

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

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: I have to say I was dismayed today during Law Amendments Committee when I watched multiple Cabinet Ministers and members of the

government abuse their majority and vote down multiple motions presented by my colleagues and I. The motion was simple: extend the committee hours so that the requests to speak by so many Nova Scotians could actually be honoured. Instead, not even one-quarter of those who put their names on the committee's list were heard. Is this justice, Mr. Speaker? Is this democratic? I think not.

Thankfully, the citizens of this province are very resourceful and they won't let being shut out of a government committee silence them. Night after night, day after day, the people are crowding on the streets outside this Chamber and making their voices heard. The government may not want to listen but, in the end, they don't really have a choice.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

### **S. SHORE RADIOTHON: VOLS. - THANK**

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, February 14<sup>th</sup> is always a special day on the South Shore. The radiothon, hosted by local radio station CKBW and Country 100.7, raised money for equipment upgrades at the South Shore Regional Hospital. Community groups carry out fundraising events throughout the year to support the radiothon and the individual pledges are nothing short of amazing.

This year's event brought in over \$100,000 in pledges. Over the seven years of the radiothon nearly \$700,000 has been raised - quite an accomplishment in rural Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank all volunteers who spent many hours of their own time to ensure the success of this event, to the businesses and organizations and individuals who support the Health Services Foundation.

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

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

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Our responsibility as MLAs is to represent people we are lucky to represent. The Standing Committee on Law Amendments is an important place to hear the views of Nova Scotians. Lisa Craig wanted to share her views about Bill No. 75 at Law Amendments Committee. She followed all the rules but she wasn't able to do it.

I was wondering if an apology should be sent to the people who were not able to give a presentation today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**TEACHERS: ASSESSMENTS - TIME CONSUMPTION**

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I want to share a second “aha” moment from Law Amendments Committee. Again, I apologize for not giving credit to the presenter.

A teacher said the education system has made liars out of teachers because they cannot possibly do what is asked of them and they have not been allowed to admit it. In this case the story was of needing to do individual assessments of Grade 1 students, which take an hour, by the end of September.

Effectively that means 24 fewer hours in the first, most important month of school, spent on individual assessments instead of getting students used to a routine and building class climate. I gather that this teacher chose to respond to the needs in his classroom rather than at the department and did not actually complete all the assessments.

It is uncomfortable for me to lie, I’m sure it is uncomfortable for most, if not all members of this House, to lie. The general public sort of expects it of us politicians but it is definitely not what teachers signed up for. Teachers are . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Time allotted for the member’s statement has expired.

The honourable member for Kings South.

**ALCOE-HOLLAND, JILL:  
SCOTTIES TOURNAMENT OF HEARTS (2017) - QUALIFICATION**

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my most sincere congratulations to Jill Alcoe-Holland of Coldbrook on qualifying to represent Nova Scotia at one of my favourite tournaments, the 2017 Scotties Tournament of Hearts in St. Catharines, Ontario, starting on February 18<sup>th</sup>.

Jill and her teammate Andrea Saulnier will be the first members of the Glooscap Curling Club in Kentville to compete in this prestigious Canadian women’s curling championship. This accomplishment will provide inspiration to Kings County curlers for many years to come.

On behalf of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, I congratulate Jill on this impressive achievement and I wish Team Nova Scotia the very best of luck in St. Catharines. I know they will make us proud.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

**N.S. LEGISLATURE: ALL-NIGHT SITTINGS - HIST.**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: You know, Mr. Speaker, all-night sittings like this used to be quite rare in this House. They used to be reserved for actual emergencies. In fact, in the 20 years prior to this government, this Legislature sat all night one time - one time in 20 years. Here we are now, this is the fifth time. This is the fifth emergency this government has had to deal with with all-night sittings. I call that manufactured chaos.

It is the absolute perfect example of terrible leadership and it just terrifies me and many Nova Scotians that this is the crew that is running a \$10 billion province. Mistake after mistake, panic after panic, all-nighter after all-nighter. One time in 20 years, five times under this government. I think you can figure out, just like I can, what these guys are all about.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

**AL-RASOUL ISLAMIC SOC. - BEDFORD COMMUN. VISIT**

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to tell the House about a recent event that took place in Bedford. As we all know, in late January six men were gunned down at a Quebec mosque while they were at prayer. The following week, the Al-Rasoul Islamic Society invited religious and political leaders to speak to its members. I was honoured to be asked.

Many leaders took the mosque up on its offer. There were three members of the Legislature there, as well as the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Deputy Mayor and several councillors. As well, church leaders spoke. We were able to share with the mosque members the condolences of our community. We told them that in our Christian tradition we are urged to love our neighbours as ourselves. After the event, we shared a traditional meal.

On the way out, several Muslim friends commented to me that until that evening, they didn't realized how much support they had in the community. They were moved to discover just how much their neighbours grieved with them and we, in turn, were moved to see a large sign from the Muslims of Halifax thanking the city for its support.

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

**BILL NO. 75: PRESENTERS - LISTEN**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker we heard from front-line workers yesterday. The government continues to say they have been listening to teachers, but I wonder where the disconnect is between the teachers the government is listening to and the teachers, school psychologists, and students who spoke at the Law Amendments Committee.

It's clear that the education system needs to be changed; it's also very clear that no one wants to see another committee set up. The problems that are facing our students in Nova Scotia have been voiced numerous times yesterday and over the last few months. The government should consider listening to what has been said before they proceed with Bill No. 75.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

### **STIRLING FRUIT FARMS - ANNIV. (100<sup>th</sup>)**

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an exceptional Annapolis Valley family business, Stirling Fruit Farms. A.R. Stirling purchased the farm in 1917 and over the subsequent years he worked diligently to expand and improve the orchards, develop export opportunities, and set up farm markets. He was an innovator and a pioneer in the Nova Scotia apple industry.

A.R. was pleased to see his sons take an interest in the family business and today, 100 years after its establishment, Stirling Fruit Farms continues to thrive under the leadership of A.R.'s grandsons. They currently grow over 35 varieties of apples and an assortment of other crops, and operate five farm markets and a U-pick.

On behalf of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, I would like to congratulate Stirling Fruit Farms on a century of success in agriculture, and thank them for their outstanding contribution to the economy and the culture of the Annapolis Valley.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this government owes these 300 people an apology. The government has failed them.

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

**FRANKLIN, DR. TAMARA: ACHIEVEMENTS - CONGRATS.**

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Dr. Tamara Franklin of Prospect Village. Dr. Franklin is a Dalhousie alumna who obtained her Ph.D. from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in 2009 and has recently returned to Halifax from a post-doctoral position at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory.

Dr. Franklin is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience at Dalhousie and recently received the development innovative grant for her research on environment gene interactions and autism.

I would like the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Dr. Franklin on her achievements, and wish her well in her research in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**BILL NO. 75: NEGOTIATIONS - ALTERNATE PATHWAY**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, the Premier claims that if he had another pathway than Bill No. 75 that he would take it. While in British Columbia six tentative agreements were rejected before they reached an agreement, the B.C. Government did not impose a contract because they respected the collective bargaining.

Another pathway this Liberal Government could take would be to immediately implement some of the non-contractual items that would improve working conditions. Two suggestions include: create an effective attendance policy that could be reasonably implemented and develop an assessment and evaluation policy that requires student accountability that does not guarantee a pass no matter how little a student does. But, instead, we have a committee to study classroom improvements and more than 300 people have been prevented from speaking at Law Amendments Committee. I give this government a fail.

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

**DIVINE, ANN: ATLANTIC BUSINESS MAGAZINE - FEATURE CONGRATS.**

HON. DIANA WHALEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Ann Divine, a resident of Clayton Park West, on recently being featured in the *Atlantic Business Magazine*. Ann Divine was born in Guyana and raised in England before emigrating with her family to Canada in 2004, where she has achieved successes in many fields such as probation and human rights.



In 2011 Ann Divine founded Ashanti Leadership and Professional Services with the goal of using her experience and expertise in helping immigrants and women of colour achieve success. Ann overcame cultural and gender barriers in pursuit of her dream of building Ashanti Leadership and Professional Services. It is for this vision and perseverance that Ann was featured as a trailblazer in the January 2014 issue of *Atlantic Business Magazine*.

Please join me in congratulating Ann Divine on her well-deserved honour and wishing her continued success in all her future endeavours.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

**DAHN, DR. JEFF: HERZBERG GOLD MEDAL - CONGRATS.**

MR. JOACHIM STROINK: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate an esteemed constituent of Halifax Chebucto. Dr. Jeff Dahn has recently been awarded this year's Herzberg Gold Medal, Canada's most prestigious science prize, which is bestowed annually by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council. Dr. Dahn is recognized as one of the pioneer developers of the lithium battery that is now used worldwide in laptop computers and cellphones.

His recent work has concentrated on increasing energy density, improving the lifetime and lowering the cost of lithium ion batteries. Last year, Dr. Dahn's work brought Tesla Motors to his doorstep. The company has set up a research facility in Dartmouth with the aim of jumpstarting a revolution in electric car performance by leveraging Dr. Dahn's insights.

I'd like to invite my colleagues to congratulate Dr. Dahn on his Herzberg Gold Medal and wish him continued success in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**HUTCHINSON, CHRIS & ANNA:  
PURE MAPLE SYRUP PRODUCTS - SUCCESS CONGRATS.**

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, nestled atop the South Mountain of Annapolis Valley is the community of Lake Paul. With a population of approximately 100 people, the area is known for its relaxing cottage lifestyle and close-knit sense of community. A visit in the summertime may consist of aquatic activities on the lake, and snowmobiling is a popular winter pastime.

Lake Paul is also the site of Hutchinson Acres, a blossoming sustainable maple syrup industry that has attracted the attention of the producers of the popular CBC television program *Dragons' Den*. For over a decade, Chris and Anna Hutchinson have

worked tirelessly to develop and expand their business into what it is today. Primarily known for their line of PURE Infused Maple Syrup products, Hutchinson Acres also has Christmas trees, wild blueberries, and timber. The Hutchinsons employ locally within their community, and their products can be found throughout Nova Scotia and across Canada.

As the MLA for Kings West, it personally brings me great pride and satisfaction to see the continued growth of Hutchinson Acres. I've had the pleasure of working with Chris and Anna since the farm's beginning in 2004. Their story is that of a homegrown Nova Scotia success with the potential for sustainable production for generations to come.

I'd like to take this opportunity to . . .

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

The honourable member for Antigonish.

**ANTIGONISH AFFORDABLE HOUSING:  
RIVERSIDE ESTATES - CONGRATS.**

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, the Antigonish Affordable Housing Society has recently reached two new milestones in the creation of Riverside Estates, a community-supported development designed to meet the needs of low-income residents of Antigonish Town and County.

Earlier this month it was announced that applications are now being accepted for the four nearly-completed units of the proposed 14-unit complex. As part of Phase 1 of the project, these four units are expected to be ready for occupancy in March of this year.

An important part of the society's vision is to create housing that is socially and financially sustainable but also community supported. To aid in realizing this vision, the society has hired a community navigator to work with the new residents to turn their new units into homes, to support local sustainability, and to create a community within the complex. Mr. Carleton MacNeil has recently assumed the role and is sure to be an asset to the project and to future residents of Riverside Estates, as he brings with him countless hours of professional and volunteer experience.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating the Antigonish Affordable Housing Society for their success thus far in the creation of Riverside Estates.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

**DOHERTY, DAN: SUCCESS - CONGRATS.**

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the success of local publisher and businessman Dan Doherty. Dan wears many hats: realtor, chairman of the Spryfield Business Commission, and owner of local fixtures Danielsons General Store and Spryfield Water 'N' Wine. Dan also publishes *The Chebucto News* each month. This free community paper plays an essential role in connecting residents in Armdale and Spryfield and the communities stretching to Sambro with good news stories and information on local services and events.

In all his roles, Dan contributes to making Spryfield and the surrounding area a better place to live. This month marks a big milestone for Dan's Mont Street business, Water 'N' Wine. For 24 years, the store has been supplying wine- and beer-making kits, bottling services, equipment, and expertise to the area. He'll mark the big occasion with a grand opening on February 24<sup>th</sup> at his new location.

I ask all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Dan and his staff on their terrific success.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**PHINNEY, DEBBIE/STAGGERS PUB & GRUB - FREE CHRISTMAS DINNER**

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: Mr. Speaker, they say home is where the heart is. Unfortunately, some individuals live in isolation, and this is especially difficult over the holiday season. Debbie Phinney, owner of Staggers Pub & Grub on Portland Street, realized this, and for the third year in a row, she has hosted a free Christmas dinner to those in need of both food and social activity. With the help of folks like Angele, Barry, Sabina, and several other volunteers, Debbie was able to prepare meals for over 340 people, including delivering many meals to those not able to leave their homes.

The meal included turkey, beef, and all the fixings. During the dinner, the crowd was treated to the musical stylings of Mark Raven and guests.

I ask my colleagues in the House to please join me in saying thank you to Debbie and her amazing volunteers for helping those in need and bringing a smile to many faces in downtown Dartmouth during Christmas.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**CDN. CONFEDERATION - ANNIV. (150<sup>th</sup>)/ATL. CAN. INTL. AIRSHOW 2017**

HON. LEO GLAVINE: This summer will mark the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Canadian Confederation, and there are celebrations and events being planned across the country to

mark this special milestone. Several weeks ago, I had the privilege of attending the announcement of the Atlantic Canada International Airshow for 2017, which will take place in Greenwood, Nova Scotia, on August 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.

Fourteen Wing Greenwood is the largest Airforce base in Atlantic Canada and will be a perfect site for the event, which will include demonstrations by the world-renowned Snowbirds demonstration team, comprised of some of the most highly skilled pilots in the Royal Canadian Air Force. In addition to the Snowbirds, the airshow will host a multitude of other attractions to display the capabilities of our Armed Forces. A 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary-edition CF-18 fighter is confirmed for the event.

As the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Kings West, I would like to invite the citizens of Nova Scotia and their families to participate in many community events this year as we celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Confederation in our beautiful country. I would like to thank the airshow executives, personnel, and volunteers for making the 2017 Airshow Atlantic in Greenwood a reality this summer.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

### **RISK, DR. DAVID/FLUXLAB - GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION**

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Dr. David Risk and his dedicated team at St. Francis Xavier University's FluxLab research the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and develop new tools and technologies to assist in achieving that reduction. To be more specific, Dr. Risk focuses on large-scale emission-measurement problems within the energy industry.

One product of the team's work thus far has been a vehicle-mounted gas-leak detection technology called ExACT, short for emissions attribution via computational techniques. The sensor, which can detect large emission from up to 20 kilometres away and smaller ones from several hundred metres, undoubtedly has the potential to be a game-changer for both Canadian and global energy firms that aim to responsibly and accurately measure emissions stemming from their operations.

That's why I'm so proud to share with you, Mr. Speaker, that Altus Group Ltd. has acquired the exclusive rights to commercialize this technology for the market. This partnership represents an important step in making this technology commercially available to energy firms around the world where it can assist in the accurate measurement of emissions and their source strength.

I ask my colleagues in the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Dr. David Risk and the FluxLab team for their progress in the development and commercialization of ExACT.

MR. SPEAKER: You're a long-winded bunch tonight. The honourable member for Hants East.

**SWEET, SUSAN: HANTS CO./ARTISTIC COMMUN. - ADVOCATE**

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Susan Sweet is an artist and supporter of Nova Scotia art. She lives in Maitland and has been involved with Gallery 215 in Selma for the last several years. She has worked to bring Nova Scotian art to the rural market through Facebook and the gallery website. She is a graduate of NSCAD and has a BFA.

She is deeply influenced by the area and her past. Her process begins with a photographic journey through the area, and she then prints images as references for her painting and pastel work. Her images are enriched with emotion and shared with the world. She was the commissioned artist for the Hants County Exhibition to mark the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the event.

Susan Sweet is a part of the large artistic community that is Hants County. She is an advocate for Hants County and for the artistic community.

MR. SPEAKER: Barring - one more member's statement. The honourable member for Hants East.

**SPEARING, KEN: KENNETCOOK - HISTORIC ARTWORK**

HON. MARGARET MILLER: I have to be quick on my feet tonight.

I rise today to pay tribute to Ken Spearing and the wonderful works of art he creates, adding life to a central building in Kennetcook. Mr. Spearing created acrylic paintings to cover the 10 windows of the multi-unit building inspired by old photographs of businesses and iconic structures that helped create the Village of Kennetcook.

The pieces feature oil wells from the 1940s, original stores and churches, the former train station, MacAskill's Mill, and the last covered bridge that existed in Nova Scotia. After nearly 145 hours, the history and growth of Kennetcook is proudly on display in the hub of the community. The images spark many meaningful stories and the memories unique to the area.

Mr. Spearing's passion to portray rural scenes and the forgotten past of Nova Scotia agriculture, forestry, and industry is a powerful reminder to where we come from, a powerful reminder of who we are, as a people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HAMILTON, ANDREW - SCOTIA SCHOLARS AWARD (2016-17)**

MR. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Andrew Hamilton of White's Lake. Andrew is a Master's student in the Department of Applied Human Nutrition at Mount Saint Vincent University and he is also the recipient of the 2016-17 Scotia Scholars Award. The Scotia Scholars Award is intended to provide financial support to high-calibre trainees engaged in health research related to academic study at Nova Scotia universities.

The goal of the Scotia Scholars Award is to support development of the next generation of highly qualified health researchers and leaders in the Nova Scotia health research enterprise, as well as encourage continued interest in health research careers. Applicants are evaluated by their institution, based on their past academic leadership and research achievements.

I would like the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Andrew on achieving this prestigious designation, and wish him well in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Barring more Members' Statements, the House will stand recessed until 1:35 a.m.

[1:16 a.m. The House recessed.]

[1:34 a.m. The House reconvened.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We'll now proceed with 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.

**EECD - NO-FAIL POLICY: MYTH - PREM. CONFIRM**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is to the Premier. Earlier this week the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development said that the no-fail policy is a myth. Well, it's not a myth at the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board. Their policy manual says, "The AVRSB and the Department of Education believe that most students in grades P-6 and most middle level/junior high students (grades 6-9) benefit from being in class with their peers in age-appropriate settings. Retention, therefore, is a rare exception."

Their policy goes on to say, “The AVRSB expects, in those rare instances when it is considered to be an option, that retention will be experienced by a student no more than once during grades primary to nine.” I’ll table that.

Does the Premier agree that no-fail has been a myth?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, yes.

MR. BAILLIE: Well, Mr. Speaker, apparently the Premier doesn’t believe the manual of his own school board, the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board, where it’s pretty clear that it’s not a myth.

But it’s not just there, Mr. Speaker. Lisa Wilson is a teacher at E.B. Chandler Junior High School, in Amherst. She has written to us, and I’ll table the correspondence in a moment, that she has three non-attenders for whom there is no accountability. Even though they have missed the majority of the year, they will most likely move on to Grade 9. She also has 16 very poor attenders who miss at least two days per week on average. Again, there is no accountability.

Mr. Speaker, if no-fail is a myth, what does the Premier call passing students who don’t show up for school?

THE PREMIER: Again, I want to tell the honourable member that there was a directive sent out across the province to the school boards to notify them that there is no such thing as a no-fail policy. We rely on teachers, principals, and schools to ensure that kids who are not meeting expectations - they determine, based on their own professional judgment, whether or not that child moves forward or stays in that particular grade.

As the honourable member would know, there have been ongoing discussions around the attendance policy. There is a document ready to go out, as he would have heard in Question Period a few hours ago. It’s to go out to be reviewed by teachers. In the work-to-rule, they were not allowed to have that conversation.

We’re looking forward to them having a view of that so that we can implement that policy.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I don’t know how much evidence the Premier or the minister needs that, in fact, it’s not a myth, that this is going on in our schools right up until the present time.

I would like to share with the Premier a little more of Lisa Wilson’s note. She says that the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development has repeatedly said that a no-fail policy does not exist and that it may not be on the books, but it is a working policy. In her school, which contains Grades 7 and 8, it is a rare occurrence to see a student fail.

Students know this, and those who are unmotivated will simply take up a seat, when they attend, knowing they will get a free pass.

I ask the Premier, when will teachers like Lisa Wilson be allowed to stop the free passes?

THE PREMIER: She could prior to a few days ago. She can today. She will be able to in the future. We rely on her expertise to identify whether or not her students are meeting the grade expectations, if she is going to hold them back, along with her principal in that school community.

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

### **TEACHERS SITUATION: PREM. - APOLOGIZE**

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: My question is also to the Premier. Yesterday while the bells were ringing here in Province House, the Premier was at the World Trade and Convention Centre showing off an ad about optimism. I'm not sure that teachers share the optimism. Last year in the State of the Province Address, the Premier had to apologize for a Seniors' Pharmacare fiasco. This year he should be saying sorry to the teachers.

Mr. Speaker, I guess he forgot yesterday so I'll give him a chance today. Will the Premier take the responsibility and apologize to the teachers for the mess he has made?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank teachers across this province for the work they do, ensuring that our children and young Nova Scotians get a proper start in life. I've said from the very beginning that it's my belief that there's no profession that has a greater impact in this province than teaching. All of us have teachers who have taught us in school who have left a lasting legacy with us. We often remember them fondly.

What we're trying to do is work with teachers to ensure that we provide those supports. Teachers have told us they haven't felt they've been heard. This bill provides an avenue for them to be heard.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, clearly teachers think that the province is in a very different state than the Premier does. This government has brought about the first province-wide strike in our history. During yesterday's address, the Premier made sure to acknowledge his friends from the banks and congratulate them for their record profits.

Why does the Premier think it's more important to provide \$22 million to banks making record profits than it is to listen to teachers and make the classroom investments they have asked for?



THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member. What I actually said yesterday if he'd been listening was the banks had actually forecasted the largest growth in seven years in the province and project us to continue to move our economy forward. He would also know that after he was in government, sitting in a Cabinet that cut money out of public education, our government, every budget has continued to invest in public education.

But I also want to assure him and teachers across this province we have heard from teachers, we understand their frustration, we are prepared to invest in classrooms, and that's why this bill will allow us to speak directly to classroom teachers so we can make sure that the investments we make are the ones that they believe in.

MR. BELLIVEAU: Mr. Speaker, we have been in this House now since Tuesday. We've been sitting through the night, and at Law Amendments Committee teacher after teacher, presenter after presenter came to this government with one request: withdraw this bill. A few hours ago, we gave the Premier an opportunity to do the right thing, but he didn't take the opportunity. You know, it is never too late to do the right thing. So, again, I'll ask, will the Premier take the advice of the teachers and withdraw this bill?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As he would know, I've had three tentative agreements with two different executives with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. We've gone through this process. Work-to-rule began in early December, and it's having an impact on classrooms across the province. This bill will get back to where kids will be back in class, and I hope the honourable member will support it.

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

**LAW AMENDMENTS COMM. PROC.:  
PREM. RESPONSE - CHANGE EXPLAIN**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, in 2013 the Premier was actually eager to hear from presenters at the Law Amendments Committee at that time, and he said, "We do think it's important that in the process of delivering democracy that we allow and be confident that Nova Scotians have had a real opportunity to be heard and a real opportunity to have their say on this piece of legislation," a piece of legislation ironically to fix a contract for paramedics. I'd like to ask the Premier, why did the Premier rule out delivering democracy in the exact same situation for teachers?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we actually asked the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and the Leader of the New Democratic Party to actually support changes that would allow two committees to be run at the same time. It was the honourable member who denied the people the opportunity to be heard today.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, that's just not the case. The paramedics had a chance to talk to an entire Law Amendments Committee, and we asked that teachers be given that same opportunity. It was the Premier and his government that said no and shut down the Law Amendments Committee here tonight.

But back in 2013, he also said, "I am pleased with the fact that we have asked and pushed for the Law Amendments Committee to sit today so Nova Scotians will have an opportunity to come in to speak on this piece of legislation. I am sure we'll hear from paramedics." Why did the Premier think it was so important to hear from paramedics in 2013, but not from teachers in 2017?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. He would know the Law Amendments Committee sat last night; we heard from presenters last night. He would also know that it sat today; we heard from presenters today. We gave the honourable member an opportunity to stand in this House and support an opportunity that we would have run two parallel committees to hear from more presenters. He chose not to support that.

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

**LAW AMENDMENTS COMM.: PREM./EECD MIN.  
- NON-APPEARANCE EXPLAIN**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. He keeps telling us that he is listening to teachers, that he wants to hear directly from teachers. Well, over the past two days, I feel honoured and privileged to have had the opportunity to actually listen to the many teachers who braved the snow, the cold, the wind to come here to the people's House and share their personal stories. I saw anger; I saw tears; I saw frustration; and I saw betrayal. But, most of all, I saw human beings, professionals who were deeply committed to the well-being of their students.

My question for the Premier is, could he please explain why neither he nor his Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development bothered to come to Law Amendments Committee themselves to hear directly from the teachers of this province?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As she would know, there were members from the government who were there, members of the Executive Council were there. We continue to get back reports from what is happening.

As she would know, Mr. Speaker, there are many things going on in this province. I have responsibility not only to be in this House but I have responsibility to run the Government of the Province of Nova Scotia. That's what we're going to continue to do.

MS. ZANN: My mother would say she is the cat's mother. The Premier has a habit of blaming others for his mistakes. During the Film Tax Credit fiasco he blamed Nova Scotia's filmmakers and told everyone that the tax credit was too rich for Nova Scotia. Then he turned around and handed millions of dollars to the richest banks.

Now, during this education fiasco, he is blaming the union, he is blaming the teachers, and he is blaming the NDP - neglecting to say that we gave the teachers a 7.25 per cent raise while respecting their collective bargaining rights. My constituents want to know, can the Premier admit that teachers volunteer much of their time outside their contract, and why is he not willing to agree to arbitration instead and just scrap Bill No. 75?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for her question. Of course, teachers do a tremendous amount of work beyond their working day. As I said earlier, all of us would remember experiences that we've had, whether it's through help we would have received as students, whether it was coaching activities that take place, whether that's in a sporting team, whether it's a band program. Probably the two largest student events in my community are the band programs in the three high schools that I represent, all of that is work that is happening afterwards. Of course, I would support that.

What we have here is trying to strike a balance. We wanted to have the capacity to make those investments in the classrooms. I've heard from teachers who are not happy with the fact that we put \$65 million back in that her government cut out, that we missed the mark. There's obviously more work to do. I'm looking forward to hearing from those teachers, making a commitment to do that investment with them.

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

#### **LAW AMENDMENTS COMM.: PRESENTATION ACCESS - DETAILS**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable that for the first time in the province's history teachers are now on strike. Back in 2001, the Minister of Energy had a philosophy about strikes and the tactics governments used to end them. He said, and I'll put that Hansard in there, when referring to a former Liberal Government that was dealing with the strike, he said, "We could have brought in that bill and we could have ordered them back to work. We didn't do that. We respected the process."

My question to the Minister of Energy is, does he long for the days of the MacLellan Government when Liberals respected the collective bargaining process?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. It gives me an opportunity to remind again of the efforts that our government undertook during this process to have more Nova Scotians be able to make presentations at Law Amendments Committee, we recommended that we have a subcommittee that would have allowed, for

the first time ever, more Nova Scotians to be able to make presentations which the Opposition at first agreed to and then turned around and disagreed with.

One of the other things we did, Mr. Speaker, is that for the first time ever, there was a live feed which allowed Nova Scotians from one end of our province to the next to be able to make and see the presentations that were taking place.

Mr. Speaker, I think there is no question that we have done a number of things to allow Nova Scotians to be able to make comments on Bill No. 75, and we're certainly still open to hearing presentations from our constituents and from all Nova Scotians.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: The live feed brought to us by the CBC, of course, was first shut down by the Chair and then, after a motion from the member for Kings North, allowed it, with unanimous consent so I thank the members of the committee for that, to allow that to happen.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is that back in 2001, the Minister of Energy didn't approve of legislation to put striking workers back to work. In the debate I just tabled, he called it the easy way out. Why is this government taking the easy way out when it comes to teachers, instead of going back to the table and hammering out a deal like they did in the good old days?

MR. SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I believe he may have been an executive assistant back in the day to the Minister of Finance during Bill No. 68, when the Progressive Conservative Government took on nurses in this province. It was around the summertime. We were sitting 24 hours a day in probably 30-degree-plus weather, as the Progressive Conservative Government of the day was looking to ram through legislation.

I stand corrected that if he wasn't an executive assistant at the time that it probably wasn't too long afterwards that he did become one and I don't recall at any point hearing from that member ever since, saying that was the wrong approach being taken by the government of the day, of which he has remained a member of that specific Party. If we're reflecting on history, there certainly didn't seem to be any issues with Bill No. 68 in how the Tories treated nurses back then.

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

### **TEACHERS STRIKE: GOV'T. MLAs - BLAME**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, here we are on the eve of or in the middle of the very first teachers' strike in the province. Back in 2001, the Minister of Energy knew where to point the finger of blame when it came to a possible strike. He said:

I have to tell you, again, regardless of what the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Health or any other minister tells you, if the health care workers walk out at 6:00 a.m. tomorrow morning, if you want to see who is to blame, [Government MLAs] can all collectively look in the mirror.

My question to the Minister of Energy is, does the minister have enough mirrors for all Liberal MLAs to see who is to blame for this unprecedented teachers' strike?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: What is interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that once again we see the Progressive Conservative Party trying to warm up the unions and trying to convince unions that they are their best friends. Yet when the Leader of the Official Opposition was asked in at least two interviews with ATV, would you offer a different wage package than what the government has offered - the answer was no, I wouldn't. He goes out and tells teachers that I'm your friend and I'm here to help you and I understand everything you want. But by the way, the wage package as it is, I wouldn't offer you any more.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that we all stand here and be able to say what our positions are. We clearly know that the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party has zero intentions of offering any more than what has been offered on the table as a financial package for teachers in Nova Scotia.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, back in 2001, the Minister of Energy asked some questions that are relevant today. He said, "We are on the eve of a strike. Where is [the] government? Are they at the table? Are they sitting 24 hours a day like we are here? Where are the negotiators for the government?"

Today, with this strike, I am asking the Premier what the Minister of Energy demanded to know 16 years ago - where is the government? Are they at the table? Are they sitting 24 hours a day like we are? Where are the negotiators for the government?

THE PREMIER: I think he asked me, Mr. Speaker. Again, I want to remind the honourable member that we had three tentative agreements with two different executives of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. They were negotiated at the bargaining table.

We were at the bargaining table when work-to-rule began; we've heard the impact it is having. We're hearing from parents, students, teachers as well, the impact this is having. When the most recent tentative agreement was voted down, the union leadership made it clear that they were going back to continue to do work-to-rule.

This is about getting kids back in class, Mr. Speaker, and I hope the honourable member will support this piece of legislation.

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

### **WORK-TO-RULE - STUDENTS: ATTENTION ADEQUACY - CONFIRM**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Again, the Premier continues to spin the numbers as if he is playing from the same Trumpian playbook. He continues to regurgitate the old campaign propaganda that the NDP cut \$65 million from education when, in fact, it was \$13 million, plus cost pressures that are imagined.

We raised teachers' wages by 7.25 per cent but he wants us to believe that he is bringing in this offensive piece of legislation because he is actually concerned about students, just like they locked out students to keep them safe.

My question for the Premier is, could he please table the evidence to support his claim that students have not been receiving adequate attention in the classroom during work-to-rule, because this is the reason he is giving for doing this Draconian piece of legislation?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. She would know, and I know that she would have heard from teachers as well, she would have heard from students across this province there is no question that this has been a divisive issue in schools and in communities. This has been a challenging time for teachers, for parents, for students.

It was our sincere hope that we would have got an agreement at the bargaining table. We had three tentative agreements with two different leaderships of the executive committee, Mr. Speaker. Our goal is: kids need to be back in class.

The honourable member referenced the fact that she gave a 7.5 per cent pay raise when she was in government. She's ignoring the fact, she's not telling Nova Scotians, that she was also part of a government that cut \$65 million out of classrooms at the same time.

MS. ZANN: In Law Amendments Committee today, a passionate Cape Breton teacher told us that, in recent years, he has felt like he's working on an assembly line, that the government has kept adding nuts and bolts, and that the conveyor belt just keeps moving faster. The teacher said that work-to-rule actually slows down the speed of the conveyor belt and has allowed him to pay attention to what really matters: his students. We heard that story over and over and over. Would the Premier please explain to this House why he thinks that he knows better than teachers who are in our classrooms every single day?

THE PREMIER: There's no question that there are challenges in classrooms across our province. We make and have continued to make investments. I've said before that we

thought we were hitting the mark with the investments that we were making, that we were asked by the union to make. Obviously, that has not met with the satisfaction of teachers.

The honourable member can stand in this House each and every time and talk about this fact. But the fact of the matter is her government cut \$65 million out of public education. That is challenging enough. There's no question.

We want to continue to make investments in classrooms across this province. We have heard from teachers. We're going to continue to listen to teachers. This bill provides an avenue for teachers to have their voices heard.

We're going to continue to make those investments. It's my hope that the investments we make in co-operation with teachers will hit the mark and make a difference in their lives and in the learning environment for students.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

### **EECD: NO-FAIL POLICY - EXISTENCE CONFIRM**

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: I certainly hope the Minister of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development saw some of the feed yesterday from Law Amendments Committee and has a better understanding that the primary reason that teachers rejected three offers, as we've heard repeatedly now, is really about classroom conditions.

One of those issues that's been raised a number of times is the no-fail policy, which the minister said yesterday doesn't exist and the Premier just said doesn't exist. Yet it appears repeatedly on the minister's own website, as it turns out.

The Freeman panel report on her website says a no-fail policy began in the 1990s and that, "Today, with few exceptions, Nova Scotian students are promoted with their peers." In fact, in order to achieve this, there is a credit rescue and a credit recovery program to ensure that students pass even if they don't pass in assignments or are late with their work, and so on.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

MR. YOUNGER: Does a no-fail policy exist in Nova Scotia, as the panel said, or does it not exist, as the minister claims?

HON. KAREN CASEY: We want to make sure that every student does their very best. We provide supports and services to make sure that they do. We never want a student to have to repeat. But there are times when they do.

When that time comes, we value the professional judgment of the teacher, who works with the parent and the principal. Those are the three people who will determine whether a student needs more time at their grade level before they move on.

We do everything we can and teachers do everything they can to make sure that the services and supports are there for that student so that they can achieve their very best. Sometimes that doesn't happen, and students are asked to repeat a grade.

MR. YOUNGER: In addition to that document on her website, there is also the 2010 report of the Minister's Working Committee on Absenteeism and Classroom Climate. That report covers a lot of things including a no-fail policy.

In fact, they recommend getting rid of the no-fail policy. The response from the minister of the day was to not get rid of it but instead to do a two-year trial getting rid of it, which expired in 2013, just before this member became minister. How is that not a no-fail policy when two documents on her own website say that, in fact, there is a no-fail policy and that there was a trial period with a fail policy which expired just before she became minister?

MS. CASEY: As I've said, every teacher works very hard to make sure that every student reaches their full potential. When they do, they progress to the next level. If they don't, then we want to make sure that that student has the adaptations that they need, if they need an IPP, if they go to resource. Teachers do everything possible to make sure that that student can be successful.

Talking about a no-fail policy, we have over 400 students who we have recorded as having repeated a grade. There is no such thing as a no-fail policy.

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

**PREM.: BOUNDARIES COMMN. - STRIKE**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Nova Scotians must be confident that their elections are fair, legitimate, and constitutional. Our democracy of course rests on it.

Recently, the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal ruled that the province's existing electoral map violates fundamental Charter rights. My question to the Premier is, will he ensure the restoration of the constitutional rights of Acadian and African Nova Scotian voters and strike a boundaries commission?

THE PREMIER: As the honourable member would know, as I'm sure he would have read part of the documentation of that court decision, a number of the organizations that spoke, one in particular, the Acadian Federation, said this would be a two- to three-year process. You know that.



We're now in conversations with them about what the possibilities are and how we look at dealing with the issues that the court brought forward and making sure that their rights are being protected. When we have that conversation and get a path forward, we will be certain to let all Nova Scotians know.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I reject the three-year number that the Premier is throwing out. Both of the last two Electoral Boundaries Commissions took less than a year to do their work.

The Premier has more than enough time to strike a commission and right the wrong of the jerrymandered boundaries that were given to us by the previous NDP Government. The Liberals used to oppose the illegitimate boundaries, so it is hard to understand why they don't want to fix them quickly.

This government has both the time and the means. My question to the Premier is, why is the Premier condemning Acadians and African Nova Scotians to another unconstitutional election?

THE PREMIER: This is a serious issue. The honourable member is suggesting that I'm condemning Acadians and African Nova Scotians by the fact that the court has just made a decision finding something unconstitutional. I believe it's unfair, quite frankly.

I will and have always respected minority rights in this province. I'm proud of the work that I've been doing with the African Nova Scotian community. I'm proud of the work that our government has been doing with the Acadian community. I'm proud of the work that our government has been doing with the Mi'kmaq community.

Today was an historic day, when we issued a pardon for Grand Chief Gabriel Sylliboy, a wrong that happened almost 100 years ago.

I have heard the court. We have heard the court. We are now engaging with our partners out there, and we will find the proper solution on a go-forward basis.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

### **EECD: CLASSROOM IMPROVEMENTS - PRODUCE**

HON. PAT DUNN: My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. A resource teacher in Halifax by the name of Christine Richards recently described the decline of inclusion in education in this province.

Ms. Richards said, and I quote, "I've had teachers in tears in my office with huge self-doubt. They blame themselves, which is easy to do." I'll table that. These are the plain

and awful consequences of this government's refusal to take education improvement seriously.

My question to the minister is, after hearing stories like Ms. Richards', why is the minister proposing more talk instead of producing meaningful classroom improvements?

HON. KAREN CASEY: I think if the member looked at the piece of legislation, he would see very clearly, and teachers would see very clearly, teachers' fingerprints on that legislation. There is very clearly a mechanism for two things that teachers have asked us for to happen. An opportunity for them to be part of the decision-making - in fact, they will now be part of the decision as to how the \$20 million will be spent over the two years, \$10 million each year. That's there. That has never happened before. The second thing is that the issues that teachers have identified are clearly identified. They're written out in the legislation. That's exactly why we want to respond, and it's how we're responding to what teachers are asking us to do.

MR. DUNN: There's quite a few classroom teachers across the province who would love to have their fingerprints on anything going forward, but they may not get that chance.

Once again, this government insists on busywork designed to look like action, rather than taking the urgent action this education system needs.

My question to the minister, will the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development agree today that this legislation is meant to procrastinate, rather than empower this province's hard-working teachers?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised to see the member standing up there next to his Leader when they seem to disagree on this whole business of an NSTU strike. In fact, we've heard the Leader of the Official Opposition say to blame the Premier for this strike, but the member for Pictou Centre has gone out publicly and said, "I am going to let that rest on the shoulders of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. It is another day where things will be in disarray in regard to the students and things that happen outside the school. We already had several storm days recently. We need some consistency and structure now." Mr. Speaker, he was talking about the NSTU strike tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

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

MS. LISA ROBERTS: My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. I appreciate that she doesn't condone students waiting two to three years for psych-ed assessments, but I have heard of this situation a number of times, and we heard it just recently at Law Amendments.

What mechanism does the minister have to ensure that boards have the funds they need to hire school psychologists at the appropriate levels to cut down wait times for psych-ed assessments to no more than three months?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, as I said to the member before, and I will repeat, the wait time for students to have a psych-ed assessment, the wait time for them to get on a speech-language schedule, or the wait time for them to have resource are unacceptable. If that means that we have to change the ratio or put more funding into hiring those specialists, that will certainly be a priority. We want the teachers to work with us on that.

MS. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, we have heard from teachers of the proliferation of initiatives aimed at classroom improvement, which they don't feel are improving their practice. Often-mentioned time wasters are professional learning communities, school improvement plans, and external assessments.

My question to the minister is, which improvement initiative will the minister instruct her department to stop in order to actually improve the working conditions for teachers and learning conditions for students?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that teachers said they were concerned about was the number of assessments that were happening. We immediately put a stop to that until we look at which assessments were being asked for by the boards and which were being asked for by the department. We have that information. We know that we should not be duplicating and getting the same information from two different sources, so there will certainly be a change in the number of assessments that are done in our classrooms.

The second thing is, there were questions that were raised and teachers expressed concerns about PowerSchool. They expressed concerns about TIENET. We have already sent something out to the schools with respect to PowerSchool. We are trying to address their questions and their concerns as soon as possible.

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

### **COM. SERV. - REUNIFICATION MECHANISMS**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Services. We've been talking about children for a week now, or close to it. Children are the most important commodity we have, and I know it's important to Community Services to make sure that children are safe and looked after.

Once a case has been torn down into the various pieces, is there a plan to put those pieces back together for the benefit of the family?

HON. JOANNE BERNARD: I thank the honourable member for the question. We have a myriad of mechanisms within the Department of Community Services and the child welfare system to work with families before they get to a point of crisis. That was the whole point of making over 100 amendments to the Children and Family Services Act. Since that time, we've added programming to it so that families are assisted and supported before they get to the point of children being taken into care.

When children are taken into care for various reasons - neglect, abuse - there are also mechanisms in place for reunification, because we know that's usually in the best interest of the child.

MR. HARRISON: Is there a way in which even I, someone in my position, can check to make sure that a plan is in place? Right now there doesn't seem to be one.

MS. BERNARD: There's always the conundrum of having the right of privacy of the child who is taken into care versus advocacy. I'm blessed, and this province is blessed, that the Department of Community Services has a wealth of information and hard-working people who base their social work on evidence-based decisions and best practices across the country.

Case conferences are held every day, not only within the department but within the community, with other issue experts, so at the end of the day what is best for the child is paramount and done.

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

#### **LAW AMENDMENTS COMM.: EXCLUDED PRESENTERS - APOLOGIZE**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question again is to the Premier. Over the last two days we held Law Amendments Committee for a total of about 15 hours. We saw about 100 people on those two days, and when we asked about extending it so that more people could come in and chat, we were told it is our fault that we wouldn't split Law Amendments into two committees.

If we had split Law Amendments into two committees and had seen 200 people, we would have had 200 more still waiting to get on that list.

Mr. Speaker, I want to know, will the Premier apologize to the 200 people - mainly rural Nova Scotians - who weren't permitted to speak at the Law Amendments Committee this week?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. In his preamble, he laid out the fact that he voted against the capacity for more people to be heard - another committee and a subcommittee on Law Amendments. We had

Law Amendments last night and we had it for the entire day today. The bill was reported back.

I look forward to this bill continuing to move forward through the House so that we can get kids back in school.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, more people to be heard is not what the Law Amendments Committee is all about. It's all people to be heard. Even if we had split it, we still would have had 200 people sitting and waiting to get into Law Amendments Committee.

I will say, Mr. Speaker, that it's the first time I sat in Law Amendments Committee - and I sat over there for seven or eight hours - that I saw an actual Minister of the Crown sitting in Law Amendments Committee and I didn't see one regular committee member sitting there. It got to the point where eight o'clock hit, we had a person sitting in the chair, and the government members got up and walked out and wouldn't let her finish her presentation.

I want to know, will the Premier apologize to Tami Jardine, who travelled in from the Valley to sit in that chair to have her say, and was left?

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

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that I was at that committee - just to correct something. There was an attempt by the Opposition to claim that Cabinet Ministers don't sit on the Law Amendments Committee. They may have forgotten that Leonard Preyra, who was a Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage, was a permanent member on the Law Amendments Committee under the previous NDP Government, so there is a history of having representation by Cabinet Ministers there.

We made an attempt right around the end of the list of presenters we had, because the member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River had a constituent. I also had a former constituent who grew up back home who had also asked, and we were attempting to find ways to accommodate them. Unfortunately, the Opposition took the time to block those efforts and deny that from taking place.

There was a good-faith effort. We were prepared to hear more presenters. The Opposition clearly wasn't interested in doing so.

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

**PREM.: FED. FUNDING AGREEMENT - DETAILS**

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, it seems that the Premier likes to take a hard line on bargaining here at home in Nova Scotia, but has a different approach to negotiations with his federal Liberal friends in Ottawa. Somehow the Premier's team went into the bilateral health agreement negotiations asking for a 5.2 per cent annual increase but agreed to a side deal and accepted 3.5 per cent.

Can the Premier explain why this government thinks a funding agreement that results in fewer dollars is the best deal that they could have gotten for Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Actually, Mr. Speaker, it is not less money. I'm sure he would follow the negotiations with great interest, being a former Minister of Health, and he would know there is a 3 per cent increase in funding. There's also targeted funding. For the Province of Nova Scotia, there's roughly an additional \$150 million for adolescent mental health that the federal government has directly targeted - the very thing that we've been hearing in this House.

He would also know that there's an additional \$130 million for home care. I know, as a former Minister of Health, he would have worked very hard to ensure that home care services continued to be enhanced across the province. In every budget, we have invested in home care because we've heard from Nova Scotians who want to stay in their home as long as possible.

MR. DAVID WILSON: The Premier should know that if he stood together with the other Premiers and the other Health Ministers across the country, they would have gotten a better deal. They caved, Mr. Speaker. They caved, and it was a disappointment across the country to those provinces that thought Nova Scotia would have been a partner.

If this was such a great deal, why is it so hard to get the details? An access-to-information request was filed requesting all correspondence related to funding in the health accord between December 1, 2016, and January 2017. The response we got was that there were no records.

I would like to ask the Premier, can the Premier explain to Nova Scotians why there are no records of any of the analysis or decision related to this agreement? If there is, would he make those public?

THE PREMIER: There was a public debate about the issue, from Premiers across the country sitting with the Prime Minister. It has been ongoing for quite some time.

The national government has made a commitment to target the priorities of Canadians. They've targeted funding toward adolescent mental health. We believe that's an important investment. We believe that funding needed to arrive in Nova Scotia to make

those strategic investments for struggling young people in this province who require support.

We have also said many times that we've invested in home care. There's additional funding associated directly with home care. We're going to continue to work with the national government.

He would also know that there are a number of other Canadian provinces that have signed bilateral agreements with the federal government. Part of that provision is that if there's any changes to any other Canadian province, the Province of Nova Scotia will receive any additional funding that is there.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

#### **EECD - EAs: CLASSMATE FILL-INS - CONFIRM**

MR. JOHN LOHR: My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Today in Law Amendments Committee, we heard the story of a student - in fact we heard from the student's mother - a Grade 7 girl who was a special needs student who needed help getting from class to class. In that school, another Grade 7 student, a classmate, was assigned to this task.

My question for the minister: is this normal practice, asking other classmates to fill in for EAs in our schools?

HON. KAREN CASEY: I can't speak to that case, but if the member wants to share those details with me, I would be glad to follow up.

MR. LOHR: In fact, this case did happen, and this girl was a flight risk. This is how the mother learned about this. We learned that this Grade 7 student - reportedly her parents weren't aware that she was in this position of being responsible for this.

Again I would ask, is this normal practice, to ask students to take on these very responsible roles in our schools?

MS. CASEY: Again, I will say that I would be glad to talk to the member about the specifics of that because I'm not aware of it.

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

#### **HEALTH & WELLNESS: HOSPITAL UNDERSPENDING - RISK**

HON. DAVID WILSON: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. In December, both the Yarmouth General Hospital and the Queens General Hospital in

Liverpool suffered damages when pipes burst, causing substantial flooding. These events raised questions about the government's decision to underspend the hospital infrastructure budget by more than 50 per cent over the last three years. That's more than \$70 million budgeted for hospital infrastructure that went back into government coffers.

I would like to ask the minister, is he concerned that the government's underspending in hospital infrastructure is putting patients and hospital staff at risk?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: In both circumstances, there were circumstantial reasons as to why pipes froze. Liverpool is a case of where a hatch was left open, and pipes froze and burst. Yarmouth Regional Hospital is a very new, relatively new hospital and, again, a miscalculation and we had obviously a very disastrous flood.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I was the Minister of Health and Wellness. There are needs right across this province. To underspend the hospital infrastructure budget by over \$70 million is not an excuse. The Auditor General identified a \$85 million funding gap related to hospital infrastructure needs in the province, but this government seems to have no plan for addressing these needs.

So I would like to ask and give the opportunity for the minister: When will the minister tell Nova Scotians what this government's plan is to address hospital infrastructure needs, especially the ones that the Auditor General's Office have brought to light?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, as the member would know, having been a former minister, there are times that projects get redesigned. They go out to tender and there is a gap between final design and the work starting being behind by several million dollars. In fact, as he would know, it has happened many years, and that's part of a process. All of these are scheduled work and part also is tied in to a full review of services, how and where they'll be delivered across the province, and it was important for the NSHA to carry that work out first before certain projects, other projects, were undertaken.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

#### **HEALTH & WELLNESS: WEYMOUTH - PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Health and Wellness. There are still over 3,000 patients who are without a family doctor in the Weymouth area. A meeting was held in Weymouth in October and since then nothing has changed. The member for Clare-Digby was in attendance at that meeting.

My question for the minister is, can the minister explain why the people of Weymouth are still without a doctor?



HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, this is an area where of course a doctor retired. A significant number of the patients are now going to the Clare Medical Clinic; some others are in Weymouth. I would just give the message to the member - stay tuned for good news.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, thank you for that answer.

This government ran on a promise of a doctor for every Nova Scotian. The people of Weymouth feel ignored by this government. They're tired of worrying about what should happen if they get sick or find themselves caring for an ill family member. My question is, when can the people of Weymouth expect a doctor in their area?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, what I can tell the member opposite - we won't have announcements until the final contracts are signed but this is a year when I certainly am pretty excited about the fact that recruitment has gone especially well and Weymouth certainly can look forward to having doctors. We have nurse practitioners who are working in the clinic there now, and I think we'll be, very shortly, you will hear good news.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

### **EECD: CODING - SUPPORT INADEQUACY**

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. She has often pointed to the introduction of coding as one of the successes of this government but, as we heard from a teacher today at Law Amendments Committee, it has been done without sufficient professional development, and that teacher said that she struggles discussing it with parents.

Can the minister explain why her department added coding to the curriculum without providing adequate support to teachers?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I think everyone here would recognize that the importance of coding and the understanding and skill that students need in order to become productive when they go on through high school and out into the work world. It does depend on coding, it does depend on them having a knowledge base.

What we wanted to do is to make sure we did an introduction, we certainly . . .

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

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will now recess while it resolves into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

[2:29 a.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Mr. Keith Irving in the Chair.]

[2:20 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened with Deputy Speaker Mr. Keith Irving in the Chair.]

THE SPEAKER: The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole House on Bills has met and considered the following bill:

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

and the chairman has been instructed to recommend this bill to the favourable consideration of the House.

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

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, may I make an introduction to the House?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to the House and in fact welcome to Nova Scotia, a number of distinguished educators and teachers' representatives who are joining us in the east gallery today.

We have with us: Heather Smith, the President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation; Mike Foulds of the Ontario Teachers' Federation; Rémi Sabourin of the Franco-Ontarian Teacher Association; Sam Hammond of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario; James Dinn of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association; Shelley Morse who is no stranger to this House, Vice-President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation and a Past President of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union; as well as Wally Fiander, First Vice President of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union; and Joan Ling who is the Executive Director of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union.

I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming them here to the Legislature today. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Once again, I am afraid that the gallery should not be applauding, under the Rules of our House. Thank you.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. A few minutes ago the President of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, Liette Doucet, advised the media that there will be no job action taking place on Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, meaning that teachers, kids and all support staff will be in school on Tuesday.

As a result of that, Mr. Speaker, the House will meet again on Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, from the hour of 12:01 a.m. until 11:59 p.m. After the daily routine and Question Period, we will begin debate on third reading of Bill No. 75.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now rise to meet again on Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, from the hour of 12:01 a.m. until 11:59 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise to meet again on Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, between the hours of 12:01 a.m. and 11:59 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned until Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, at 12:01 a.m.

[The House rose at 2:23 p.m.]