



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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First Session

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2017

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2017

Sixty-third General Assembly

First Session

9:00 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Mr. Chuck Porter

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a petition, the operative clause of which reads: There is a desperate need for a new elementary school in Springhill. "We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now to help build a new school."

I have affixed my signature hereto and there are 261 signatures on the petition.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition on behalf of the residents. The operative clauses reads as follows: “We, the residents of Marshalltown back roads are petitioning the Province of Nova Scotia to pave the road.”

Mr. Speaker, I have affixed my signature. There are 59 signatures. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by acknowledging that we are here in Mi’kma’ki, the traditional territory of the Mi’kmaq people. It is my pleasure to say a few words about the important celebration happening on Monday, Treaty Day 2017. On Treaty Day, we reflect on the importance of our treaty relationship. We also celebrate the achievements of the Mi’kmaq elders and their youth. Our government is in working collaboration with our Mi’kmaq partners to advance reconciliation through many initiatives and I want to highlight just a few.

Earlier this year, we issued a pardon and apology to the late Grand Chief Gabriel Sylliboy and his family for his conviction for hunting out of season almost 90 years ago. We are also working collaboratively to develop an Aboriginal justice strategy that is focused on reducing the overrepresentation of indigenous people in our justice system.

Early this month, we acknowledged support for families involved in the national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, so that they have the information and support they’ll need if they choose to participate in this process.

Also, we are revitalizing the Mi’kmaq culture and language as an important part of our Nova Scotia history. It’s an important part of the first cultural action plan, which we introduced a few months ago. There has been some stand-up progress in treaty education since we signed the MOU in 2015. It is important that the history of the Mi’kmaq be told and represented in our public schools, in the public service, and to the general public throughout Nova Scotia, so they understand the important relationship that our ancestors received and the relationship our ancestors began almost 400 years ago when Membertou welcomed our first French ancestors in Port Royal in 1605.

We know there is more work to do in reconciliation, and I want to assure this House and all members of Nova Scotia that our government is committed to this important work.

In addition to the importance of Treaty Day, I want to remind all members that October is Mi'kmaq History Month. There are many events happening both on Treaty Day and throughout that month, and I want to encourage all members to participate. I would also ask all Nova Scotians to embrace the spirit of Treaty Day, not just on Monday but every day. After all, we are all treaty people. Wela'lin.

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, let me begin by thanking the Premier for providing me with a copy of his remarks in advance. I, too, would like to acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people. This is the 31st celebration of Treaty Day, and it is a great opportunity for every Nova Scotian to learn more about the history and important contributions of the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia and the importance of the treaty relationships that we have with the Mi'kmaq.

The first Treaty Day was marked by the signing of a proclamation by then Grand Chief Donald Marshall, Sr. I am pleased to say with each successive Treaty Day celebration, together we make some more progress towards understanding, mutual respect, and, ultimately, reconciliation. As I've occasionally noted in this House, it was in 1958, not that long ago, when Prime Minister John Diefenbaker championed the Canadian Bill of Rights that gave all Aboriginal people in this country the right to vote. That was only 1960.

That fact always makes me think of a great friend of this House, the late Noel Knockwood. I had the honour to go to school with his grandson Pius, who remains a friend. Noel Knockwood was born in 1932. He was 28 and had already served our country in Korea before he was granted the right to vote. Forty years later, he was our Sergeant-at-Arms in this Legislature. His remarkable life is a story of perseverance, humility, and triumph that all of us can learn from.

Mr. Speaker, today is a day to celebrate the progress we have made, but it is also a day to recognize that there remains much more to do. All members of the Progressive Conservative caucus are committed to working toward greater understanding and reconciliation. I do hope that all Nova Scotians mark Treaty Day on Sunday and take advantage of the many opportunities to learn about the Mi'kmaq culture that we all benefit from, and also in the month of October during Mi'kmaq History Month. Thank you very much. (Applause)

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, the first treaties between the Mi'kmaq people and the British Empire were signed nearly 300 years ago to establish a basis for peaceful

coexistence. On October 1st we celebrate Treaty Day as a way of recognizing the importance of the treaties to the history of this province and its people.

I would like to recognize today that we are standing and sitting on the unceded territory of Mi'kma'ki, and I say "unceded" because this land was never sold, or rented, or ceded to the colonial settlers. The Mi'kma'ki welcomed them with open arms and said we will sign peace and friendship treaties with you so that you can share this beautiful land of ours but we also would like to be respected and have our voices heard when important decisions are made about its use.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that it shames me today to know that we are still continuing on many times not consulting properly with the Mi'kmaq people. Honouring the spirit of the treaties means respecting the rights of these First Peoples who welcomed our newcomers here so many centuries ago. It means taking responsibility for addressing past and present injustices and committing to the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

I especially want to recognize today the First Nations People of Millbrook and Sipekne'katik, whose friendship and ally-ship have been integral to my work as an MLA, and just recently I enjoyed bringing a bus-full of people from Millbrook to Halifax for the Prismatic Multicultural Festival. We very much enjoyed our trip and our trip home as well. So, thank you, wela'lin, and all my relations.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 277

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

Whereas today marks the last day that Mr. Robert "Bob" Kinsman sits in the gallery as Manager of Hansard Reporting Services; and

Whereas Bob has served this House and Nova Scotians for a total of 36 years, beginning his work in 1981 as a seasonal employee and then as Assistant Editor in 1989 and as Manager of Hansard since the year 2000; and

Whereas Bob has spent many long hours up in the gallery, Mr. Speaker - and I am not sure how he survived it that long - and at the Hansard Office, and leading an excellent team with a record of exemplary service;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly thank Bob Kinsman for his outstanding contribution to the House of Assembly, its members, and our province, and wish him a wonderful retirement with his wife, Nancy, their children, grandchildren, family, and friends.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice, on behalf of all members of this House, and passage without debate.

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried. (Standing Ovation)

Let me just take the opportunity to say as Speaker, for a matter of the record, I know we had some personal time yesterday with Bob and his family but it has been a tremendous honour for me, as Speaker, to work with somebody like Bob, a man of character and professionalism who has certainly kept the standard of operations not only in the Hansard department for this House of Assembly but the entire operation of the House of Assembly at an exemplary level. I spoke yesterday of Bob's reputation throughout the Commonwealth as one of the leaders in his field.

For your years of service, Bob, we're forever grateful. We will certainly miss you. You're a great friend to this House. Drop in any time, my friend. (Applause)

[9:15 a.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 278

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

Whereas the organization Phoenix Youth Programs is a leader in innovative approaches in engaging and supporting youth in Halifax Regional Municipality, providing a continuum of care for youth aged 11 to 24 and their families; and

Whereas this year, Phoenix celebrates 30 years of helping young people reach their full potential, develop careers, and live independently; and

Whereas Phoenix has grown over the past three decades to offer a multitude of supports that empower young people to discover and harness their strengths, find a true sense of belonging, and make good choices;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the entire Phoenix community for looking out for one another for 30 years and wish them great success for many years to come.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 279

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

Whereas on Sunday, October 1st, we will mark both National Seniors Day and the International Day of Older Persons, recognizing the contributions of older adults to our families and communities across the province; and

Whereas the theme of this year's International Day of Older Persons is focused on tapping the talents, contributions, and participation of older persons in society; and

Whereas the Government of Nova Scotia and the Department of Seniors is committed to valuing, promoting, and supporting older adults and their contributions to our society;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join in observing National Seniors Day and the International Day of Older Persons as we celebrate seniors and the contributions that they make to our families and communities across the province.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

RESOLUTION NO. 280

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

Whereas this Saturday, September 30th, marks the fifth annual Orange Shirt Day, when Canadians are asked to wear orange as a sign of support for residential school survivors; and

Whereas Orange Shirt Day has a simple yet powerful message that every child matters; and

Whereas Orange Shirt Day is also a chance for First Nations, governments, schools, and communities to join together in the spirit of reconciliation;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature recognize September 30th as Orange Shirt Day.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 14 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1995-96. The Education Act, Respecting Discipline. (Mr. Tim Halman)

Bill No. 15 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1994-95. The Environment Act. (Hon. Iain Rankin)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

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

ROSSITER, JOHN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. DAVID WILSON: I want to recognize, pay tribute to, and remember a former colleague and friend. On September 29, 2003, Hurricane Juan hit Nova Scotia and paramedic John Rossiter was killed while on duty. John was a good paramedic; he was compassionate and dedicated. His healing hands touched thousands of Nova Scotians and visitors to our province. His loss was felt throughout the province, including his hometown of Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador.

After his death, his family wanted to recognize and pay tribute to John and to this day, there is a bursary for paramedics who want to do additional training or people who want to get into the paramedic profession. John was dedicated to that profession. He wanted to improve the working conditions of paramedics and attended Law Amendments Committee here in Nova Scotia to discuss what was happening with the working conditions.

I want John's family and friends, and those who knew him, to know that we do remember him and that the Province of Nova Scotia is indebted to his service.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

BERWICK & DIST. LIBRARY: GRAND OPENING CONGRATS.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my congratulations to the Town of Berwick and the Annapolis Regional Library on the grand opening of the Berwick and District Library and Grounds, which took place this summer on August 19th.

As the latest edition to the string of remarkable developments that have been added to Commercial Street, the Berwick and District Library is a state-of-the-art, modern facility that will serve residents in the Berwick area for generations to come.

The Berwick and District Library will serve as a central hub for the community, providing residents with an array of services, programs, and a welcoming space for studies and social gatherings.

As the MLA for Kings West, I offer my congratulations to the staff members, the residents of the Town of Berwick, and the Annapolis Valley Regional Library for this beautiful facility which will serve the community for many years to come.

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

**GAVEN WHYNOT MEM. MOTORCYCLE SHOW & SHINE
- OPENING CEREMONY**

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, on September 16th, I had the honour of speaking at the opening ceremony of the first annual Gaven Whynot Memorial Motorcycle Show and Shine in Liverpool. Mr. Whynot was a director of the Friends of Hank Snow Society and an avid motorcyclist. He passed away one year ago and is fondly remembered for his many contributions to the Hank Snow Museum and to his community.

Society co-director and friend of Gaven, Charlotte White, worked to make happen their shared vision of a motorcycle event in Liverpool. A beautiful new gazebo was dedicated to him at this ceremony.

I am honoured to congratulate Ms. White and her committee for establishing this memorial and event.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

HURD, MOLLY: ACCOMPLISHMENTS - CONGRATS.

HON. GARY BURILL: Mr. Speaker, this Spring just passed, Halifax resident Molly Hurd published her first book. It is called *Best School in the World: How students, teachers and parents have created a model that can transform Canada's public schools*.

Molly's publication comes after her extensive career in teaching. It's a career that has taken her to Quebec, Nova Scotia, Nigeria, Tanzania, the United Kingdom, and back to Nova Scotia. Her volume *Best School* draws from all this experience but it focuses especially on Molly's time as a teacher at the Halifax Independent School, an institution she describes as "a little known school in Halifax that kids are excited to attend every day, right through until they graduate."

I would like to congratulate Molly Hurd on her accomplishments as an educational author and for her contribution to the provincial and national discourse on how to create schools that excel at engaging, challenging, and educating students.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

WYNN, MEGAN - RICK RUSSELL MEM. SCHOLARSHIP

HON. KAREN CASEY: Megan Wynn from Belmont, Nova Scotia, first became involved in woodsmen events through 4H. She is a member of the Dal AG College team in Bible Hill and a competitor in the Rick Russell Woodsmen Competition, named in honour of Rick Russell who got involved with woodsmen first as a student, then went on to become assistant coach and head coach.

The sport requires dedication as the team practises two hours a day, five days a week, three and a half months of the year. Wynn is physically fit, has developed technique, and has great motivation and drive. The team travels to New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario to compete and finishes the season with a local event.

I ask members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Megan for being the winner of the Rick Russell Memorial Scholarship and wish her continued success with her sport.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

HABIB, RODNEY: PET BLOG - COMMEND

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Dartmouth East resident Rodney Habib. Rodney is a small business owner and pet blogger whose social media following now exceeds 1.9 million people across the globe. Rodney has the most popular pet health page in the world today.

Rodney is passionate about changing the way people think about feeding their pets and his most recent means of doing so is through his documentary, *The Dog Cancer Series: Rethinking the Canine Epidemic*.

His recent project is just one example of how Rodney Habib consistently gives back to his community. As an entrepreneur, community leader, blogger, and pet advocate, Rodney is an excellent role model for our youth. I ask all members to join me in commending Rodney for his actions.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

CLC ATL. WOMEN'S CONF. - WORKPLACE GENDER EQUALITY

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, tonight marks the start of the Canadian Labour Congress' Atlantic Women's Conference. Women workers from across Atlantic Canada will gather to talk about the struggle for economic justice and the fight for gender equality in the workplace.

This government's attacks on unions disproportionately impact women. Mr. Speaker, women workers make up 64 per cent of front-line public sector workers and 81 per cent of health care workers here in Nova Scotia. Bill No. 148 is a direct attack on women's economic equality and it is deeply disappointing to witness the government undermine women's rights through this bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

MILLER, DAVID/ARNOLD, AÏDA - ANTIGONISH TOWN PROV. VOL. AWARD

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, every April, municipalities in Nova Scotia nominate a volunteer to receive a Provincial Volunteer Award. This year the Town of Antigonish named David Miller and Aïda Arnold as co-recipients of their Volunteer of the Year Award. As family members of the Guysborough Antigonish Pictou Arts and Culture Council, they have dedicated themselves to developing arts and culture in the region for the past 20 years.

A shining example of this commitment can be seen in one of their most recognized projects, the Antigonish Art Fair. The Art Fair began as a small event four years ago and has since grown into a staple of the summer in our community. Every second Friday you can see close to 1,000 attendees at Chisholm Park enjoying performances and displays by local artists.

David and Aïda have also played a key role in the beautification of the Town of Antigonish, having started the town's beautification committee 11 years ago. It should be no surprise that Antigonish has earned the number one Communities in Bloom ranking seven times since then, due in no small part to their contributions.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Dave and Aïda on receiving the Provincial Volunteer Award. It is well deserved.

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

PAYNE, TERRY & FRANCINE/TERRY'S PLACE ANNIV. (50th)

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, many of us might believe that working full time with our spouse could be very challenging but one couple disagrees and have recently celebrated their 50th Anniversary both of marriage and of their family-run business. Terry and Francine Payne discovered the Tastee Freez in Truro while on their honeymoon in June 1967. They took over the business, moved it to Hilden in 1974, and it was renamed Terry's Place in a brand-new building.

I commend the Paynes and their daughter Angie Delaney, the current owner of Terry's Place, for 50 years of running a successful business without compromising family values and traditions.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

FOREST IND. - DIVERSIFICATION

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, in 2013, there were three hardwood manufacturers in Nova Scotia making flooring and other products. Now there is only one left. Finewood Flooring and Lumber in Cape Breton closed in 2014 and River's Bend Wood Products, near Antigonish, closed in 2015 because they could not access enough local hardwood. Group Savoie in Westville, near New Glasgow, considered closing in 2015 for the same reason.

It's not that Nova Scotia doesn't have good quality hardwood, but that those logs weren't separated out from truckloads going to the larger mills. In 2016, Group Savoie solved their supply problems through co-operation with Northern Pulp and the Abercrombie Point kraft pulp mill and through new access to high-quality hardwood from the former Bowater lands. As a result, there are 45 jobs still in Westville.

This is one example of diversifying our forest industry beyond pulp and paper and softwood lumber. We must encourage this sort of diversity as we move forward.

[9:30 a.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

GIBERSON, LINWOOD, DAVID & PETER - BUS. ACHIEVEMENTS

HON. KEITH COLWELL: I'd like to recognize Linwood, Peter, and David Giberson, owners of Dartmouth Metals, on their tremendous success operating this well-established business. Linwood started selling metals in 1962. His son Peter formed Dartmouth Metals in 1979, and was joined in the business by his son David as a third generation. David worked for the business throughout high school and university, and after

graduating in 2003, he joined the company full time. Dartmouth Metals sells their metal products in Canada and international markets, creating some 40 jobs in our area.

I ask the members of the House of Assembly to please join me in congratulating Linwood, Peter, and David for their achievement in running a successful business and growing Nova Scotia's economy.

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

WALKER, GEORGE & GERALDINE - ANNIV. (50th)

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: I rise today to congratulate George and Geraldine Walker of Sydney Mines, who will be celebrating their 60th Anniversary. Their daughter, Joyce Walker-Haley, entered a contest hosted by Catelli Pasta called Catelli Family Reunion by writing an essay describing why her family deserved the \$10,000 prize.

Walker-Haley was one of three winners of the national contest hosted by the company for their 150th Anniversary. Joyce will use the prize money for a traditional Cape Breton ceilidh open to the public, followed by a special family supper hosted by Catelli chef Matt McKenzie.

I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Walker family on winning this contest and wish the Walkers a memorable anniversary.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

**BURKE, TANYA/E. HANTS ADULT LEARNING CTR.
- COMMUN. GARDEN**

HON. MARGARET MILLER: For over two years, Tanya Burke and a group of volunteers at the East Hants Adult Learning Association spent countless hours securing funding and getting the proper infrastructure in place for a community garden. This spring they succeeded in turning their idea into a reality, with 12 boxes overflowing with fresh produce. Elmsdale Lumber, Elmsdale Landscaping, and Stewiacke Home Hardware assisted the group with lumber, soil, and a shed.

The volunteers wish to share their labour of love with the community. Seniors and families are encouraged to come out and spend time among the variety of vegetables, fruit, herbs, and flowers, learning and enjoying the outdoors. They hope to grow a sense of community as well, by using the garden as an educational tool.

I ask that all members of this House join me in congratulating Tanya and the volunteers of the East Hants Adult Learning Association for their vision and wish them continued success in bring the community together with a community garden.

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

**KEIZER, JOHN & JODY
- EAST. PASSAGE COW BAY LIONS CLUB CITIZENS OF YR.**

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: I would like to recognize a couple in our community who were recently selected as citizens of the year at our Eastern Passage Cow Bay Lions Club at our charter night last Saturday, celebrating our 45th year. John and Jody Keizer were selected because of everything they do for their community. We had no grocery store, and when that was mentioned over and over again, they decided that, because of their expertise, they would be the ones to bring that to our community. We're extremely grateful to them.

They also saw a lot of need for help, so they started a 50-50 lottery. Every shopper is asked to donate on a daily basis, and as of the last two and a half years they've raised over \$80,000 for all of the non-profit groups, like the cadets and the Cub Scouts, in our community. They also work on the Fisherman's Cove board of directors, donating much of their time and energy to supporting the fishermen and the fishing shops in our community. I'd like to thank them.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

JUMP IN - ORGANIZERS CONGRATS.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, Jump In was a pilot project on the Halifax Waterfront to promote urban swimming in Halifax Harbour. Cities around the world are promoting urban swimming and building infrastructure to allow for the safe use of harbours by the public for recreational swimming.

This summer, the organizers of Jump In took input from the public as to the location of the swimming area and what facilities people require while using the harbour as a swimming location. I look forward to seeing the finished project next summer.

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

SPENCER, SONYA: ESCAPE FROM ALCATRAZ TRIATHLON - CONGRATS.

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sonya Spencer of Albert Bridge, who recently took part in the 2017 Escape from Alcatraz triathlon in San Francisco, California. The competition includes a 1.5-mile swim from Alcatraz Island to the shores of the St. Francis Yacht Club, an 18-mile bike ride, and an 8-mile run through the trails of the Golden Gate Recreational Area. Sonia finished in a time of 2:58:15, placing 58th in the female 15 to 39 division. I am pleased to congratulate Sonia Spencer on this amazing experience and commend her for all her hard work to achieve this.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

SHAFTO, ANNE - GOV'T. HOUSE ART INSTALLATION

HON. GARY BURRILL: Last week, the most recent works of Halifax resident and conservationist Anne Shafto were unveiled for display in Government House. The installation demonstrates her extraordinary work to stabilize the Kings and Regimental colours of the 25th and 85th Battalions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the First World War. Anne's latest display builds on a career in conservation and collection management that has seen her working for clients across Canada and around the globe. I would like to congratulate Anne on this notable achievement and encourage all members to take in this inspiring installation at Government House.

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

DIGBY CARE 25 - FUNDRAISING MILESTONE

MR. GORDON WILSON: I would like to ask the members of this House of Assembly to please join me in recognizing a very nice milestone reached by the Digby Care 25. With the \$2,665 given in March to the Digby and Area Health Service Foundation, the total donated by this group now exceeds \$20,000, a total reached in less than two years.

This group, now numbering 85 members, including my mom, was founded in April 2015, when five women wanted to help their community. At the first meeting, they donated \$125 to the TLC Animal Shelter. Since then, their contributions have increased every month. The Digby Care 25 encourages women to get involved in their own community and encourages others to do the same.

It is gratifying to see how quickly this group has grown, and we can expect their positive impact in the community to continue for a long time.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

OTTER, LESLIE: BUBBLE TREE CHILDREN'S BOUTIQUE - EXPANSION

HON. PAT DUNN: The best and most enduring motivation for a new entrepreneur is to make a positive change in their community; in other words, taking a leap of faith and hoping things work out. Pictou County entrepreneur Leslie Otter is opening a second business in the Truro area. Otter, currently the owner of Bubble Tree Children's Boutique in Stellarton, recently initiated a move to Bible Hill. This business will give parents in that area a new location to find clothing for their younger ones.

The decision to open a second store became an easy transition for Leslie. Numerous shoppers from the Colchester area continue to visit and shop at her Stellarton location. The

store offers used children's clothing for all sizes, as well as toys, books, maternity clothing, playpens, and other baby equipment. Congratulations to another young entrepreneur willing to take the business risk for imminent success.

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

**SHERBROOKE VILLAGE OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS COMM.
- FEST. & EVENTS AWARD**

HON. LLOYD HINES: I rise today to share my congratulations to the Sherbrooke Village Old Fashioned Christmas Committee. In April of this year, Destination Eastern and Northumberland Shores held their annual awards banquet dinner in New Glasgow. At this banquet, the committee was presented the Festival and Events Award, a most well-deserved award for an outstanding event. Held the last weekend of November and the first weekend of December, the event features an opening night tree lighting, candlelight procession, fireworks, and entertainment.

Over the two weekends, there are Christmas craft sales and workshops, festive dining, Victorian teas, children's Christmas teas with story time, closing night parade, and more, attracting over 6,000 people. The Old Fashioned Christmas is a great example of how volunteers, businesses, community leaders, and a museum can work together to achieve an incredible tourist attraction and a display of community pride.

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

ARGYLE HIST. & GENEALOGICAL SOC. - RESEARCH SYSTEM

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: A new system is helping researchers gain access to the archives at the Argyle Historical and Genealogical Society in Tusket. The majority of the researchers who use the facility are locals, but many come from the U.S. in the summer. According to Judy Frotten, the heritage development officer with the municipality of Argyle, there has been an increase in the number of researchers using their facility, and the new system seems to have been making a positive impression on visitors from far and wide. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to thank Judy for all her hard work on this successful project.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

CONVENIENCE STORE DAY 2017 - SUCCESS HIGHLIGHT

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the success of this year's Convenience Store Day - 2017 marked the Atlantic Convenience Store Association's sixth annual C-Store Day, and I was pleased to once again have the chance to participate.

On August 30th community leaders across the province lent a helping hand at their local convenience stores, working alongside staff, greeting customers, and encouraging donations to this year's local charity, the Children's Wish Foundation. I had the pleasure of joining the St. Margarets Bay Road Needs in Armdale, and I can tell you that it was a lot of fun for everyone who came through - from the balloon pop to the pastry sale and the barbecue set-up outside. The event was a big success in our community.

I ask all to join me in thanking Mark Deyarmond and franchisee Todd White for welcoming me behind the cash, and extend congratulations to Todd and his partner Kage, who will soon be welcoming their second child.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

MINA, VICKY: PROSPERITY - RECOGNIZE

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Vicky Mina, a highly sought-after makeup artist here in Halifax. Her passion for all things beauty is evident through the work she does on her clients and has contributed to her success and allowed her to form strong relationships with leaders in the cosmetics and fashion industry.

In 2015 Vickie launched her own makeup line, Vicky Mina Makeup. Her products have become increasingly popular and her line frequently expands to fit the needs of her customers. Vicky has accomplished all this while being a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother, as well as being a very active member of the Lebanese community. Vicky is truly the epitome of success and a role model to young women all over our province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of this House of Assembly to join me in recognizing Vicky on her prosperity, thank her for being my style guru, and wish her continued success in the years to come.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

WHITE, DAREN: TERRY FOX RUN - ORGANIZER

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Mr. Daren White and thank him for his work in our community, both as a volunteer and in his capacity as a phys ed teacher at Spring Street Academy Elementary School in Amherst.

Every year one of the extra projects Mr. White does is organizing the Terry Fox Run for students. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Daren White had approximately 450 students participate in the Terry Fox school run.

I'd like to honour Mr. White at this time for his tireless efforts in fighting cancer and helping our children learn about Terry Fox and the importance of serving and sacrifice for others.

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

JOYFUL SOUNDS MUSIC STUDIO (FALL RIVER) - EXPANSION

MR. BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Fall River's Joyful Sounds Music Studio on their recent significant expansion. I was very glad to attend their grand opening and tour their impressive new premises.

Louise MacDonald opened her Kindermusik Studio in 2005 in the basement of her home. In 2007 she received the prestigious Maestro Award and was recognized as one of the top 1 per cent in the world and has maintained her Maestro status ever since.

In 2014 Louise moved to her current location in Fall River on Highway No. 2, expanding her music program to offer lessons in piano, guitar, harp, and more. With the addition of another classroom and six private lesson rooms, she will be able to meet the demand for the community.

Thanks to Louise MacDonald, a successful small business operator.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

BOWERS, SHANE: HOCKEY SUCCESS - BEST WISHES

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, June 23, 2017, was a day that changed a young Herring Cove's life forever. Seventeen-year old Shane Bowers, who was previously drafted third overall by the Cape Breton Screaming Eagles, was drafted 28th overall in the NHL entry draft by the Ottawa Senators.

Shane, who is a lifelong Senators fan, could not have been more excited to be drafted by his favourite team. Shane, who grew up just a few doors down from me, has been the perfect example of hard work, dedication, and respect.

The entire Community of Herring Cove wishes you, Shane, future success and, even though you will be playing for the Senators, we all look forward to seeing you on Hockey Night in Canada.

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

[9:45 a.m.]

RUM RUNNERS TRAIL: OPENING - COMMITTEE CONGRATS.

MR. HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the members of the Rum Runners Trail Committee for the opening of their much-anticipated Rum Runners Trail earlier this summer. Rum Runners Trail is a partnership of seven active living trails which collaboratively develop and manage the 110-kilometer trail corridor. These seven sections of Rails to Trails are linked to each other, forming a continuous trail from Halifax to the Town of Lunenburg, through the entire length of the beautiful constituency of Chester-St. Margaret's.

The Rum Runners Trail is becoming a premier destination trail in Atlantic Canada. It has been accomplished through the financial support of the provincial and federal governments with help from Halifax Regional Municipality, the regional District of Chester, and the regional District of Lunenburg. Most importantly, through the hard work and dedication of the volunteers of the Rum Runners Trail Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of the Legislature to join me in congratulation the members of the Rum Runners Trail Committee.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville.

ROSS, DARAH: TENNIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS - CONGRATS.

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Hammonds Plains resident Darah Ross, a member of the doubles female tennis team who represented Nova Scotia at this summer's Canada Games. Darah began playing tennis at the age of five and has trained hard and quickly to rise in the ranks. She's a member of the HEADStart Tennis Academy and attends Armbrae Academy.

Darah and her partner Emma McShane had a fifth-place finish at this year's game, an impressive placing for a 13-year old. The partners also won the 2017 National Bank NB Open ladies' doubles. Our community is proud to have this talented female athlete as a member of our community and I would ask that all members of the House join me in congratulating Darah Ross on her accomplishments.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

ROCK, REBECCA: N.S. 55+ GAMES - GOLD MEDALS CONGRATS

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Rebecca Rock on receiving five gold medals in all of her swimming events at the Nova Scotia 55+ Games hosted in Lunenburg County.

Rebecca is a music and French teacher at Bayview Community School. She starts everyday doing laps at the Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre swimming pool, before making her way to school. Much of her youth, she partook in competitive swimming and laughs at the opportunity to proclaim that it only took her until she was 62 years old in order to finally receive a medal. Her medal wins were in the 50-meter breaststroke, 100-meter breaststroke, 50-meter freestyle, 100-meter freestyle, and even her relay team took first place to solidify her five-gold-medal win.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you and all members of this House of Assembly to please join me in congratulating Rebecca Rock on her five gold-medal wins and wish her the best of luck as she partakes in the nationals next summer in Saint John, New Brunswick. Thank you.

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

**POOLE, LUCY/MUHAMMAD, SOHIBA:
HFX. WEST HS CO-PRESIDENTS - CONGRATS.**

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Lucy Poole and Sohiba Muhammad on their election as co-presidents at Halifax West High School for this year, 2017-2018. These students have shown extreme academic excellence and leadership skills and, thus, were elected with the position of leading their student government for the upcoming school year. With the help of their executive team and upwards of 100 student government members, Lucy and Sohiba will spearhead various events and fundraisings to ensure that school is not only a place to learn but to give back to the community and, most importantly, have fun.

I ask that members of this House join me in congratulating Lucy Poole and Sohiba Muhammed in their recent victory as co-presidents of Halifax West High School and wish them the best of luck for their positions.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

**MARSHALL, SARAH - PRIME MINISTER'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE
IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the fact that Kings South resident Sarah Marshall received a 2016-2017 Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Early Childhood Education. This prestigious award celebrates extraordinary leadership, exemplary early childhood education practices, and exceptional commitment to helping build the foundation children need to make the best possible start in life. Sarah was one of just five recipients from across the country to receive the certificate of excellence, the highest level of the award.

Our children are our future and our most precious resource and we all benefit so greatly from the compassion, dedication, and skill of exceptional early childhood educators like Sarah. Will the House of Assembly please join me in congratulating Sarah on this well-deserved honour and in thanking her for her tremendous commitment to her profession and to improving the lives of our young people.

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

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I draw your attention to the east gallery where two gentlemen from the Bridgewater community made an early drive this morning to Halifax, insistent on them buying me breakfast at the Bluenose II Restaurant. I would like to introduce Carroll Young and Reid Delong, and ask my colleagues to bring them a warm welcome to the Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

BRIDGEWATER WATERFRONT PARK - CONGRATS.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, this time last year it was hard to envision the final results of the downtown Bridgewater upgrades. With change comes some resistant. The final product has surpassed all expectations and will be enjoyed by all. The project, named Take Back the Riverbank, removed an old parkade along the LaHave River and replaced it with the beautiful Pijinuiskaq Park.

I was fortunate to be part of the grand opening earlier this summer and was thrilled to see how many came out to celebrate this accomplishment. It wasn't easy getting to the end, with a summer last year of construction, detours and a few setbacks along the way.

I'd like to take this time to recognize and acknowledge the King Street merchants who endured all those hardships. Congratulations to the Planning Committee, the Town of Bridgewater and all the residents who now have a beautiful waterfront park to enjoy.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

MACDOUGALL-PENNER, LINDA - ANTIGONISH CO. MUN. PROV. VOL. AWARD

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, every April municipalities in Nova Scotia nominate a volunteer to receive a provincial volunteer award. This year the municipality of the County of Antigonish named Linda MacDougall-Penner as their recipient for her outstanding contribution to the Port Hawkesbury Antigonish Swim Team, or PHAST. Linda has been a communications officer for PHAST swim club for the last five years and serves as an executive member as well. She redesigned the communications strategy and tools, and dedicates many hours to the PHAST social media accounts to keep

the membership, the community and local media informed. She is also the team photographer, captures individual and squad photos each week.

Linda played a critical role in the redesign of the new website for PHAST this year and the team runs more efficiently because of her efforts. Linda also officiates as a stroke and turn judge for swim meets and runs the community youth group from St. James United Church in Antigonish.

Mr. Speaker, I ask colleagues in the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Linda MacDougall-Penner on receiving the Provincial Volunteer Award. It is well deserved.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

STOP NOW & PLAN (SNAP): E. HANTS FAM. RESOURCE CTR. - HOSTING

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, the Stop Now and Plan program (SNAP) is an award-winning crime prevention model program developed in Canada by the Child Development Institute over 30 years ago. This program helps children, youth and their families learn self control and problem-solving skills, such as learning to calm down and reflect before reacting and seeking out positive solutions to the problems related to anti-social and violent behaviours.

The East Hants Family Resource Centre, in conjunction with Brave Halifax, is now offering this free, 13-week program for troubled preteen girls and their parents and caregivers. For families in Hants, Cumberland and Colchester Counties, as well as our adjoining areas of Halifax County, hosting the Stop Now and Plan program at the East Hants Family Resource Centre in Elmsdale, provides a reasonable distance for travel.

Mr. Speaker, I ask members of this House of Assembly to please join me in thanking the staff of the East Hants Family Resource Centre for offering this valuable learning opportunity and wish them every success.

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

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to bring the members' attention to the west gallery where members of my wonderful family are here. I'd like to introduce for a second time to this House, my little baby Cecilia, a beautiful little girl, who turned eight months this week; my lovely, caring wife Katie Churchill who is an incredible mother and who is visiting us for the first time today; a really wonderful person, my mother-in-law, whom I've come to care about very deeply, Kathy Creber who is here with us today; if the House could please extend a warm welcome to them. (Applause)

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

LEVY, RICHARD (DICK) - JOE CASEY HUMANITARIAN AWARD

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, since 2011 the Town of Digby annually presents the Joe Casey Humanitarian Award to one of the citizens who has made a significant contribution to improving our community. This year the honouree was Richard (Dick) Levy, a man who had retired to the place where he was raised. Over the years he was involved with many of the local festivals held in the area and served as the president of the Digby Area Board of Trade. He also served as Digby's mayor from 1988 to 1991.

Throughout his life it was important to Richard that his family support his efforts and hoped that they were proud of him in his accomplishments. Please join me in congratulating Dick on receiving this well-deserved award.

Also, in note of Joe Casey, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the passing of Joe's wife Vera this week. Vera was the first lady for probably one of the most recognized politicians we had in Joe Casey. Her funeral is today and thoughts of her are in my mind.

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

AVERY, WAYNE: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. LLOYD HINES: I rise today to pay tribute to a most cherished husband, father, son, brother, and friend who was taken from us far too soon on October 1, 2016.

Wayne Avery of Larrys River lost his courageous battle with cancer at the age of 58, leaving many to mourn the loss of an amazing teacher, softball player, coach, and active community member. Wayne was a dedicated teacher for 33 years, retiring in 2014. He had a great love for sports and was a great competitor. He gave so much of his time through coaching to help others gain excellence in their athletic aspirations in badminton, basketball, soccer, and his beloved softball.

The Guysborough Broadhorns captured the Eastern Canadian Men's Intermediate Fast Pitch Championship in Sydney recently, continuing the county's dominance in softball in Nova Scotia, and these young athletes share the same passion for softball and continue to keep Wayne's memory alive.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

RAMIA, LEBA/HFX. SIGN GROUP INC. - BEST BUS. AWARD

HON. LENA DIAB: I rise today to congratulate an Armdale resident, a local business owner, and a friend, Leba Ramia.

Earlier this month, Leba received a pleasant surprise in his mailbox, a letter informing him that his business, Halifax Sign Group Inc., had been awarded Best Business of 2017 by the website Three Best Rated. By examining businesses' reputation, history, complaints, ratings, and cost, Three Best Rated honours and lists the three best local companies in the service categories in cities across the country.

Leba's business was picked under the Best Sign Company category for Halifax. Halifax Sign Group is known for supplying local businesses and organizations with illuminated fascia signs, awnings, banners, and much more. The company prides itself on welcoming and employing Nova Scotian craftsman and doing all their assembly work out of their Halifax location.

Please join me in congratulating Mr. Leba Ramia and his team on this well-deserved recognition.

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

FURNEAUX, KAREN: N.S. SPORT HALL OF FAME - INDUCTION

MR. BILL HORNE: I rise to congratulate celebrated Olympian kayaker Karen Furneaux of Waverley.

Karen was inducted into the Nova Scotia Hall Fame on November 12th. An alumnus of the Cheema Aquatic Club, Karen is Nova Scotia's most-decorated female paddler with three Olympic appearances and nine world championship medals to her name. Karen has 50 national championship medals and two gold medals from the 1999 Pan-American Games, and was named Nova Scotia female Athlete of the Year five times.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Karen Furneaux on her induction into the Nova Scotia Hall Fame, and wish her well in her future endeavors.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

BANKS, CATHERINE ET AL - SAMBRO SPIRIT AWARDS

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, the 2017 Sou'wester Days held in August were, once again, a huge success. Although the weather was soggy, this did not dampen people's spirits. Despite the rainy weather, many events went as scheduled. In addition to the traditional events of the festival such as the parade, barbeque and lighthouse tours, this year's event introduced the Sambro Spirit Awards. These awards were presented to individuals who have shown long-term dedication and involvement in the community. The recipients of the first annual Sambro Spirit Awards were Catherine Banks, Skip Horton, and Danny Gray.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating this year's recipients of the Sambro Spirit Awards and thanking them for their commitment to their community. Thanks to Catherine, Skip, and Danny for all they do to make Sambro a wonderful community.

MR. SPEAKER: I thank everyone very much for those Statements by Members.

I will take a couple of seconds here to remind everybody, for Question Period which is upcoming, we are making great progress on our heckling and our respect for the members posing the questions and the ministers answering the questions. I will ask us to continue in that vein this morning.

[10:00 a.m.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition

PREM. - COFFIN ASSAULT CASE: HIRING ISSUES - DETAILS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, in June the Premier's former Director of Communications, Michelle Coffin, bravely told her story of domestic assault. When she inquired as to why the Liberal campaign had rehired the person who assaulted her, she was told that the Premier had consulted women's organizations in Nova Scotia before that rehiring was made.

I would like to ask the Premier, will he tell the House today which women's organizations he consulted before that hiring occurred?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I believe what he's referring to is there was a former minister in our government who actually made that reference to meeting organizations. I do want to acknowledge again to the member the important issue around violence, particularly around sexual violence, domestic violence, in the province. That's why we continue to invest year over year in the sexual assault strategy - the only government in our province to do so. That's why we continue to make those important investments, and we'll continue to make sure that we have a conversation about the fact that everyone deserves to be safe in their own environment.

MR. BAILLIE: Well, in fact, Mr. Speaker, it was the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island who did assure Ms. Coffin that the Premier had consulted with women's organizations before that rehiring occurred. The fact is, only the Premier can clear up whether that is in fact correct or not. The member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island is quoted

as saying, and I'll table the quote, "The premier called all of the women's organizations and asked what they thought, and they unanimously said that he should be rehired."

I would like to ask the Premier a simple question: is that statement true?

THE PREMIER: Again, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. What we have, what has been across this province is - again, I want to tell the honourable member in 2013 our government has taken the issue of sexual violence and domestic violence very seriously. We have done so by continuing to invest money, to ensure there's a strategy to deal with it.

We just opened a second domestic violence court here, building on the pilot that was in Cape Breton. So, we'll now have two; the second one will be near the largest population. It's been made very clear by organizations that have issues around domestic violence - they have said that when there is someone who has perpetrated a crime or perpetrated violence, that if they take responsibility and continue to go through the process, do what the court has ordered them to do, they deserve to be able to move back and to find some level of employment, but they need to continue to understand and take full responsibility for their actions.

MR. BAILLIE: I would like to think that all members of this House take domestic violence very seriously. That's why Ms. Coffin deserves an answer to the questions that I'm asking the Premier. I have given him two opportunities to tell us quite simply whether he did call women's organizations, as Ms. Coffin was told, or not.

The Coast magazine wrote a long exposé on this issue, and they in fact called women's organizations themselves to ask if they had been contacted. They specifically called Adsum House, Shelter Nova Scotia, the Avalon Sexual Assault, and the Transition House of Nova Scotia. All contradicted the claims made to Ms. Coffin by the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

I want to ask the Premier again, if he can just tell us which version is correct, the version reported in *The Coast*, whose reporters called those women's organizations, or the story told Ms. Coffin by the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island?

THE PREMIER: The honourable member is very right. All members of this House I believe understand the seriousness of this issue. I know this government does. That's why in 2013, from the very beginning, we have continued to make investment around the sexual assault strategy. We're continuing to work with organizations across the province to enhance second-stage housing for women fleeing from domestic violence.

We need to continue to make sure this conversation goes on in our communities; we need to make sure that our sons recognize as they're growing up that violence is not the method to move forward - they need to understand that they need to be caring, loving

citizens, part of our province; and we need to make sure that everyone in our community feels safe in their own home, in the workplace, and indeed anywhere in our province.

That's why we're going to continue to make those investments. The current budget had an additional million dollars to continue to build on that strategy. We're going to continue to work under the leadership of the Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act and with all our partners across this province to make sure that this province is a safe place.

MR. SPEAKER: I just want to make mention that the rules for our Question Period do outline that, lines of questioning that concern internal Party matters, Party or election events, are not fodder for Question Period. I'll just throw that out there for all members' benefits.

The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party.

**PREM. - CDN. INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH EDUC.:
PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE - REPORT DETAILS**

HON. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Canadian Institute for Health Information released a report which included the information that there are 20 fewer family practice doctors practising in Nova Scotia today than was the case when the Liberal Government first took office.

I want to ask the Premier, is he troubled by this statistic?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the report also said that we have more doctors per capita than any other province in Canada. I do want to tell the honourable member, though, that we do know there are pockets in this province where we need more health care providers. That is why in the current budget we have invested in more collaborative care centres across the province, because we know physicians want to work in a collaborative team. They want to work with nurse practitioners, dietitians.

It's my personal view that in some of our communities, social workers should be part of that primary care team to help deal with the issues, the determinants of health. We know there is more work to do within our province, but as he would have read in that report, it's not unique to Nova Scotia, it's something that is going on across the entire country.

MR. BURRILL: It is well understood as this crisis has been dealt with, that the per capita number of physicians in our province is largely irrelevant to the problem that we are dealing with, because it includes so many physicians whose positions are taken up with hospitals and with research.

I have asked a question that seems to me very plain and straightforward and I think it's fair to say that the response we've received has been furtive and evasive, so I want to direct the question again to the Premier. This number that there are 20 fewer family physicians practising in the province than on the day he was sworn into his office, is this a fact which he considers troubling?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Again, I want to send him back to the report, to read it; he would recognize that on a per capita basis we are leading the country in terms of physicians in the province. We recognize, though, there are still areas in our province where we need to continue to make more advancement to ensure that we have the appropriate environment that we are attracting physicians.

I know the honourable member would know the issue of Digby surfaced in this House under successive governments. We now have doctors who are attracted to that community, but we know there are other places. We heard very clearly in the campaign the issue around access to primary health care in Cape Breton. We'll continue to work with those communities, continuing to work with our partners, and hopefully we'll continue to work with members of the Opposition so we can continue to make sure that Nova Scotians have access to primary health care in the community where they want to have it.

MR. BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, surely the Premier can recognize that the answer he has provided here is un-comforting in the extreme to the 106,000 people in the province who don't have a doctor at the moment. It is on behalf of those people that I want to put a final question. On the basis of this new evidence brought forward yesterday by the Canadian Institute for Health Information, I want to ask the Premier, does he share the widely-held view now in Nova Scotia that we are in the middle of experiencing a health care crisis?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to thank all our health care partners across the province who continue to work with us to ensure that we are providing primary care in communities across the province.

Do we know there are pockets where we need more health care providers? Of course, we do, Mr. Speaker, that's why we continue to go out and recruit more physicians. It's why we enhanced the number of residency seats at Dal, as part of this budget, by 10. There will be an additional 10 above that, for foreign-trained doctors who can come to get the Canadian competency here in our province. That will bring an annual complement of 56 to the province. It's one step in many steps that we will do to continue to ensure that we stabilize and enhance primary health care across our province.

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

PREM.: UNIVERSITY FUNDING - FORMULA

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, two universities were shortchanged by the funding formula change in 2008, Acadia and Cape Breton University. One was reimbursed for their shortfall, that was Acadia, and one was not - Cape Breton University. In fact, CBU was told repeatedly that there was no money for them at the same time that this government was handing out extra payments to Acadia. The question is, why, since both were impacted by the same formula change? I would like to ask the Premier, can he explain why his government gave extra money to one university but not to the other?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. He's right, in 2008, the funding formula impacted both Acadia and Dalhousie in a negative way. In 2012, under the NDP Government, they made an agreement with Acadia University that provided them with an advance payment. They continue to make that. What we said as a government in 2013 to all university presidents is, that we would hold the line at where they were, there would be no additional funding over and above what was provided to them when we came into power. That's exactly what we did each and every year, Mr. Speaker. What we did this year is, we formalized what had been put in place by the former government with Acadia. In this budget, we have \$1 million that, on an ongoing basis, will go to CBU.

MR. BAILLIE: The fact is that the previous NDP Government gave Acadia University once \$3.5 million, but Acadia has had \$21.5 million of extra payments under this government while Cape Breton University has gotten zero, even though they have the exact same problem. In fact, in the last year, in addition to the annual top-up payments the government made to Acadia, they forgave a Sofi loan in the amount of \$7 million - the exact same loan that they forced Cape Breton University to pay back. These two universities with the same problem are being treated very differently. The government knew that would become obvious when the Public Accounts were released this summer. I would like to ask the Premier, can he tell us when Cape Breton University was told that they would get the \$1 million arbitrary payment?

THE PREMIER: I don't know exactly when they would have been told. I can tell you that as we were going through the budgeting process, members from Cape Breton raised this issue, continuing to go forward. When we got to a point where we actually had a balance that we could look at the funding formula and we could deal with the issue, that's exactly what we did. I don't know exactly when they would have been told. That would have been something that would have happened with the department.

I want to be clear about this issue; in 2013, when Nova Scotians gave us the privilege of being government, I met personally with all university presidents together. I was very clear with them that we would hold the line on the funding that they received at that moment in time. That funding was part of the agreement the former government had with Acadia. I said to every one of those universities, if you walk with us, we will walk

side by side with you to continue to make sure we enhance your institution. We want you to be more than just the great educational institutions you are. We want you to drive economic development. We have seen tremendous growth. We have seen population growth. Quite frankly, we're seeing that CBU has been doing work, and we're there to work with CBU to continue to make sure we deal with the issue.

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

AGRIC.: CANNABIS LEGALIZATION - FARMING PERSPECTIVE

MS. LENORE ZANN: My question today is for the Minister of Agriculture. In 2013, the Liberal Party promised to create a strategic plan that will increase the number of new farmers entering the industry. However, we learned in Estimates yesterday that government has made next to no progress on this initiative. I have been thinking, perhaps the legalization of cannabis would be an opportunity to improve that record. I would like to ask the minister today, does his department have any plan for how to deal with the legalization of cannabis from a farming perspective?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: That's a very good question. As policies are developed around cannabis, we will be looking at that as a farm product.

MS. ZANN: There will be an ever-growing demand for legal cannabis once the federal government follows through on its plan for legalization, which could be as early as next July. This will mean that there will be an economic development opportunity in this new industry. However, according to Health Canada, there are only 35 authorized licensed producers of cannabis in the country and zero in Nova Scotia. I ask the minister, once it is legalized, is it his plan that Nova Scotia be a net importer of cannabis?

[10:15 a.m.]

MR. COLWELL: Again, this is all under review and until such time as the federal government legalizes it, we'll have to wait and see what the rules are around it at that time.

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

PREM.: CBU FUNDING - FORMULA

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that Cape Breton University was informed by phone call - just before the Public Accounts were released - that they were going to get a gratuitous \$1 million, the first extra funding that they would receive. It's obvious the government knew that their largesse to Acadia would be obvious when the Public Accounts were released and that Cape Breton University would complain, so they were offered \$1 million to be quiet. That's what happened. In fact no one can figure out

how the \$1 million was even determined. It's just a big, fat, round number. Is it related to their funding shortfall? No. Was it negotiated? No. Or was it just simply picked out of thin air?

I'd like to ask the Premier, can he tell the House how the \$1 million payment to Cape Breton University was determined?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Again I want to walk him back through history. Acadia University would have been provided funding under the former government. When we came into power it was there. It was very clear with all university presidents, including the President of the CBU at the time, that we would be holding the line on funding, we wouldn't be cutting them like what happened in the past. We said we would be holding the line and when we got to the point where we could invest financially in this province, we continue to work with our universities.

That's exactly what happened, Mr. Speaker. This was not a question of keeping anyone quiet. I don't know if the honourable member knows the chair of the board, whom I know. Certainly there's no way, if he has an opinion, he will express that opinion very clearly, he has many times.

We believe this was an investment that's fair. We're looking forward to working with CBU on a go-forward basis.

MR. BAILLIE: The fact is, Mr. Speaker, every university was told to hold the line, except one university actually didn't have to hold the line and got a lot of money under his Liberal Government - \$21.5 million in the four-year term of this government. Well, Cape Breton University with the exact same funding problem, got zero. Where is the fairness in that? In fact, the shortfall from the formula that Acadia experienced was \$6.5 million. They got \$3.5 million per year. The shortfall from CBU almost the same amount, \$6 million, they got zero. Where is the fairness in that?

Can the Premier explain why these two universities were treated so differently?

THE PREMIER: Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for his question. I want to remind the honourable member that when we came into power we had a \$0.5 billion deficit that we are dealing with. What we said very clearly to all our partners, we will hold the line, we will not be cutting you. That happened to you in the past but we'll be holding the line and we expect you to go out and increase your student population. We expect you to control costs. In some cases we expect you to reduce them. We need to expect that you understand the severity of what is happening within this province. We need you to lead just like this province has done,

In this House time after time I've continued to put in a fair wage package in this province so we could invest in CBU, so that we could invest in health care, so that we could invest in education - and each and every time they opposed us, Mr. Speaker - to get our fiscal health in order so that we could make the strategic investments that would grow the economy across this province. (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

THE PREMIER: It's pretty easy to sit over there, Mr. Speaker, and throw stones. The fact of the matter is that the one thing our organizations can say is that this Premier and this government have been direct and upfront with them and have been partners with them. (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd just like to remind all members that the clock on the wall is for my reference and for your reference. If somebody is in the middle of a question or an answer, I will reserve the right to be the judge of when to cut them off. (Applause)

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

LAE: CBU REIMBURSING - MIN. COMMIT

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, this government posted a surplus last year, of \$150 million, but they don't have the money to treat CBU the same as Acadia University.

Mr. Speaker, this is a matter of fairness. Today there's a great unfairness outstanding - Acadia got extra money, CBU didn't, even though they were both disadvantaged by the funding formula change. Clearly the government makes up funding rules as it goes along.

My question to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, will the minister commit to reimbursing CBU for its shortfall to the same extent that it reimbursed Acadia?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: I'd like to thank the member for the question. The member is right, that Acadia and CBU were short changed in the last MOU under the Conservative Government. They were the only two universities that had funding reduced. Every other university had a funding increase. (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education has the floor.

MR. KOUSOULIS: It would be my pleasure to answer the question but I keep getting interrupted. What we did is we looked at all the universities under the same lens. We have done financial analyses on all universities. CBU and Acadia University are not

equal, they have very much different financial situations. CBU's finances are actually in very good shape; Acadia had some challenges. We helped Acadia meet those challenges, and that was started under the previous NDP Government. CBU actually came to us with a request and what we granted was an amount higher than what they requested. Let me be clear on that, we gave them \$1 million a year, which was more than what they requested. They were informed of that decision in June as was Acadia. Thank you.

MR. ORRELL: CBU was told there would be no extra funding, to make do with what they had, and they did the hard choices in cutting some departments and some programs, offering retirements so they could meet their requirements financially. So don't tell me that they have been treated fairly, that they had money.

Clearly, this government makes up the funding rules as it goes along. In this case, politics got in the way of good public policy. Seems to me the trend for this government and this minister. My question is, can the minister tell us that they will at least agree to treat CBU the same as Acadia, starting with this budget year.

MR. KOUSOULIS: We treat all universities the same in this province. I'll point out something to the Opposition, and if they'd like to listen, they can hear the answer.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Northside-Westmount will come to order.

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education has the floor.

MR. KOUSOULIS: I'll point out something. The Opposition has been saying today that CBU received zero in the last four years under this government. That is not true. If you actually do look at the extra funding that's been given outside of the MOUs, CBU has received approximately \$18 million. We have funded programs that have helped this province, such as the nursing program. Look, that member keeps getting up and saying, Cape Breton needs more doctors, and nurses. Well, we've done that, and we've done it outside of the MOU with more funding. (Interruptions)

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

**PREM. - COFFIN ASSAULT CASE:
WOMEN'S CENTRES - CONTACT CONFIRM**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Domestic assault is a very serious matter. And when a woman has the bravery and confidence to tell her story in public, that she has been the victim of domestic assault and she is told by a member of the government that the Premier contacted all the women's centres of the province before making a hiring decision, she deserves to know if that is true. I've asked the Premier repeatedly, whether he did in fact contact the women's centres of the province in this case or not, and I think that Ms. Coffin

deserves a straight answer. So I'd like to ask the Premier, very specifically, did he call women's centres in this case, or did he not.

THE PREMIER: I think if he goes back to when he asked me this question at the beginning, I said at the very beginning, a former minister who was responsible for the Status of Women would have been, maybe, perhaps, who he was referring to - not the Premier. But I do want to answer this question. This is an important issue for our province. Domestic violence, for too long, has not been talked about for too long, quite frankly, has not been invested in strategy by governments of all political stripes.

We came into power in 2013. We've continued to invest to build a strategy around domestic violence. We've put more money, quite frankly, in our budget this year, to build on the good work that had taken place by the Status of Women and women's organizations across this province. We're going to continue to make those investments in this current budget. There are investments in housing to ensure that women who are fleeing domestic violence have a safe environment for them and their children. We'll continue to make sure that this issue is on the minds of all Nova Scotians, because everyone in this province deserves to feel safe in their own home and in their community and in their workplace.

MR. BAILLIE: A government that takes domestic assault seriously, would not make up stories in the middle of an election campaign to try to get the vote of a woman who was the victim of a proven domestic assault. That is the issue. I don't have any doubt that the Premier takes this issue seriously. I want him to prove that he takes it seriously by answering my question. Everything he said is great, but it did not answer the question, and Ms. Coffin deserves the truth. She deserves the truth.

Are the women's centres right that they were not contacted, and that the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island made up that story, or did the Premier in fact call those women's centres in this case?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again, I want to go back to the question - I answered it the very first time he asked, and I just answered it the second time he asked. I'll answer it again for him.

What I said to him was that the minister of our government who was responsible for that file, if he goes back and looks at the media stuff that they were referring to - not the Premier who would have reached out. But on top of all that, there's no question that this issue is a serious issue, not only for Ms. Coffin but for all women, and for all people in this province. Quite frankly, it's a serious issue for men in this province.

We need to continue to do and make sure that we continue to invest in the strategies that we have as a government. We'll continue to do so. We'll continue to make sure that when there are women and children fleeing from domestic violence, they have a safe place to come to. That's why we're going to continue to make investments in second-stage

housing, and we're going to continue to work with our partners across this province to ensure that this province is safe.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

COMMUN. SERV. - SOCIAL WORKERS HIRING INFO.

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, since 2013, the number of hours of short-term illness among social workers in child protection and child, youth, and family services has increased by more than 9,500 hours. Yesterday I asked the Minister of Community Services how many additional social workers would be hired this year to address burnout among those front-line workers. While the minister didn't answer directly, what she said sounded an awful lot like "zero."

Once again, I will give the Minister of Community Services an opportunity to tell this House how many additional social workers will be hired this year.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I do want to commend our social workers. They do very difficult, very important work. What we do know is that case complexity has been increasing over the last while, so we've taken a number of steps to make sure that we can respond to this issue quickly. For example, we now have a hiring pool, so we don't have to go out and advertise each time we need a social worker. We can draw from that hiring pool.

I do want the honourable member to know that we have been meeting with social workers and with the union to work on this particular issue and to make sure that our social workers get the support they need.

MS. LEBLANC: The 2017 survey of Nova Scotia Government employees found that only 45 per cent of employees in the Department of Community Services feel that their workload is reasonable. Only 35 per cent were satisfied with their department - down 12 points from 2015. Only 32 per cent said that they felt valued as a Government of Nova Scotia employee. I'll table that.

Does the Minister of Community Services agree that this government's broad disrespect for public sector workers has contributed to burnout among front-line workers in her department?

MS. REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member, and I do want to let our social workers and the employees of Community Services know that we value their services.

One thing I used to say when I was the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education is that change is hard. Sometimes when there's change going on in a department, it can

make people nervous. I want to assure the honourable member that we are working with our staff to make sure they understand what the process is going to be around transformation, and this will be a walk that we walk with them.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

PREM.: PHYSICIAN OUT-MIGRATION - REVERSE

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Earlier this morning the Premier stated that we have more doctors per capita here in Nova Scotia. I want to remind him that we have several regional hospitals that serve all of the Maritimes, like the IWK, the rehab centre, and the VG. We also have the Dal Medical School, which has a high number of academia physicians. The CIHI report that was released shows that we are the only province in Canada that has a decrease in the number of physicians in our province.

We have a responsibility to serve the people of Nova Scotia. My question to the Premier is, when will his government take responsibility for this problem and work to reverse the out-migration of physicians in this province?

[10:30 a.m.]

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. She would also know that the numbers when we were starting were much different than other Canadian provinces. I'm sure she would have followed the news yesterday, the very case she just made about Dal Medical School and people working at differing levels of practice. I made the same case out there, outside, to the media. Don't forget the IWK, which is the regional children's and women's hospital in the province where we have a tremendous number of people. We also have a medical school where we have physicians.

There's no question, we know there are issues in our province. We know that they will continue to work with our communities, continue to try to put together what we believe is the kind of environment where we're going to be able to attract and retain those health care providers that I know she's passionate about in her area, trying to retain them. We're working with our communities and will continue to do so. We know there's more work to do and we're here to work with those organizations to ensure that people have access to primary health care in their community.

MS. SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's helpful to make a statement that we have more doctors, per capita, than any other province. We need to deal with the problem. We need to deal with the issue and help the people of this province.

A survey from Doctors Nova Scotia revealed that 70 per cent of Nova Scotia doctors feel burnt out and the relationship with the Nova Scotia Health Authority was a contributing factor.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, are there a lot of reasons for doctors leaving this province? What is the minister going to do to improve relations between doctors and the Nova Scotia Health Authority?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I would absolutely agree with the honourable member. It's unhelpful to throw out statistics, but I do want to go back to the question I was asked by the Leader of the New Democratic Party and one by the current member who just asked the question. They actually used the same report to throw out statistics. All I did was quote the same report that they're quoting.

Quite frankly, if you want to use statistics, it would be helpful if we knew where the number was last year and where we are today in comparison to other provinces instead of throwing out a number. The fact of the matter is this is a very complicated problem that we have across the province. We know there are pockets where we're working very hard to try to achieve it. We know - and I quite frankly believe there's another looming problem in our province when it comes to physicians. We have a number of them who are 70 years old still practising - when they decide to leave under fee for service, what happens?

Where we may have communities now that feel like they're fully serviced, in two years from now that issue is going to surface in their community. It's why we need to continue to attract as many health care providers as we can, and it is why we need to broaden the scope of collaborative care practices to ensure that all our health care providers are responding to the needs of our citizens.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS:
C.B. PSYCHIATRIST RECRUITMENT - NSHA ACTIONS**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question, through you, is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Cape Bretoners learned earlier this week that two psychiatrists who were supposed to come to the Island will not be coming, and this is bad news for the people who need their services, but it's also bad news for the psychiatrists already practising in Cape Breton.

A survey produced by Doctors Nova Scotia shows that the psychiatry community is feeling unsupported and abandoned because of the poor relationship with the Health Authority. For instance, they were not consulted about a decision to merge addiction and mental health services, a decision they opposed and think is working poorly.

My question for the minister is, quite simply, will the minister admit that the actions of the Health Authority are making it more difficult for psychiatrists to stay in Cape Breton?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for this important question. You know what? I can assure the member when I was in Cape Breton I met with a number of the psychiatrists, the lead psychiatrist for the hospital there, who shared his concerns at that time. That was before knowing the most recent development with the intended new recruits that chose to not, for personal reasons, follow through with their intention to practise there, but the concern he raised about the amalgamation of the mental health and addictions, that's contrary. That's information that was not disclosed to me in that meeting.

I assure you, I asked that exact question as I went around the province meeting with mental health and addictions workers at regional hospitals and hospitals across the province. I asked each one of them what they thought of that process and, in every case, without exception, they said that that was the appropriate thing and was a good move for the province. Thank you.

MR. MACLEOD: Well, Mr. Speaker, Doctors Nova Scotia's community listening tour did not get that information. As a matter of fact, that government said that there would be a doctor for every Nova Scotian when they ran in this province and it has not happened, and now we see people who need services and can't get them.

Mr. Speaker, do you know that in Cape Breton it takes 14 months - 425 days - to get an appointment with a psychiatrist? The Doctors Nova Scotia report provided some insight into that long wait. In May, the report was made that 500 patient referrals - 500 - were left sitting on a desk untouched from January to May.

The question is, will the minister admit that the poor relationship between the Health Authority, his government, and Cape Breton psychiatrists is contributing to poor service for people who need it today - not 10 years down the road, not three years down the road, but today?

MR. DELOREY: As I have stated a number of times, the topic and the concerns around primary health care but in particular mental health services in Cape Breton and right across this province are very important. They are very challenging circumstances for the individuals, the families, our community members who require these services.

The efforts being made by the Nova Scotia Health Authority were demonstrated when they focused on recruiting new psychiatrists for the Cape Breton region. They had psychiatrists lined up. For personal reasons, they have indicated that they are not going to follow through with that. So that work is ongoing. The commitment and the intention are

being provided by the Health Authority in those recruitment efforts. They see the problem. They're working hard to fill those positions and provide the services.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**COMMUN. SERV. - OPEN ARMS MINISTRY:
FUNDING - DENIAL EXPLAIN**

MR. JOHN LOHR: My question is for the Minister of Community Services. Open Arms is a Christian ministry that has been operating an emergency shelter in Kentville for almost 15 years. Over the years, they have provided shelter for about 1,300 individuals, relying on a small group of volunteers. These volunteers are dwindling.

In 15 years, Open Arms has never received government funding, but now they need it, and their request has been denied. My question for the Minister of Community Services is, why won't the minister fund Open Arms, an organization that is filling a real need in our community?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I would be happy to sit down with him and learn more about the work they do. I do believe he has put in a submission on that, but I would be happy to sit down and discuss that.

MR. LOHR: Thank you to the minister for that. I look forward to sitting down and discussing this with her.

The people who operate Open Arms believe they can operate a year-round emergency shelter with a paid coordinator for less than \$80,000. I say that's good value for money. My question again to the minister is, if the lack of funding forces Open Arms to close its emergency shelter, what does the minister expect homeless people who rely on Open Arms' services to do?

MS. REGAN: I want to let the honourable member know that we are committing more funding to housing again this year. I'm happy to sit down with him, as I said, to talk this issue through. The funding is not endless, and there are a number of groups around this province who do want funding.

Again, I can't make any promises, but I'm happy to sit down with him.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

NAT. RES. - KEJIMKUJIK NATL. PARK: CLEAR-CUT - DETAILS

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Yesterday, I asked the Minister of Natural Resources why her department did not consult Parks Canada before approving a large clear-cut next to

Kejimikujik National Park. The minister said that while she had heard about the situation, she wasn't aware of the Parks Canada briefing note I referenced. This is troubling, Mr. Speaker. I am concerned that the minister and her department have not rectified this situation and that it may happen again.

As the minister committed yesterday to look into this, I would like to ask her again, why did her department keep Parks Canada in the dark about the proposed clear-cut next to Keji?

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Thank you to the member opposite for the question again today. As I referenced yesterday, I certainly wasn't aware of the situation at that time, but measures have been taken to rectify that situation to make sure that it doesn't happen again. Most approvals now are crossing my desk for approval. I have final eyes on every cut that's happening in the province. In the end, responsibility will be up to me to make sure that this doesn't happen again.

MS. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, the Tobeatic Wildlife Management Area, or the Game Sanctuary, as it is also known, is mapped as biodiversity-rich landscape under the Western Crown Land plan where the dominant value is conservation.

However, according to the department's online harvest map, there are two planned harvests inside the sanctuary, including a clear-cut. As I understand it, this would be the first planned logging within the sanctuary since the province acquired the lands from Bowater in 2012.

I ask the minister, why is she allowing clear-cutting to take place inside a game sanctuary?

MS. MILLER: I thank the honourable member for that question again. That's certainly something I'm going to look into to find out about. I believe that she is mistaken. I can't imagine there would be any kind of forestry processes within a game sanctuary, but it is something I will look into and follow up on.

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

EECD - DAYCARE OPERATORS: PRE-PRIMARY - INTEGRATION

MR. LARRY HARRISON: My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Daycare operators in the province, like the one in Brookfield, my hometown, are scrambling to understand and to work around the implementation of the pre-Primary program. It has been mentioned that the first phase of the program has been implemented in underserved areas, and that consultations are planned this Fall for current daycare operators.

The question is, what are the plans to work with and attempt to integrate current daycare operators into the pre-Primary system?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I appreciate the question. The issue right now that we're trying to address is that one in four children are accessing these critical programs. I know that every early childhood educator knows the impact they can have on the lives of the children that they are able to touch through these services.

There is a capacity issue, so in terms of cost-effectiveness of delivering this program, using our school system, where the infrastructure is in place, is absolutely critical. If we did look at expanding the private sector to cover 100 per cent of children, we would have to build new spaces, Mr. Speaker. Also, the evidence is pretty clear that using our school systems, having 4-year-olds actually on site in the schools that they will potentially attend, is a much better way to help them transition socially into that new environment.

MR. HARRISON: The Brookfield preschool has already lost six spots to the pre-Primary program this year. Others have lost qualified educators as well. These daycare operators desperately need their questions answered.

When are the consultations being scheduled for daycare operators? How will government ensure these educators both know about and can access these meetings?

MR. CHURCHILL: The member is right: this sector is absolutely vital to providing services to our families and to providing the wide breadth of services that we need for our children before they enter school age.

We have a vested interest in this sector. The province invests in this sector to the tune of \$55 million a year. We are negotiating funding agreements with the federal government that will see us invest further dollars into that sector to expand and support it.

We do recognize that the reality of a new, universal, free pre-Primary program for 4-year-olds will create pressures on their business model, Mr. Speaker, which is why we've moved forward thoughtfully for Phase I. We have only heard from approximately three out of 384 that have had impacts on staffing. That is because of our thoughtful approach to this.

We recently had private providers come in and speak with our consultant before we actually went out in the field. They feel very good about the questions that we are going to be asking on their behalf to parents and the public.

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

**HEALTH & WELLNESS - COLE HBR.-EAST. PASSAGE:
COLLABORATIVE HEALTH CTR. - CONFIRM**

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, as you may be aware, the Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage constituency that I represent does not have a single family doctor. During the 2017 provincial election, the constituents of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage were told by the Liberal candidate that we were getting a collaborative health centre.

I have received five calls just in the past week and numerous calls over the past three months from constituents who have lost their family doctor. Can the Minister of Health and Wellness tell me, yes or no, is this Liberal Government going to honour that promise to the constituents of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I appreciate the member bringing this question forward on behalf of her constituents, obviously a very important one for them. As we all know, Mr. Speaker, we have committed not just from a policy perspective approach that recognized collaborative care practices are a good way to help expand the primary care services in our communities to the people of Nova Scotia - her community and other communities.

[10:45 a.m.]

We have committed over \$9 million towards collaborative practices moving forward this year. Those specific sites haven't yet been announced, but when they are, I will be sure to let the member know if her community is on that list.

MS. ADAMS: I am a little confused, I must confess. My understanding from what I've read in the budget is that the budget for collaborative health centres was \$6 million. There were two identified in the books, Shelburne and New Waterford. It does not list my constituency, so I want to know whether my constituency got left off by accident, and we can just pencil it in, or if it in fact is not getting a collaborative health centre as promised.

MR. DELOREY: Again, the work is ongoing to provide additional collaborative care practices across the province. The work is being done to identify how the practitioners wish to collaborate in those centres to provide the best primary care services that they can to the people of Nova Scotia.

I believe the member referenced comments and commitments made by the former member for her community. My understanding, Mr. Speaker, is that the commitments that were made at that time were that the member would be working towards that.

As a government, we continue to work to establish collaborative care practices throughout the province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Beaver Bank.

TIR: COURTESY BUSING - CANCELLATION

MR. BRAD JOHNS: On Wednesday, a constituent brought me a letter that they had received from Stock Transportation dated September 26, 2017, and I will table that, stating that their children will no longer be receiving courtesy busing. This year, courtesy busing and busing issues - I have been contacted more about those issues than at any other time, even on Halifax Regional Council. We are a month into the school year, and students and parents are now being informed that they have to rush around to deal with this cut to courtesy busing.

My question is, regardless of whether we're talking about mandatory or courtesy busing, is it accountable for parents and guardians to receive notice four weeks into the school year on an issue like transportation?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I appreciate the question. We also have received a number of concerns in the HRM area in relation to busing.

We have reached out through staff to the school board to discuss the issues. They have assured us that they're working their way through the process. I know that there are some communities that may still be affected, but that number has been reduced significantly based on when this first came to our attention.

At heart and centre of this is the health and safety of our children. If the member does have any information in terms of routes that children are required to take for walking, if those are safe or unsafe, I would be very happy to take that information and act upon it.

MR. JOHNS: I thank the minister for his remarks. Parents have expressed their concerns with the maximum distance that the province and school boards are setting for walking and busing. Distances are set provincially, and sometimes lesser distances are set by the school board, but they need to be reviewed. Decisions that are made last-minute like this are leaving people scrambling for transportation for their kids.

My question is, would the minister commit to at least reviewing the distances that school boards are setting for busing?

MR. CHURCHILL: The issue first and foremost, I believe, is around safety. I do not think it's a matter of distance. There are many out there who would argue that having our children walk to school is a healthy exercise. But of course, we want those pedestrian routes to be safe for our kids because we want them getting to school and back home safely. For me, this is a question of safety.

Again, if there are routes that we are concerned about, I would like to know where they are so that we can properly address those safety concerns if they do exist.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACMELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole on Supply unto Her Majesty.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank the House for the opportunity to stand up and share a few thoughts today. I had the honour . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The honourable member for Kings South has the floor.

MR. IRVING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I had the honour and privilege to be invited to the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The House will recess for a minute or two to give people a chance to settle in here perhaps.

[10:50 a.m. The House recessed.]

[10:52 a.m. The House reconvened.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable member for Kings South.

MR. KEITH IRVING: I am pleased to rise today to provide a few thoughts to the House on our country, on Canada 150. I was honoured to be invited to a local Baptist Church as they were celebrating Heritage Day. They asked me to speak on Canada 150. It was a helpful thing to do to reflect on our country, to take a few moments and think about what makes us Canada. My speech to them was about Canada 150 near and far, and honouring and celebrating our country.

Our country and countries in general are defined very much by our geography. This country, being a northern country, is greatly influenced by climate. I can think of no better way to describe that than my time living in the Arctic and heading out on my first caribou hunt in about -30 degrees. I was on a trip with Methuselah Kunuk, a local Inuit hunter, and we went about 100 kilometres north of Iqaluit to pick up a broken-down skidoo and to, hopefully, hunt some caribou.

It was a marvelous moment when we came across a large herd of caribou and, of course, I was all excited about hunting my first caribou and roaring to go and what did Methuselah do but stop the skidoo and pull out a cigarette. I learned a lot that day from Methuselah, about him working with the land and the animals. He showed such tremendous skill on the land. While I was shivering in the cold, he was whipping up a tent for camping in the evening.

And I obtained great respect for our Indigenous People that day, as they have learned to live in the Arctic, to live and work in a very harsh and bitter climate. I believe that that is very much part of this country. Even here in Nova Scotia, we battle the elements each winter. It helps define us. We rely on each other, in our climate, to work together, to stay warm, to stay fed, to harvest wood and harvest food, and that is very much what has defined us, I believe, as a country as our forefathers settled this land. And, again, returning to our Indigenous Peoples here in Nova Scotia are being welcomed by Membertou and then sharing this land with the settlers who eventually formed this country.

The other thought I had about how this country came to be was that we were a country born through peace; we did not go to war to create this country. Our country was built with Loyalists loyal to the Crown and they settled our country. Our African Nova Scotians came to this country in peace, fleeing wars to the south of the border, and that I think has helped define us as Canadians on the international stage. We are a country of peace and democracy, and I'll touch on democracy at the conclusion of my remarks.

I don't think there's any way we can reflect and celebrate and honour our country without giving some thought to our veterans and their role in defending and honouring our country with their service. This year I had a very profound experience of touring the gravesites in Belgium and France with my son. It was a father and son trip to tour the graveyards and it is a very, very powerful, powerful moment.

I had no relatives in the graveyard, as far as I am aware, but one cannot be unaffected by walking through those thousands and thousands of gravestones with maple leaves on each one. As I walked through those graveyards with my 22-year-old son, seeing the ages 19, 22, 25, 18 - we owe those men lying in those graves in Belgium and France more than we can ever describe. It has defined us as a country and I think on Canada 150 we must pause, particularly with the upcoming Remembrance Day, and think of what they have provided us in the building of this great country. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Canada is also built locally and, as we all know in this House, we have the opportunity to acknowledge remarkable people from our ridings. I've had the opportunity to meet so many people in my riding who are just such great Canadians and, I think, are reflective of what this country and what this province is about.

I wanted to highlight a few today whom I think deserve recognition as we think about this country, as we think about our communities, our province and our country. Just recently L'Arche opened a \$2.8 million new home. It was called Building Our Dream. Over the last four or five years they've raised \$2.8 million to create a new home for the community of L'Arche with the core members. The outpouring of support from the Wolfville and area community to raise that amount of money, I think, just reflects so well on our country as our citizens work and gather together to support those who are less fortunate than ourselves, and face challenges.

I've mentioned in the House previously, Roger and Suzanne Sevigny. They are a couple I actually met in Iqaluit years ago, but about 20 years ago they moved to Coldbrook, Nova Scotia. Roger and Suzanne have fostered over 100 children in this province over 46 years, and they're still going. (Applause)

[11:00 a.m.]

Many of these children they foster have disabilities. They showed up at my community recognition event with three or four kids, two of them in wheelchairs. The work that Roger and Suzanne have done - quietly, in the background - and the love and support they've given those 100 children in need is something that I think we, as Nova Scotians, can be so proud of and greatly indebted to them.

The other person I wanted to mention is Judith Tod. I've worked with Judith over the last year or so with the Wolfville Area Inter-Church Council group on supporting refugees. Over several decades, she has helped several people seeking asylum. She's gone to bat for them and worked with lawyers to get them asylum in our country. Now she has embraced the work of refugee sponsorship, and has led over 60 volunteers in the Valley to host two Syrian families, the Tahinas and the Alis. We've also now just recently, through her work, taken in a Syrian woman who was settled on the South Shore but needed to leave the area, so she has come up to Wolfville and is now being supported by Judith and many other volunteers.

Mr. Speaker, a local example of how great our country is - I wanted to touch again on the Black River community association that fundraised for many years to renovate their hall. Several weeks after opening that hall, it burned to the ground. That community did not give up but came together again. Beyond the community, donations came pouring out, and they rebuilt the hall. They did not give up - just a great testament to Nova Scotia rural communities and their vitality and energy and the great people in them.

I wanted to finish up on my thoughts about Canada, as we celebrate Canada 150, with a story from about 30 or 35 years ago. I had the honour and privilege of chairing a national organization called Canadian Crossroads International. I've been a volunteer with them in Cameroon, West Africa, and on returning sat on the board for many years, including a stint as chair. It just happened in 1992, I believe it was, that we had an international consultation during my period as chair. I had the honour to escort 30 country representatives from around the developing world into Parliament Hill for Question Period. It was quite an event to enter Parliament with these men and women from around the world in their traditional, colourful garbs and being introduced in the House.

It was a lively session, like most sessions in the parliamentary system. I believe the Prime Minister was Brian Mulroney at the time. The Opposition was pounding at Brian Mulroney on all the terrible things he was doing to the country and the terrible decisions, and going quite hard at him in the typical parliamentary debate that sometimes takes place in this House.

We left the Chamber after Question Period, and the country representative from Côte d'Ivoire turned to me and said - and I'll never, ever forget this: I now know what democracy is. I said: Why? He said: If anybody had said that to our president in Côte d'Ivoire, they would have been shot. That was a lesson that I learned on how great and fortunate a country we have in Canada.

I encourage all members to give some thought to our great country; to the men and women who have fallen in defending it and have served in the military; to those founders of our country who built it through cutting wood, sailing ships, and harvesting food and fish; and to the local people who, every day, work quietly in the background and give so much to this great country.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

We'll take just a short recess while the minister has staff made ready.

[11:06 a.m. The House resolved itself into a CW on Supply with Deputy Speaker Mr. Chuck Porter in the Chair.]

[3:20 p.m. CW on Supply rose and the House reconvened. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Chuck Porter, resumed the Chair.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole on Supply reports:

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole on Supply has met and made progress and begs leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

We will take a short recess while we wait business in the Red Chamber to finish.

[3:20 p.m. The House recessed.]

[3:28 p.m. The House reconvened.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, that concludes government business for today. The House will meet again Monday, October 2nd, between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. Business will include the daily routine with no Question Period, followed by the Committee of the Whole on Supply.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for the House to rise to meet again on Monday, October 2nd, the hours being 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Following the daily routine we will do the motion on supply.

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

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned.

[The House rose at 3:30 p.m.]