



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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First Session

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS:	
Gov't. (N.S.) - Victoria Co.: Cell Antennae - Ensure, Mr. K. Bain (by Hon. A. MacLeod)	1332
GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 372, CCH - Black, Ellie: Accomplishments - Recognize, Hon. L. Glavine.....	1333
Vote - Affirmative.....	1333
Res. 373, EECD: School Bus Safety Wk. (Oct. 16-20) - Recognize, Hon. Z. Churchill	1334
Vote - Affirmative.....	1334
Res. 374, Persons Day (Oct. 18 th) - Dr. Ramona Lumpkin: Accomplishments - Recognize, Hon. K. Regan	1334
Vote - Affirmative.....	1335
Res. 375, McNee, Grace - Bicycle Trek: Ind. Living N.S. Fundraiser - Congrats., Hon. K. Regan.....	1335
Vote - Affirmative.....	1336

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:

No. 52, Motor Vehicle Act, Hon. David Wilson	1336
No. 53, Electricity Act, Ms. L. Roberts.....	1336
No. 54, Labour Standards Code, Ms. T. Martin	1336
No. 55, Real Estate Appraisers Act, Ms. C. Chender	1336
No. 56, Occupational Safety General Regulations, Ms. T. Martin	1337

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS:

Persons Day (2017): Cdn. Women's Equality - Honour, Ms. K. MacFarlane	1337
Krizan, Matthew: Culinary Events - Congrats., Ms. S. Lohnes-Croft.....	1337
SWES Strong Girls Club: IDGC Particip. - Recognize, Ms. B. Adams	1338
Mi'kmaq Native Friend. Ctr.: Reconciliation Event - Recognize, Ms. L. Roberts.....	1338
Kartbahn: 20 th Anniv. - Recognize, Ms. R. DiCostanzo.....	1339
Brown, Frank - Teacher: 50 th Birthday - Honour, Mr. T. Halman.....	1339
Nocturne (10 th Anniv.): Artists/Organizers - Congrats., Ms. S. Leblanc	1340
MacDonald, Ian: Scouting Commit. - Thank, Mr. K. Irving	1340
George D. Lewis Sch.: Final Play - Acknowledge, Hon. A. MacLeod	1341
Persons Day (2017): True Equality - Path Forward, Ms. C. Chender	1341
Rodney, Barb - Vol.: G.G. Sov. Award - Honour Recognize, Hon. Z. Churchill	1341
Shelburne Co. Agric. Exhib. Assoc.: Success - Congrats., Ms. K. Masland.....	1342
Farrell, Jack/Fraser, Tom: Cornwallis Documentary - Recognize, Ms. L. Roberts.....	1342
Sm. Bus. Week - Button, Andrew: Bus. Vision - Recognize, Hon. M. Furey.....	1343
MacLellan, Donald/Donna: Community Commitment - Appreciation, Ms. A. Paon.....	1343

Gov't. (N.S.) The Lodge That Gives - Fin. Assistance, Ms. T. Martin	1344
Sceles, Ted: Fort Sack. Vol. of the Year - Congrats., Hon. K. Regan.....	1344
Luker, Mason - Children's Wish Fdn.: Disney World - Best Wishes, Mr. E. Orrell.....	1345
Gillis, Angeline: Sr. Dir. Mi'kmaw Cons. Group - Recognize, Ms. L. Zann.....	1345
Hewitt, Henry "Chick": 12 th Lancaster Living Legend - Congrats., Hon. L. Glavine.....	1346
Ripley, Ian - Apple Forestry: Sustainable Management - Honour, Ms. E. Smith-McCrossin.....	1346
Turner, Olivia/Gignac, Allie: Pop Tab Fundraiser - Congrats., Hon. M. Miller	1347
Salter, Ainslie: Scottish Dance Scholarship Prog. - Congrats., Hon. P. Dunn.....	1347
Sm. Bus. Wk.: Local Businesses - Support, Hon. R. Delorey	1347
First Cornwallis Baptist Church: Anniv. (210 th) - Congrats., Mr. J. Lohr	1348
CyberSCAN Unit: Professionalism/Advocacy - Thank, Ms. L. Zann.....	1348
Robertson, Phil: Digby Lobster Bash - Congrats., Mr. Gordon Wilson.....	1349
Williams, Ralph/Sack. Lions Club: Fundraising Efforts - Thank, Mr. B. Johns.....	1349
Hfx. Dunbrack Prem. Women's Soccer Team: Success - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab	1349
Findlay, April/Cumberland Co. 4-H: Importance - Recognize, Ms. E. Smith-McCrossin.....	1350
Aquinaga, Tegan: Achievements - Congrats., Hon. I. Rankin.....	1350
MacDonald, Ron/N. Sydney Hist. Soc.: Efforts - Recognize, Mr. E. Orrell.....	1351
Stubbington Smith, Mary: Foster Family Mentorship - Celebrate, Hon. P. Arab	1351
Spurway, Matt: Com. Commit. - Thank, Mr. T. Halman.....	1351
Fall River Guardian Pharmacy: Grand Opening - Congrats., Mr. B. Horne.....	1352
Downie, Gord: Death of - Mourn, Mr. H. MacKay.....	1352

Brophy, Barb: Baseball N.S. Vol. of Yr. (2017) - Congrats., Mr. B. Jessome.....	1353
Army Cadets (N.S.): Com. Impacts - Recognize, Ms. R. DiCostanzo.....	1353
Lunen. Folk Hbr. Fest.: Success - Congrats., Ms. S. Lohnes-Croft.....	1353
Levy, Mikayla: Wrestling Career - Success Wish, Mr. K. Irving.....	1354
d'Entremont, Irene: Order of N.S. - Congrats., Hon. Z. Churchill.....	1355
ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS:	
No. 239, Prem. - N.S. Health Cards: Admin. Contract - Status, Hon. J. Baillie.....	1355
No. 240, Prem.: Minimum Wage - Increase, Mr. G. Burrill.....	1357
No. 241, Prem.: Physician Recruit. Plan - Delay, Hon. J. Baillie.....	1358
No. 242, Justice: Bill No. 16 - Constitutionality, Ms. C. Chender.....	1359
No. 243, H&W: Breast Screenings: Lack of Access, Ms. K. Masland.....	1360
No. 244, Int. Serv.: Flextrack - Details, Hon. C. d'Entremont.....	1361
No. 245, Int. Serv. - Sierra Systems: Amended Tender - Controls, Mr. T. Houston.....	1362
No. 246, Env.: Cap and Trade Prog. - Details, Ms. L. Zann.....	1363
No. 247, EECD - School Fees: Policy - Clarify, Mr. T. Halman.....	1364
No. 248, TIR - HRM: Vehicle Noise - Action, Mr. B. Johns.....	1365
No. 249, EECD - Island View HS: IB Prog./Skills Trades - Explain, Ms. B. Adams.....	1366
No. 250, H&W - Dart. Gen. Hosp.: Emerg. Mental Health Serv. - Access, Ms. S. Leblanc.....	1367
No. 251, Justice - Bill No. 16: Constitutionality - Ensure, Ms. K. MacFarlane.....	1368
No. 252, EMO - Victoria Co. (C.B.): Cell Towers/Antennas - Install, Hon. A. MacLeod.....	1369
No. 253, H&W: Cumberland Hospice Soc. - Min. Meet, Ms. E. Smith-McCrossin.....	1370
No. 254, Immigration: Intl. Students - MSI Eligibility, Ms. L. Roberts.....	1371
No. 255, H&W - Doctors N.S. Fund: Maternity Leave - Impact, Mr. E. Orrell.....	1372

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS:

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:

No. 44, Mental Health Court Expansion Act

Ms. K. MacFarlane	1374
Mr. H. MacKay	1377
Ms. C. Chender	1381
Mr. J. Lohr	1384

No. 47, Homes for Special Care Act

Ms. K. Masland.....	1388
Mr. B. Jessome.....	1391
Ms. T. Martin	1394
Ms. B. Adams	1398

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5):

Gov't. (N.S.): Balanced Budgets - Future Invest.,

Hon. L. Kousoulis.....	1403
Mr. T. Houston.....	1406
Mr. G. Burrill	1409

ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Thur., Oct. 19th at 1:00 p.m.1411

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):

Res. 376, Joukhadar, Joseph/Nadim: Accomplishments - Congrats.,

Hon. L. Diab

Res. 377, Currie, Beatrice: Hfx. Dunbrack Prem. Wom. Soccer Team

- Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....

Res. 378, Blank, Ashley: Hfx. Dunbrack Prem. Wom. Soccer Team

- Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....

Res. 379, Read, Ally: Hfx. Dunbrack Prem. Wom. Soccer Team

- Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....

Res. 380, Conrad, Candace: Hfx. Dunbrack Prem. Wom. Soccer Team

- Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....

Res. 381, Buckler, Holly: Hfx. Dunbrack Prem. Wom. Soccer Team

- Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....

Res. 382, Boudreau, Jayden: Hfx. Dunbrack Prem. Wom. Soccer Team

- Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....

Res. 383, Huck, Jeanette: Hfx. Dunbrack Prem. Wom. Soccer Team

- Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....

Res. 384, Oickle, Josie: Hfx. Dunbrack Prem. Wom. Soccer Team

- Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....

Res. 385, Macdonald, Kate: Hfx. Dunbrack Prem. Wom. Soccer Team

- Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....

Res. 386, Hardy, Kim: Hfx. Dunbrack Prem. Wom. Soccer Team

- Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....

Res. 387, Huck, Leanne: Hfx. Dunbrack Prem. Wom. Soccer Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1417
Res. 388, de Koe, Lianna: Hfx. Dunbrack Prem. Wom. Soccer Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1418
Res. 389, Diab, Monica: Hfx. Dunbrack Prem. Wom. Soccer Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1418
Res. 390, LaLande, Rachele: Hfx. Dunbrack Prem. Wom. Soccer Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1419
Res. 391, Santilli, Rieka: Hfx. Dunbrack Prem. Wom. Soccer Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1419
Res. 392, O'Donnell, Tiffany: Hfx. Dunbrack Prem. Wom. Soccer Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1420
Res. 393, Song, Sungbeen: Hfx. City U-17 AAA Boys Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1420
Res. 394, Piercey, Matthew: Hfx. City U-17 AAA Boys Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1421
Res. 395, MacLachy-Gaudet, Joey: Hfx. City U-17 AAA Boys Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1421
Res. 396, MacDonald, Isaac: Hfx. City U-17 AAA Boys Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1422
Res. 397, Eliot, Harry: Hfx. City U-17 AAA Boys Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1422
Res. 398, Bhujel, Hari: Hfx. City U-17 AAA Boys Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1423
Res. 399, Heckel, Erich: Hfx. City U-17 AAA Boys Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1423
Res. 400, Davis, Eli: Hfx. City U-17 AAA Boys Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab	1424
Res. 401, Adza, Edmund: Hfx. City U-17 AAA Boys Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1424
Res. 402, Warner, David: Hfx. City U-17 AAA Boys Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1425
Res. 403, MacLeod, Cullen: Hfx. City U-17 AAA Boys Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1425
Res. 404, Ripoll, Carson: Hfx. City U-17 AAA Boys Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1426
Res. 405, Richards, Brandan: Hfx. City U-17 AAA Boys Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1426
Res. 406, Rubinger, Ben: Hfx. City U-17 AAA Boys Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1427
Res. 407, Al Arabi, Ayoub: Hfx. City U-17 AAA Boys Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1427

Res. 408, Napier, Alec: Hfx. City U-17 AAA Boys Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1428
Res. 409, McFarland, Aidan: Hfx. City U-17 AAA Boys Team - Congrats., Hon. L. Diab.....	1428
Res. 410, Barron, Laurie - East. Can. Cup All Star Challenge: Asst. Coach - Congrats., Hon. Z. Churchill	1429
Res. 411, Hamilton, Andrew: Acad. Res./Com. Commit. - Thank, Hon. I. Rankin	1429
Res. 412, Res. Opp. Ctr.: Anl. Vol. Awards - Thank, Hon. I. Rankin.....	1430
Res. 413, Hennigar, Sandra - St. James United Church: Contributions - Thank, Hon. I. Rankin	1430
Res. 414, McGinn, Terri: Comm. Contributions - Thank, Hon. I. Rankin.....	1431
Res. 415, Schwartz, Rita Mae - Souls Hbr. Res. Miss.: Commit. - Thank, Hon. I. Rankin	1431
Res. 416, Bishop, Suzanne - St. James United Church: Commit. - Thank, Hon. I. Rankin	1432
Res. 417, Spires, Petra: Achievements - Congrats., Hon. I. Rankin.....	1432
Res. 418, Maple Grove Ed. Ctr.: Late Bus - Congrats., Hon. Z. Churchill	1433
Res. 419, Hbr. Lites New Horizons Club - Congrats., The Speaker	1433



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2017

Sixty-third General Assembly

First Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Mr. Chuck Porter, Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we start the daily routine the topic for late debate, as submitted by the honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, is:

Therefore be it resolved that by demonstrating strong fiscal management and achieving balanced budgets, the provincial government now can invest in key programs, economic development and attracting investments while not burdening future generations with more debt.

Tonight, at the moment of interruption.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. HALMAN: In the west gallery, we have with us Dartmouth East resident, and good friend of mine and my neighbour, Chris Blonde. Chris served in the Royal Canadian Navy for over 20 years. He was a submariner, and after retiring two years ago, he is now a local entrepreneur in Dartmouth East. He is the owner of Blondie's Sweet Potato Dog Treats.

I'll ask the House to please welcome Chris Blonde. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

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

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I am going to be tabling this petition on behalf of the member for Victoria-The Lakes:

“We, the undersigned residents of Victoria County and area call upon the Government of Nova Scotia to ensure that cellular antennas/towers are installed to improve areas of poor communications throughout Victoria County.”

The petition contains 590 signatures and I have attached my name, as per the Rules of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, may I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. GLAVINE: In your gallery today, the Speaker's Gallery, there is a young lady who, I think, we all know in Nova Scotia. Ellie Black is with us today, coming off of course

an outstanding World Artistic Gymnastic Championship - and I'll refer to some of her accomplishments in my motion here today.

If Ellie could rise - her friend Tyler is with her as well - if they could rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Standing Ovation)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 372

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

Whereas the 2017 World Artistic Gymnastics Championships in Montreal hosted more than 500 athletes from 80 countries around the globe; and

Whereas Ellie Black of Halifax, Nova Scotia, led the Canadian contingent and captured a silver medal in the all-round gymnastics final; and

Whereas this is Canada's first medal at the artistic gymnastics world championships since 2006;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House join me in recognizing the remarkable accomplishments of Ms. Black who, through her hard work, dedication, and training has cemented her status among the world's most elite gymnasts, as well as one of the best Nova Scotia athletes of all time.

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. 373

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

Whereas more than 118,000 school-aged students across Nova Scotia ride the school bus to school; and

Whereas in the 2016-17 school year there were more than 1,500 school bus red-light violations witnessed by school bus drivers; and

Whereas school zones can be unpredictable places, and for the safety of all students, drivers are legally required to stop when a school bus is stopped with its red lights on;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature join me in recognizing the week of October 16th to October 20th as School Bus Safety Week in Nova Scotia.

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 Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 374

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

Whereas October 18th is Persons Day, marking the Persons Case in 1929, which declared women as persons under the law and established the right of women to fully participate in politics and affairs of state; and

Whereas today in Nova Scotia about 60 per cent of senior leadership positions in the provincial Public Service are held by women and there are 17 women MLAs, the highest number of women MLAs ever elected to the Legislature; and

Whereas this month Dr. Ramona Lumpkin, former President and Vice-Chancellor of Mount Saint Vincent University, was awarded the Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case, for her dedication and commitment to gender equality;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Dr. Lumpkin for her amazing accomplishments, and recognize all women and girls who work to advance gender equality in Nova Scotia.

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 Community Services.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I please make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. REGAN: Thank you. It gives me great pleasure to introduce in the east gallery Grace McNee, if she would please rise, who took on the tremendous challenge of riding her bike across Canada to raise funds for Independent Living Nova Scotia. Grace's bike tour was in honour of her friend and former Independent Living Nova Scotia board co-chair, Sarah Dubé, who passed away last year. I'd also like to welcome to the House today Brenda McNee, who is Grace's mom, if she would please rise, and Lillianne Dubé, Sarah's mom. As well, we have folks here from Independent Living Nova Scotia: Carrie Ernst, who is the operations manager, and Randy Reede, who is the information outreach coordinator. I would ask the members to give our guests a warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 375

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

Whereas Independent Living Nova Scotia supports persons with disabilities to make informed choices about how they want to live their lives; and

Whereas Grace McNee trekked across Canada on a bicycle to raise funds for the organization in loving memory of her friend and Independent Living Nova Scotia co-chair, Sarah Dubé, who passed away last year; and

Whereas Sarah's strong will and determination was truly inspiring and she was the most fiercely independent person Grace ever knew;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly congratulate Grace for raising funds for Independent Living Nova Scotia and wish her great success as she continues to help Nova Scotians with disabilities live independently within their communities.

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. 52 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 293 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Motor Vehicle Act. (Hon. David Wilson)

Bill No. 53 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 25 of the Acts of 2004. The Electricity Act. (Ms. Lisa Roberts)

Bill No. 54 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Labour Standards Code, Respecting Minimum Wage. (Ms. Tammy Martin)

Bill No. 55 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 25 of the Acts of 1998. The Real Estate Appraisers Act and Election by Widow Regulations. (Ms. Claudia Chender)

Bill No. 56 - Entitled an Act to Amend the Occupational Safety General Regulations. (Ms. Tammy Martin)

[1:15 p.m.]

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 Pictou West.

PERSONS DAY (2017): CDN. WOMEN'S EQUALITY - HONOUR

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Today is Persons Day. It's the day that honours the Persons Case, the case that won the victory of Canadian women's equality.

In 1927, Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney, and Henrietta Muir Edwards went to the Supreme Court of Canada to ask why women were not included in the word "person" in the BNA Act. They lost that case.

The Famous Five then took the next step and went to London to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Two years later on October 18, 1929, it was announced that the court would include women in the word "person."

I know that my female colleagues here today and I stand on the shoulders of those brave women. We are strong, proud persons who are honoured to represent the people of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

KRIZAN, MATTHEW: CULINARY EVENTS - CONGRATS.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: I would like to congratulate Chef Matthew Krizan of Mahone Bay, on his continued success with his restaurant, Mateus Bistro.

This summer, Matthew had the opportunity to take part in two unique experiences where he incorporated Nova Scotia's culture through his culinary skills. Matthew was the chef on board the Canada C3 Expedition for two separate legs - a Canada 150 initiative that was a 150-leg sailing trip through the Northwest Passage. He brought with him lots of Clearwater seafoods to fuel researchers, scientists, crew, and journey participants.

And representing Mahone Bay on August 27th, Matthew also took part in Canada's Table event, where he was one of 10 visiting chefs who partnered with 10 chefs from Ottawa to serve a sold-out dinner to 1,000 people. Matthew took both of these opportunities to showcase the East Coast through his cuisine. He incorporates aspects of Nova Scotia by gifting some of the diners with braided sweetgrass from traditional Mi'kmaq lands, and incredible seafood.

I would ask that all members of this House of Assembly to please join me in congratulating Matthew on both amazing events he took part in this summer.

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

SWES STRONG GIRLS CLUB: IDGC PARTICIP. - RECOGNIZE

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: I would like to bring attention to the South Woodside Elementary School's Strong Girls Club for attending the International Day of the Girl Child. The event was organized by the Alexa McDonough Institute for Women, Gender and Social Justice and was held on Wednesday, October 11th at Mount Saint Vincent University.

The students had the inspiring opportunity to see presentations from outstanding young girls from across our province. Some of the presenters were: Trisha Gore, a Mi'kmaq dancer; Jodie Upshaw, a singer-songwriter; poet Meredith Bullock; Tiona Emmerson, an artist and winner of the Delmore "Buddy" Daye Learning Institute; and Stella Bowles, who is an environmentalist responsible for initiating the cleanup of the LaHave River.

It was a memorable day of empowerment and inspiration for these young women.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**MI'KMAQ NATIVE FRIEND. CTR.:
RECONCILIATION EVENT - RECOGNIZE**

MS. LISA ROBERTS: I wish to extend best wishes and gratitude for an event happening today, right now, in Halifax Needham.

The Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre, in collaboration with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, has invited the public to a community event with the theme, Reconciliation: Let's Start the Conversation - I was invited and I dearly wish I could be there. The conversation today will shape the strategy on how the urban indigenous community and residents of Halifax can move forward together towards reconciliation.

It is an opportunity to learn about the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission findings, and find out what they mean for our capital city. Topics include Justice, Residential Schools, Culture, and Education.

I am deeply grateful to the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre for extending an invitation to the community to talk about reconciliation. Wela'lin.

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

KARTBAHN: 20th ANNIV. - RECOGNIZE

MS. RAFAH DICONSTANZO: In recognition of Business Week, I rise today to recognize Kartbahn, who celebrated their 20th Anniversary this year.

Kartbahn is a local company which offers racing and laser tag to many children and adults alike. Over the years, Kartbahn has been home to many birthday parties and corporate events.

For the past 20 years, Kartbahn has thrived as a business, located in Bayers Lake. Families continue to come here, time and time again, to enjoy the wonderful services the employees at Kartbahn have to offer.

This facility offers the best equipment for people of all ages to enjoy at a reasonable price. Kartbahn has become a bustling tourist destination for many years, as it offers both cutting-edge racing technology, and mission-based laser tag.

Not only is this facility handled to equip racing, but they also hold various team-building and retreats for local organizations.

I ask that the members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Kartbahn on their recent milestone.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

BROWN, FRANK - TEACHER: 50th BIRTHDAY - HONOUR

MR. TIM HALMAN: I rise today to honour a Dartmouth East resident, Frank “the Tank” Brown.

Frank has one of the more difficult and under-appreciated professions in society today, he is a high school math teacher.

Frank is well-known in Dartmouth East for his endless supply of math jokes and puns, his positive influence on his students, and his skill as an educator are clear when you see the reaction on the face of former students at the mention of his very name.

It is also Frank's 50th birthday.

I ask all members of this Legislature to join me in giving Frank Brown some well-deserved recognition for his many years of teaching math and encouraging interest in math, and wishing him a Happy 50th Birthday.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

NOCTURNE (10th ANNIV.): ARTISTS/ORGANIZERS - CONGRATS.

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of Nocturne, the amazing art at night festival that takes place each Fall in Halifax and Dartmouth, and has spawned several similar events across the province. This past Saturday night the city was full of excellent local art, interactive experiences and community spirit. It was also full of people of all ages, from all corners of the province, gathered together to absorb art.

I'd like to especially send shout-outs to the Dartmouth exhibits - Trophy, Memorial, The Nature of Portland Street, the Dartmouth High Improv Team, and Automatown.

I'd also like to acknowledge that for the past 10 years every director of Nocturne - all but one on a volunteer basis - has been a strong, creative woman. I ask the House to join me in congratulating all the artists and organizers involved in Nocturne.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

MACDONALD, IAN: SCOUTING COMMIT. - THANK

MR. KEITH IRVING: Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate Scouter Ian MacDonald on recently receiving the Silver Acorn Award for his especially distinguished service to Scouting. For over four decades, Ian's exceptional work as a Scout leader has had significant and long-lasting positive impact on the lives of countless young people.

In addition to the regular duties of a Scouter, he has been involved with Cubs, the Kings Area Service Team, and the Learning to Camp program. He has also participated in Scouting courses both as a student and an instructor and has been camp chief for numerous events. Ian added the Silver Acorn Award to an already impressive list of Scouting accolades, including the Medal of Merit, the Provincial Outstanding Service Award, and numerous certificates of commendation.

I ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in thanking Scouter Ian MacDonald for his tremendous commitment to Scouting and to improving the lives of young people.

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

GEORGE D. LEWIS SCH.: FINAL PLAY - ACKNOWLEDGE

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the end of an era. One of the last events at the George D. Lewis School in Louisbourg was the annual production of their school play - this year it was Château La Roach, presented at the Louisbourg Playhouse on June 4, 2017. It was the 12th season for the George D. Lewis School's junior high play and it was directed by Natasha Burke-Morash.

I stand here today, Madam Speaker, to thank Natasha and all the players over the years for their hard work they put into these plays year after year. Sadly, this one was their last as George D. Lewis closed its doors in June 2017.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

PERSONS DAY (2017): TRUE EQUALITY - PATH FORWARD

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Madam Speaker, as others already have, I rise to celebrate Persons Day. On this day in 1929 women became persons under Canadian law. We've come a long way and we have a long way to go. I look forward to the day when all women, including LGBTQ, Indigenous, and disabled women truly have parity in our society - parity in wages, in opportunity, in political office, and in freedom from harm.

On this day at this moment when it is increasingly apparent that identifying as anything other than male brings with it increased danger and harm, I hope this House will join me in marking this milestone as one step on a longer path to true equality.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

RODNEY, BARB - VOL.: G.G. SOV. AWARD - HONOUR RECOGNIZE

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Madam Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize Yarmouth's Barb Rodney. Barb was recently awarded the prestigious Governor General Sovereign's Award for Volunteering.

The Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers recognizes the exceptional volunteer achievements of Canadians from across the country in a wide range of fields. As an official Canadian honour, the Medal for Volunteers incorporates the Governor General's Caring

Canadian Award. The medal builds on the legacy and spirit of the Caring Canadian Award by honouring the dedication and commitment of volunteers.

Barb Rodney has been an active and dedicated volunteer for many organizations in our community and was recognized especially for her decades of volunteering with the Victorian Order of Nurses, where she was credited for expertly helping to steer the helm of the organization as well as her stewardship of the VON.

I ask this House to join me in thanking Yarmouth's Barb Rodney for her many years of dedication to the VON and her community, and in recognizing her for the prestigious honour of being awarded the Governor General's Sovereign Award for Volunteering.

[1:30 p.m.]

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

SHELburne CO. AGRIC. EXHIB. ASSOC.: SUCCESS - CONGRATS.

MS. KIM MASLAND: Madam Speaker, I was pleased to attend the opening of the Shelburne County Agricultural Exhibition in August. This exhibition has a rich history that dates back to the year 1876. It remains strong and successful today, and not only brings economy to local small businesses but provides an important opportunity for community members and visitors to gather together to socialize, learn, and enjoy great food and entertainment.

It is events like this exhibition that make communities in rural Nova Scotia so special. It was wonderful to join the people of Shelburne County, to march in the opening parade, and to acknowledge the commitment and efforts of the organizers and volunteers.

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate the Shelburne County Agricultural Exhibition Association for another successful event.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**FARRELL, JACK/FRASER, TOM:
CORNWALLIS DOCUMENTARY - RECOGNIZE**

MS. LISA ROBERTS: On this day, when dozens of community members are gathering at the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre to talk about reconciliation and what it means in my urban constituency of Halifax Needham and other parts of the city, I want to give a shout-out to two young white men who took initiative to inform themselves and others.

Jack Farrell and Tom Fraser are the novice filmmakers behind a short documentary called, *Indefensible: The Troubling Legacy of Edward Cornwallis*. They secured modest funding of \$2,000 and did numerous interviews with Halifax councillors, historians, and others, as well as accessing archival material, to produce this short, informative, well-done documentary.

Jack shared with me that symbols are important and they need to be confronted. They are an example of how settlers can engage in reconciliation.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

SM. BUS. WEEK - BUTTON, ANDREW: BUS. VISION - RECOGNIZE

HON. MARK FUREY: Madam Speaker, CO3, an innovative collaborative co-operative for entrepreneurs, small businesses, and start-ups, has created an environment and network conducive to the success of local business in my community. The meeting space at CO3 allows small businesses to conduct meetings, workshops, and collaboration in a professional setting. This has created an opportunity for partnerships to be formed and has brought together professionals and the creative minds of our area's many business owners who are innovators and problem solvers.

In celebration and recognition of Small Business Week, I wanted to acknowledge Andrew Button, founder of CO3, and recognize his vision of a co-operative business space allowing ideas to flow freely and to help to foster collaborative relationships within the business community.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton-Richmond.

**MACLELLAN, DONALD/DONNA:
COMMUNITY COMMITMENT - APPRECIATION**

MS. ALANA PAON: Capturing the beauty of a community and its people goes a long way in building hometown pride and a sense of belonging and ownership. Although the medium is often the message, Donald MacLellan of Arichat in Cape Breton-Richmond uses photography and videography as his medium to convey the message of home.

Whether a current resident or living away, thanks to Donald MacLellan, home on Isle Madame is always just a click away. Donald MacLellan is often assisted by his wife, Donna, and can be found at various community events and activities, as well as exploring remote points of intrigue across Isle Madame.

Donald operates a Facebook page called "Isle Madame Through My Eyes," and he posts out of love and a compassion for his home community, sharing what he sees through his camera lens with those of us seeking a little piece of home.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to share my appreciation of Donald MacLellan and his wife, Donna, for their commitment to their home community of Isle Madame.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

GOV'T. (N.S.): THE LODGE THAT GIVES – FIN. ASSISTANCE

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: This morning I had the pleasure of attending an MLA breakfast at the Canadian Cancer Society at which my retired colleague Gordie Gosse was guest speaker. Gordie has been instrumental in raising awareness to ensure that other men will not face the same diagnosis and allow boys in this province to be vaccinated against the HPV strain.

It was my first time at the Lodge, and it gives me both happiness and sadness to see such a wonderful facility in our province. The work they do, along with the services they provide, is such a comfort to those dealing with cancer. To think patients have a free place to stay and are provided with three meals a day is quite a relief to those needing treatment outside their homes.

Residents of Nova Scotia should never have to choose between paying their bills or paying to live away from home in order to receive life-sustaining treatments. This house is completely run on donations. I would urge this government to step up and provide this excellent facility with some much-needed and deserved financial support. Nova Scotians' health is well worth it.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

SCELES, TED: FORT SACK. VOL. OF THE YEAR - CONGRATS.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Madam Speaker, I would like to tell you about an inspirational Bedford volunteer. Earlier this year, Ted Sceles was named Fort Sackville Foundation's volunteer of the year. Ted served as their auditor for several years and then took over the role of treasurer in 2010. Simply put, Ted leads in all matters financial, everything from CRA returns to grant applications. He has always stepped up to work on the maintenance of the historic house, too.

Ted has been key to the success of many other volunteer organizations: Brookside Cemetery, Beacon House, and Bedford United Church, just to name a few. He has also been a member of the Halifax West Liberal Association for 20 years, many of those spent as its treasurer. He has served as official agent for the Nova Scotia Liberal Party and as official riding agent in 17 elections, both provincial and federal. That's a lot of paperwork. Having worked with Ted, I can say his work is always on time, accurate, and above reproach. I have the highest regard for him. Ted Sceles is the kind of person you want and need in any volunteer organization . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order. Time has elapsed.

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

**LUKER, MASON - CHILDREN'S WISH FDN.:
DISNEY WORLD - BEST WISHES**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: I rise today to wish Mason Luker and his family a memorable trip to Disney World in Florida, where he will attend Jedi training along with other activities. Mason was awarded his wish by the Children's Wish Foundation of Canada, Nova Scotia Chapter. Mason suffers from several life-threatening heart conditions. Many smiles and memories will be shared through his trip. I would like to thank the support of the community and the volunteers who allow the Children's Wish Foundation to work its magic for so many families. I ask all members to join me in wishing Mason and his family a wonderful trip.

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

GILLIS, ANGELINE: SR. DIR. MI'KMAW CONS. GROUP - RECOGNIZE

MS. LENORE ZANN: I would like to recognize Persons Day today by recognizing an amazing Nova Scotian woman. Angeline Gillis is senior director of the Mi'kmaq Conservation Group, and she recently addressed a group of Canadian senators about climate change.

We are witnessing climate change with unpredictable weather patterns that are happening all over the world, she said. We are experiencing more powerful storms, droughts, and the introduction of new species into our landscape and waters. She highlighted the social, cultural, and economic impacts that climate change will have should communities not be able to adapt. She called for moving forward in a strategic manner rather than a timid one, stressing that collaboration with stakeholders is especially important so that new programs, regulations, and policies that will be needed to combat climate change are developed.

She also suggested developing a concept of melding together traditional knowledge . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order. Time has elapsed.

The honourable member for Kings West.

**HEWITT, HENRY “CHICK”:
12th LANCASTER LIVING LEGEND - CONGRATS.**

HON. LEO GLAVINE: On the 6th of October, the Military Aviation Museum at 14 Wing Greenwood hosted a ceremony to honour a veteran and a living legend. Mr. Henry “Chick” Hewitt, age 95, served as a flying officer crew navigator onboard a Lancaster bomber during the Second World War.

Mr. Hewitt was formerly inducted as a member of the Lancaster Living Legends, with fellow inductee and former crew mate Roy Morrison in attendance. The ceremony also served as a personal reunion, as Mr. Hewitt and Mr. Morrison met for the first time since 1945.

As the ceremonial guest of honour, Mr. Hewitt riveted a plaque, bearing his signature and personal information onto the Lancaster bomber on display at the military aviation museum.

On behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia, I would like to congratulate Henry “Chick” Hewitt on his induction as the 12th Lancaster Living Legend and express my highest gratitude for his service to our nation during the Second World War.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**RIPLEY, IAN - APPLE FORESTRY:
SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT - HONOUR**

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I stand today to honour the forestry industry and general manager Ian Ripley at Apple Forestry in Cumberland County. Mr. Ripley is passionate about his work and his knowledge and education around the forestry sector.

Nova Scotia’s forests cover over 4 million hectares, or 75 per cent of the province. Our forests are diverse, sustainable, and productive, and they are an important resource. They provide our province with environmental, economic, social, and cultural benefits.

Apple Forestry and their staff stand for sustainable and proper forestry management. They continue to demonstrate their commitment, dedication, and professional approach to one of Nova Scotia’s biggest sectors.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

TURNER, OLIVIA/GIGNAC, ALLIE: POP TAB FUNDRAISER - CONGRATS.

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Madam Speaker, East Hants step-sisters Olivia Turner and Allie Gignac, students at the Enfield District School, are recycling with a purpose. The girls are collecting pop can tabs and have collected approximately 7,000 tabs so far with a goal of 752,000 for the purchase of a wheelchair for someone in the community in need. They hope that it will be for somebody their own age. They have a Facebook group called Pop Tab Girls and they have posted on a local Facebook page to let other people know what they are doing. In addition, they have a bucket at the end of their driveway where people can place their pop tabs.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the girls for the community spirit and their desire to help someone in need with such a unique project, and wish them every success in their endeavour. Our future is in good hands when we have young people like Allie and Olivia doing what they can to improve the lives of others.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

SALTER, AINSLIE: SCOTTISH DANCE SCHOLARSHIP PROG. - CONGRATS.

HON. PAT DUNN: Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a young Pictou County highland dancer. Ainslie Salter, age 14, of Stellarton, is a student at the Brenda MacKay School of Dance. She was one of two Pictou County dancers nominated to attend the Scottish Dance Teachers' Alliance North America Scholarship Program in October. Ainslie was chosen based on the marks she received in her theory exams taken in the Fall of 2016. She was nominated by examiner Janice MacQuarrie from Antigonish.

She completed her Grade 2 theory and is nominated for the Junior Scholarship. We wish Ainslie great success as she continues to represent Pictou County highland dancers.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

SM. BUS. WK.: LOCAL BUSINESSES - SUPPORT

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Every Fall, Nova Scotians and Canadians celebrate Small Business Week to pay tribute to the contributions that small business makes to our economy and our communities. Madam Speaker, being a business owner is filled with opportunities and challenges. They work hard. They are driven and take risks, often with little reward.

Madam Speaker, Antigonish, like so many other communities in our province, is incredibly fortunate to have the support that small business provides. It is the small businesses that donate prizes for hockey tournaments, advertise annually in our schools'

year books and support our volunteer groups and events with monetary and in-kind donations.

Madam Speaker, this week as we celebrate Small Business Week, let's make a special effort to support our local businesses year-round, across all industries, for they are an integral part of our community and deserve our support.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

FIRST CORNWALLIS BAPTIST CHURCH: ANNIV. (210th) – CONGRATS.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Madam Speaker, the First Cornwallis Baptist Church congregation is celebrating its 210th Anniversary. At a time when many churches are closing their doors, this congregation has stood the test of time. The church itself is actually the third building on the site, as the second church was lost in a fire in 1909. The current sanctuary was completed in 1910 at a cost of \$10,000 and still remains as a place of worship, fellowship and friendship for many in the Canard and surrounding areas.

Madam Speaker, I wish to congratulate the congregation of First Cornwallis Baptist Church on their very blessed milestone.

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

CYBERSCAN UNIT: PROFESSIONALISM/ADVOCACY - THANK

MS. LENORE ZANN: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Nova Scotia CyberSCAN Unit for their unwavering professionalism and their advocacy for victims of cyberbullying. They are crucial to the investigation of cyberbullying charges and they should play an active role in the investigations.

I know from my own personal experience, Madam Speaker, just how well they do and how important they are to victims. I received an email as well from the Vice-Principal of West Pictou Consolidated School, Kim Tetreault, who says it's not fair to victims that they should have to go through a process like this without the active support of the CyberSCAN Unit. They need to have their power, we need advocates for the victims. Police and RCMP do not always want to be involved in these investigations. We need the CyberSCAN Unit because they are well-versed in explaining to the accused the severity of their actions and the severity of the consequences.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

ROBERTSON, PHIL: DIGBY LOBSTER BASH - CONGRATS.

MR. GORDON WILSON: In our area, there are festivals that have been held for generations, festivals we went to as children and now bring our children and grandchildren. We will always continue to support these, but it is important to find new ways to promote our area. If we are lucky, as with the Lobster Bash in Digby, the festival will become popular very quickly.

In the case of the Lobster Bash, its popularity really should not be that surprising, given that if there are lobsters, there must be some lobster bash celebrations.

The first Lobster Bash was organized to promote the lobster industry, an industry which may have its ups and downs, but is also so important to my end of the province. In a very short time, the festival has become a not-to-be-missed event for our locals and our visitors. They can all watch such activities as lobster trap hauling, lobster banding, crate running, and lobster trap stacking.

I would like to congratulate Phil Robertson and his team on a very successful sixth Lobster Bash and cannot wait to go to the next.

[1:45 p.m.]

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

**WILLIAMS, RALPH/SACK. LIONS CLUB:
FUNDRAISING EFFORTS - THANK**

MR. BRAD JOHNS: Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ralph Williams of Beaver Bank. Ralph was recently recognized by the Sackville Lions Club for completing 1,900 personal visits to Lions Clubs across this province. Lion Ralph joined the Sackville Lions Club in 1979 and over 38 years has volunteered for our community. He's contributed thousands of hours to raising funds for charitable causes in Sackville and Beaver Bank area and around the world. I'd like to thank Ralph and all the members of the Sackville Lions Club for helping to make our community a better place.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

**HFX. DUNBRACK PREM. WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM:
SUCCESS - CONGRATS.**

HON. LENA DIAB: Madam Speaker, in honour of Persons Day today, I rise to congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premier women's soccer team who competed in the Canada Soccer National Championship this month in Surrey, British Columbia, after having placed first in regular Nova Scotia season play. The talented team of young women

played well in the tournament and narrowly missed the medal round after tying eventual silver-medal winners Surrey United in the group stage.

I wish to congratulate these 12 women for their team's success: Ashley Blank; Jayden Boudreau; Holly Buckler; Candace Conrad; Beatrice Currie; Lianna deKoe; my daughter, Monica Diab; Kimberly Hardy; Jeannette Huck; Leanne Huck; Rachelle LaLande; Kate MacDonald; Tiffany O'Donnell; Josie Oickle; Ally Read; and Rieka Santilli. Please join me in thanking them for representing Nova Scotia proud.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**FINDLAY, APRIL/CUMBERLAND CO. 4-H:
IMPORTANCE - RECOGNIZE**

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize April Findlay, the president of the Cumberland 4-H County Council, and the importance of 4-H Clubs and organizations throughout Nova Scotia. 4-H has been a part of Nova Scotia communities since 1922 when the first 4-H Club was organized in Heatherton, Antigonish County. The historical roots of the Canadian 4-H program are solidly grounded in rural Canada. The program originated for the purposes of improving agriculture, increasing and bettering production, and enriching rural life.

Today, it enhances skills in our younger generations such as leadership, communication, responsibility, interpersonal skills, decision-making abilities, learning about agriculture, life skills, and much more. This type of rich learning will carry on with our youth in their future endeavours.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

AQUINAGA, TEGAN: ACHIEVEMENTS - CONGRATS.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize Tegan Aquinaga of Upper Tantallon. Tegan has recently graduated from Sir John A. Macdonald High School and has been honoured as one of 15 students across Canada to achieve \$10,000 from the RBC Students Leading Change Scholarship.

Tegan achieved the Principal's List, participated in numerous leadership activities and sports teams while maintaining a 95 per cent average. She has also been active in working with community groups such as the Bay Refugee Project assisting two Syrian families to settle into our community. Tegan will be applying her scholarship to attend the University of New Brunswick this Fall to earn an engineering degree with a focus on biomedical work.

I would like the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Tegan on her outstanding achievements to date and wish her all the very best in the future.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MACDONALD, RON/N. SYDNEY HIST. SOC.: EFFORTS - RECOGNIZE

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the efforts of Ron MacDonald of the North Sydney Historical Society. He is trying to mark the 75th Anniversary of the sinking of the *S.S. Caribou*. The Caribou left North Sydney with 237 passengers and crew on board, headed to Newfoundland, but was torpedoed by a German U-boat, killing 136 people. Ron wants to reach out to relatives of those on board that day and mark the anniversary of that fateful day.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ron MacDonald and the North Sydney Historical Society for their efforts to remember our past.

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

**STUBBINGTON SMITH, MARY:
FOSTER FAMILY MENTORSHIP - CELEBRATE**

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Madam Speaker, during this Foster Family Appreciation Week, I would like to celebrate my friend and community member, Mary Stubbington Smith, who has been a foster parent for 12 years. Mary has fostered 51 children, and is currently fostering her 52nd. A mother to six children, two of whom were adopted, Mary as a nurse regularly fosters medically-fragile children, using her expertise to support them and help them thrive. After eight years of service, she recently retired as first vice-president of the Canada Foster Family Association. This inspiring and loving woman has also served on the provincial board and was local president for over 10 years. Mary is also a mentor to foster families who are going through the process of adopting.

Madam Speaker, we are so lucky in our community to have such a generous and kind friend to all, especially those in need. I ask all members to join in my celebration of her.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

SPURWAY, MATT: COM. COMMIT. - THANK

MR. TIM HALMAN: I rise today to commend Dartmouth East resident Matt Spurway for his commitment to improving our city and province. As community coordinator at Between the Bridges, Matt is showing more people what many of us in

Dartmouth have known for years, that he is a change-making force to be reckoned with. From his days working in a federal constituency office to the many community projects he is involved with, Matt is doing all he can to make Dartmouth a better place for everyone.

Matt is rarely seen without a smile. His positive and strong work ethic are envied by many. I ask all members of the House to join me in thanking Matt for everything he has done for Dartmouth and will do in the months and years to come.

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

FALL RIVER GUARDIAN PHARMACY: GRAND OPENING - CONGRATS.

MR. BILL HORNE: The Fall River Guardian Pharmacy held their grand opening in September, on a bright and sunny Saturday. Many local residents and well wishers enjoyed the free barbecue, draws, and gift bags. With a growing clientele, the owners of the Fall River Guardian - Mike Wyman, Shawn Grimm, and Greg MacLean - felt the need for a larger location. Now located on Highway No. 2, the new larger space will allow for room to provide the many new services that pharmacists have been able to provide over the last several years, and customers will also be offered a greater selection of merchandise. I would ask that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating the Fall River Guardian Pharmacy.

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

DOWNIE, GORD: DEATH OF - MOURN

MR. HUGH MACKAY: I rise today to mark and mourn the passing of Gord Downie of the Tragically Hip. Gord, who was the front man for the iconic Canadian band the Tragically Hip, was only 53 at the time of his passing last evening. Many of us watched as Gord bravely fought his cancer over the past two years. He chose to wage his battle in the public spotlight, where he could illuminate the trials of battling cancer and advocate for research and treatment of this ravaging disease. Gord also used this time of media attention to draw our eye to other important social issues, in particular the plight of our indigenous peoples.

I ask Gord's fans in the Legislature and across Nova Scotia to mark the passing of Gord by observing a moment of silence this evening, perhaps to be followed by enjoying some of the music by the Hip.

MR. SPEAKER: Before we move on to the next member's statement, if I could draw members' attention to the Speaker's Gallery, I would like to introduce a couple of great Eastern Shore constituents, long-time residents of the Chezzetcook area, good friends of mine, and folks who helped out with my campaign for re-election as well. I'm very

pleased to have them here. I have Norine and Vernon VanEe with me. Please give them a nice warm round of applause. (Applause)

The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville.

BROPHY, BARB: BASEBALL N.S. VOL. OF YR. (2017) - CONGRATS.

MR. BEN JESSOME: I would like to congratulate Barb Brophy of Hammonds Plains on being named Baseball Nova Scotia Volunteer of the Year for 2017. Barbara has volunteered countless hours to the sport of baseball within the Hammonds Plains Baseball Association and has been recognized for her many years of dedication to the association. This year, she was scheduling and field coordinator, a position which takes patience and dedication to detail. Barbara is highly regarded in our community and is well deserving of the award, which will be presented at the annual Baseball Nova Scotia awards banquet on October 21st.

I would ask all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Barb on being named Baseball Nova Scotia Volunteer of the Year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ARMY CADETS (N.S.): COM. IMPACTS - RECOGNIZE

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Army Cadets of Nova Scotia who offer amazing opportunities to the children of our communities. This past September the Army Cadets hosted an information session in Bayers Lake to promote engagement in their program.

The Army Cadets are inclusive of any person who is interested, aged 12 to 18, where they promote a physically active lifestyle, as well as learn about other cultures and traditions that they may have. We are fortunate to have an organization such as the Army Cadets to inspire the youth in our communities. It would not be made possible without the volunteers who devote countless hours to the organization.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the members of this House of Assembly join me to recognize the impact that the Army Cadets has on the youth in our province. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

LUNEN. FOLK HBR. FEST.: SUCCESS - CONGRATS.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Folk Harbour Festival on the success of their annual festival weekend this past August. The

Folk Harbour Festival showcases a combination of musical and dance performances from a wide range of cultures. It is Nova Scotia's longest-running music festival and offers audiences a true East Coast experience.

This year the festival fell on the same weekend as Rendezvous 2017 Tall Ships Regatta, which some locals thought may possibly have caused the festival to lose some spectators. However, that was not the case; in fact, the Folk Harbour Festival saw its best summer yet and broke all previous sales records with an overall crowd attendance of about 15,000 people.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you and the members of this House of Assembly please join me in congratulating the Lunenburg Folk Harbour Festival on its successful weekend, and thank all their volunteers for the contribution in making it such a success.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

LEVY, MIKAYLA: WRESTLING CAREER - SUCCESS WISH

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw the attention of the House of Assembly to Mikayla Levy, an extraordinary young athlete from the Gaspereau Mountain, just outside of Wolfville. Mikayla is ranked number two in Canada for her age and weight class in her chosen sport of wrestling.

At just 16 years of age, she has already amassed an impressive collection of awards, including a silver medal from the 2017 Canada Games in Winnipeg. With a strong work ethic, tremendous dedication and exceptional natural talent, her potential in the sport is limitless.

Please join with me in acknowledging the impressive success Mikayla Levy is enjoying this far in her wrestling career and in wishing her the very best as she continues to work towards her goal of competing for Canada at the Olympic Games. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier on an introduction.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I just want to draw the attention of the House - in the east gallery we're joined today by a childhood friend of mine, a high school friend, Mr. Bruce Gillis, who has worked in the Canadian Armed Forces as a civilian but has served our country overseas in conflict.

I want to welcome him here today and tell him how great it is to see him and look forward to catching up. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

D'ENTREMONT, IRENE: ORDER OF N.S. - CONGRATS.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, on November 7th at Province House five respected Nova Scotians who have made outstanding contributions to their province's culture and people will be invested into the Order of Nova Scotia, the highest honour a civilian can receive in the province. Among the five recipients is Irene d'Entremont of Yarmouth.

Irene has been a leader in entrepreneurship and community development for over 40 years, with a focus on tourism, culture, and economic development. She is currently the Chairman of Tourism Nova Scotia and has served as a commissioner for the One Nova Scotia Commission and a wide variety of local, provincial, and national boards and commissions.

Lieutenant Governor Arthur J. LeBlanc, Chancellor of the Order of Nova Scotia, describes the recipients as "Those who are appointed to our province's highest honour and have committed themselves to a lifetime of excellence and their extraordinary acts and achievements have benefited their fellow Nova Scotians and Canadians."

I ask this House to join me in congratulating Yarmouth's Irene d'Entremont on receiving the Order of Nova Scotia and in thanking her for her many valuable contributions to our province.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much for those very reflective members' statements. We'll pause for a moment or two while we get ready for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers.

[2:00 p.m.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY**ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS**

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

PREM. - N.S. HEALTH CARDS: ADMIN. CONTRACT - STATUS

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is for the Premier. The province's \$15 million contract with Medavie health services to produce our Nova Scotia Health Cards expired six months ago. These cards are now being administered on a month-to-month basis. Imagine that. These are the cards that all Nova Scotians use when they interact with our publicly funded universal health care system. My question is, what is the current status of the contract to administer these vital health cards?

THE PREMIER: I will ask the Minister of Health and Wellness to respond.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: That contract is currently being reviewed for an RFP process, so we're bringing together the information we need. Of course, it's a very important part of our health care system, the MSI system. It's imperative that we get the terms of reference for our RFP lined up appropriately, so that due diligence is under way now.

MR. BAILLIE: Well, Mr. Speaker, now Nova Scotians can see why our health care system is in such disarray under this government. The fact is, the contract was a multi-year contract, it expired six months ago, and now six months later, while it's on a month-to-month basis, the minister's thinking about maybe doing an RFP. No wonder this contract is symbolic of the way this government runs our health care system, which is clearly on a month-to-month basis.

I would like to ask the Premier, why did his government fail to secure a long-term contract to provide Nova Scotians with health cards within the time allowed?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the Minister of Health and Wellness for the tremendous work he's doing across this province. I'm very proud of the work that this government has done in tearing down nine different health authorities, into a single health authority. In the most recent budget that they voted against, there's funding to build 70 collaborative care centres across the province so that Nova Scotians have access to primary health care. Today, it was announced that the Department of Immigration is travelling with the Health Authority to the U.K., to attract family physicians to this province.

We are continuing to address the issues facing Nova Scotians, and we'll continue to do so and lead this province forward.

MR. BAILLIE: All of that is just talk if Nova Scotians can't even count on this government to get the fundamentals of the administration of our health ID cards right. That is the way every single one of us interacts with the health care system, when we go to a doctor, when we go to the hospital. Everyone else in the history of health care has managed to keep those cards moving, but not this government. No wonder people don't trust them anymore to find them a family doctor or to keep their emergency rooms open, when they can't even get the fundamentals of the health card right.

So I will ask the Premier to tell the House, when will they have a long-term plan for the provision and administration of our health care ID cards?

THE PREMIER: Nova Scotians today, tomorrow, and every day forward will continue to have access, through their health ID cards, that the honourable member is referring to. He's very right. Our government has done things differently than other governments. Government after government continued to roll over and spend money on

the collective bargaining process, as opposed to spending it in front-line care for Nova Scotians, and we're going to continue to spend it on front-line care.

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

PREM.: MINIMUM WAGE - INCREASE

MR. GARY BURRILL: I would like to direct my question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Across the country, we're seeing a wave of dramatically rising minimum wages. In B.C., Ontario, and Alberta - all moving towards \$15. There's mounting evidence of the benefits that a significant increase in the minimum wage of this sort can bring, both for employees as well as for the economy in general.

In 2013, when the Liberals took power, Nova Scotia had one of the highest minimum wages in Canada. On October 1, 2017, we became the province with the lowest minimum wage in our country.

We have one of the highest paid Premiers in Canada, and this Premier is leading a province which has the lowest wage for low-paid workers. Does the Premier see anything wrong with that?

THE PREMIER: I want to remind him that we just passed the budget with the largest single tax cut in the history of the province, that actually ends up going directly to low-income Nova Scotians. We've seen the single largest increase in income assistance in this province's history under our government, for those vulnerable Nova Scotians who require our support.

The honourable member, yesterday, was talking about rents in this province. We've increased rent supplements that have reduced the wait-lists for affordable housing by over 20 per cent, and we're continuing to climb. We're going to continue to move forward and make sure that those Nova Scotians who require our support and help will get it.

MR. BURRILL: It's 130,000 people in Nova Scotia - that's just short of one-third of all the working population of the province, who are making less than \$15 an hour. The Premier speaks about the tax changes in the budget just passed, but the fact is that these changes to the basic personal allowance will put around \$160 a year back in people's pockets, while increasing the minimum wage to \$15 would give low-wage workers an additional \$7,500 a year. I would like to ask the Premier, wouldn't people living close to the line be better off with \$7,500 extra rather than just \$160?

THE PREMIER: All Nova Scotians are better off today than they would be if the NDP got in power. For four and a half years when they had an opportunity to impact the lives of Nova Scotians, they were paralyzed by the opportunity that was given to them by Nova Scotians. Let me remind the honourable member that the single largest increase in

income assistance happened under this government, while that government stayed paralyzed by the opportunity. We reduced the affordable housing wait-list, while they were paralyzed by the opportunity. We reduced taxes for the most vulnerable citizens in this province, while they were paralyzed - oh, no, they weren't. They increased it. We reduced it.

MR. BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I have not asked the Premier for his assessment of the government that was elected a decade ago, and I have not (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party.

MR. BURRILL: Nor have I asked the Premier for his assessment of things that I may or may not have supported in the course of my lifetime.

I have, however, asked him, does he think it fair and reasonable before the people of Nova Scotia, that we have the third-highest-paid Premier in the country while our minimum wage workers have the lowest minimum wage in all of Canada?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I didn't have to answer the question on that. Nova Scotians already did.

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

PREM.: PHYSICIAN RECRUIT. PLAN - DELAY

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: The 2012 to 2022 physician resource plan indicates that we need 50 new doctors a year just to replace the retiring doctors; in other words, just to stand still. The 2016 update to that plan says that this government has already fallen behind on its 50 recruitments a year by 85, in the first four years of that 10-year plan. In other words, of the 200 doctors that we needed just to stand still, this government is already short by 85. I would like to ask the Premier, why has his government fallen so far behind in the recruitment of replacement doctors?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As he would know, and I have said this many times in this House, we added an additional 10 resident seats at Dal Medical School for Canadian-trained physicians. There are another 10 resident seats for international competency tests. That will increase the number of resident seats in our province to 56. He's very right, 50 is the requirement. On top of that, there's an additional 50 seats for specialists, 15 additional resident seats, five of which will be dedicated to Cape Breton Island. It's a long-term vision of how we continue to provide a stable environment and continue to make sure that we have the resources required. There's no question that this has been an ongoing challenge for decades. The structural changes will take time.

I also said in an earlier answer that the Minister of Immigration is joining the Health Authority to go on a recruitment drive in the U.K. I'm looking forward to the results of that and looking forward to continuing to work with our primary health care caregivers across this province so that Nova Scotians have access to a health care provider.

MR. BAILLIE: This is the Premier who promised every Nova Scotian a family doctor. Now we have 100,000 people looking desperately for a doctor. The government is already 85 behind. We need 50 new ones every year just to break even and make up for retirements. The Premier says that he is going to provide 10 doctors through the budget and another 10 some time in the future. That is not enough when 100,000 people today are without a family doctor, and they're behind just on replacement doctors.

The Premier says there is a long-term plan. I want to ask him directly, just how long-term does he expect those 100,000 Nova Scotians without a doctor to wait until he finally gets the message that they need help?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As he knows, it's been an ongoing challenge for successive governments to continue to make sure that we have the replacement health care providers across the province. He would also know that practices are changing to require more health care professionals.

That's why we introduced the 70 collaborative care centres that are in this current budget over the next four years. We'll continue to make sure that we have primary health care teams across the province, which will have a physician, nurse practitioners, family practice nurses. In my view, Mr. Speaker, some of those communities will require a social worker to look for determinants of health - all of those things will be part of how we deal with the ever-changing dynamic of delivering care and the ever-changing demand by residents when it comes to accessing that care.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

JUSTICE: BILL NO. 16 - CONSTITUTIONALITY

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. There are serious concerns about whether this government's attempt at redrafting the Incompetent Persons Act is constitutionally sound. On Monday the Minister of Justice tried to allay some of these concerns by telling reporters, "We've reached out to the legal community and the academics - even those who are critical of the bill in that it hasn't gone far enough - believe it's constitutional." However, following a media request for a list of who was consulted, the minister admitted that no one has directly advised that it follows the constitution.

I ask the minister, why would he give such conflicting statements about the constitutionality of this important piece of legislation?

HON. MARK FUREY: I thank my colleague for the question. The discussion that I shared on Monday was around the collective discussion of those we reached out to externally as well as internally within the Department of Justice. We believe, based on those collective discussions, that this bill is constitutional. When I spoke yesterday I tried to clarify that it was the collective discussions of all the people we've engaged through the consultation process - that we believe this bill is constitutional.

MS. CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, an expert in mental disability law from Dalhousie University Law School did provide feedback to the government on the proposed approach twice. He argued that allowing the survival of orders made under the previous legislation is, "... completely illogical, given the unacceptable standards of the old *Act*." Furthermore, he argues that, "It leaves a significant number of vulnerable individuals subject to all of the vulnerabilities or abuse permitted under the former legislation, with no mandatory scrutiny, which suggests an abandonment of responsibility."

I ask the minister, how can a piece of legislation be constitutional if it grandfathers in a key element of previous legislation that has been deemed unconstitutional?

MR. SPEAKER: I'm going to rule that question out of order. We're asking the minister's legal opinion on a piece of legislation, and that's not allowed.

The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

H&W: BREAST SCREENINGS: LACK OF ACCESS

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. A constituent of mine, a young woman named Holly Chedd, was recently ordered to have diagnostic breast screening due to lumps found in both of her breasts. It took Ms. Chedd more than three weeks to receive a referral from a nurse practitioner, and then she was told she must travel to Yarmouth for the test. Sadly, she was just informed that the radiologist has quit, and now her already-long wait has turned into February. We hear that more than 50 other woman have had their appointments rescheduled.

My question is, how does the minister justify the stress and health risks that go along with a lack of access to cancer testing?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Indeed, just this morning, I and members from across all three Parties had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Canadian Cancer Society operating here in the province. They talked a little bit about what cancer services - they highlighted, in fact, that they're

supportive of the approach to cancer care in the Province of Nova Scotia as part of their opening remarks.

In terms of the specific situation, in terms of the staffing availability for a particular service, if the member wants to have a bit more conversation on that specific case, I'm certainly happy to look into it with her.

[2:15 p.m.]

MS. MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, these extremely long waits just add even more stress to those women who are already worried and anxious about their health. The average wait for diagnostic breast screening is as low as 33 days; in some other areas, the wait is as low as 11 days. But for these women, they are being told they will have to wait more than 120 days.

Holly is willing to travel to another hospital but was told she cannot. My question to the minister is, considering we have a provincial Health Authority, will the minister take immediate steps to fix the rigid health care policies that prevent common sense to prevail when it comes to cancer screening, and when will a new mammogram radiologist be hired?

MR. DELOREY: Again I thank the member for the question. As I mentioned, the particulars in this case - if the member has, as it seems, additional information or details about that situation, I believe in this question, identifying that they were looking for the opportunity or willingness to go to another part of the province, indeed, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the advantages and the design and intentions of the one Nova Scotia Health Authority.

As I mentioned in a previous question, if the member has additional details, let's connect again, recognizing the privacy of the individuals involved, and we'll take a look at that and follow up accordingly.

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

INT. SERV.: FLEXTRACK - DETAILS

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Over the past number of years we've noticed that this government has made increasing use of Flextrack as a means to awarding government contract work. Indeed, it appears that in 2016-17 Nova Scotia awarded almost \$11 million through Flextrack.

My question to the Minister of Internal Services, could the minister explain what Flextrack is and why it is so popular with this government?

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for the question. Our procurement procedures are very in-depth, very thorough. We follow procurement law to the letter.

In terms of Flextrack, if that service is the most appropriate and has gone through the vetting process, that is why contracts are awarded to them or through them. For details, we do have a very strict policy of being as open and transparent as possible and all of our RFPs and awards are posted. I'd be happy to look into it further for the minister, if there's any specifics.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: In Public Accounts Committee today, it showed that contracts awarded through Flextrack appear in Public Accounts documentation as one lump sum payment to Flextrack, which is to say, Mr. Speaker, that departments are not disclosing whom they are actually working with.

The current Flextrack reporting protocols allow government to funnel money to suppliers, while keeping the names of those suppliers from public scrutiny.

My question to the minister, will the minister commit today to lifting the shroud of secrecy around Flextrack and begin accurately reporting as to who they are giving money to?

MS. ARAB: I thank the member for the question again. I'd be more than willing to look into that further and get back to the member.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

INT. SERV. - SIERRA SYSTEMS: AMENDED TENDER - CONTROLS

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Internal Services. In Public Accounts Committee earlier today we learned that Internal Services ran a tender process for a portion of its Help Desk application, that they knew only one company, Sierra Systems, could possibly win. This initial tender has now been amended and amended to allow for additional products and services, entirely at the department's discretion.

The RFP originally awarded was at \$3.8 million; it's already up to \$7.3 million. It has almost doubled. An objective observer might say that the department is using an open-ended tender to essentially give Sierra Systems a blank cheque.

My question for the minister is, can the minister tell us what controls are in place to keep this contract from going further afield than it already has?

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for the question. In terms of risk assessments, particularly with this software which is a service-based software, we recognized the risk. We debated the risk and any services from government or from NSHA, anyone who was going to be impacted by this service, were completely involved in the risk assessment, which we have records for, and I'd be willing to provide for the member.

MR. HOUSTON: The department issued an RFP for \$3.8 million. The cost is already up to \$7.3 million, and it could go as high as \$11 million we heard this morning. I don't know about the risk assessment around that process.

I would ask another question - the department said they expect this application to be in place for 15 to 20 years, unfortunately the underlying system is run on Adobe Flash and Adobe just announced that in 2020 it will no longer support Flash. That's just three years away. What we learned today is that the department basically said when we asked them, they said well, that's the application supplier's problem. In fact, it's not, Mr. Speaker, it's our problem. We've got \$7-plus million invested in this, maybe more - how can the minister stand behind an open-ended contract when the minister can't say what the application will look like just three years from now?

MS. ARAB: I'd love to be able to know exactly what applications are going to look like for the next three, four years. But in all fairness, I'd like to applaud our department because our department is constantly (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please.

MS. ARAB: I'd like to thank the member for his question. I'd like to answer in terms that our department is constantly looking at innovative ways to stay on top of the technology curve and to make sure that we are protected and that we are well-serviced and that we stay within our means.

Our department is constantly looking at new innovative ways to move us forward and we take into consideration the eradication of technology and the development of new technologies.

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

ENV.: CAP AND TRADE PROG. - DETAILS

MS. LENORE ZANN: When introducing a cap and trade program the government had to expect surely at the very least a few basic questions would be asked - for instance, who would participate? What are the emissions reduction targets? What will the emissions cap be for participants and how will this impact consumers? Yet, Mr. Speaker, it has

become very clear over the past few weeks that the Minister of Environment can't seem to answer even these basic questions.

I'd like to ask the minister here, how does he expect us to support a program and a bill that we now so little about?

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, this cap and trade program is about listening to Nova Scotians. Through consultation we've heard from Nova Scotians that they want to continue to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but they also want to grow the economy in a sustainable way as we transition to a low-carbon economy.

We have regulations that are coming up and we look forward to those discussions with Nova Scotians as we set our targets for the cap and trade program.

MS. ZANN: Well one thing we've learned about this cap and trade program is that actually private companies who are big polluters may even be able to earn a profit by selling unused emission credits. So here we have a program that will potentially subsidize large corporations, like Nova Scotia Power for instance, and at the very least shouldn't this money be placed in the Green Fund so it can be used to help those Nova Scotians that the minister says he cares so much about, in order for low-income people in particular to transition to a low-carbon economy?

My question for the minister is, will he commit today to ensure that any monies that are flowing from the sale of emissions credits from these big polluters are diverted to the Green Fund to help the greening of all Nova Scotians?

MR. RANKIN: As I said before in the House, any funds that come through the cap and trade program are going into the Green Fund, not the General Revenue Fund. It will be targeted directly to climate change initiatives.

The cap and trade system again is designed for the lowest cost. That's why it's a market-based system. It will achieve greenhouse gas reductions in the lowest cost possible, Mr. Speaker.

There are allowances that we're beginning in order for our businesses to transition. This is how other cap and trade systems are created across the world.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

EECD - SCHOOL FEES: POLICY - CLARIFY

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, in today's *Chronicle Herald* a parent of a middle school student, from Guysborough County, shared a troubling story - and I'll table that article. Her daughter was called to the office and was told that because her parents had

not yet paid her school fees she would not be permitted to attend the first school dance of the year, happening that night.

The mother stated, it's past time for the grown-ups to take care of money matters and give the kids the education they deserve, without constantly putting the hammer down on students to produce money, like some shady, B-movie loan shark.

My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, does the minister agree with the decision of preventing students from taking part in school activities if their families have not paid the school dues?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Of course not. I don't agree with that. In fact, we have a policy in place regarding student fees, which I'll table for the member. It states very specifically that students should not be made to feel awkward or pressured because of these situations. There is flexibility within that policy for principals to work out arrangements with families who can't afford to pay those fees, which are directly related to field trips, dances, and extracurricular activities.

MR. HALMAN: I also have that document, and I'm happy to table that as well. Will the minister now take action and ensure that this policy is being enforced?

MR. CHURCHILL: In fact, we acted yesterday when we saw the article in the *Chronicle Herald*. Our staff reached out directly to the board to ensure that the policies of the province were being followed properly. We wait to hear what they have to say about that.

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

TIR - HRM: VEHICLE NOISE - ACTION

MR. BRAD JOHNS: My question today is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Residents of Halifax are expressing fresh concerns over the increased noise in their neighbourhoods. A growing number of vehicles have been equipped with those after-market loud mufflers. Under the Motor Vehicle Act, law enforcement has limited ability to conduct mobile testing for vehicle decibel levels that would constitute a public nuisance. Halifax council recently voted unanimously to ask the province to reform the Act to include the use of mobile devices to issue tickets under the Act for stronger controls on noisy mufflers. I'll table that. My question is, how does the minister intend to respond to the City of Halifax and those concerned with increasing levels of vehicle noise?

HON. LLOYD HINES: We will rely on the fabulous relationship we have with HRM across the bridge that we have with regard to transportation. We take that seriously. That of course, would involve, I believe, an ability for them to pass a bylaw to do that,

which would involve processes with the Department of Municipal Affairs. But like any concern that comes from any of our municipal partners, we will look at it seriously.

MR. JOHNS: I guess a fabulous relationship may be depending on who you ask.

Some of the street noise that concerns residents is winding down as the cold weather arrives, but that doesn't mean that we should be ignoring this. Spring will be around the corner soon, and we need prompt action in order to allow law enforcement. Will the department commit today to reviewing concerns about vehicle noise, and will they move forward with legislation to address these concerns under the Motor Vehicle Act by this Spring?

MR. HINES: We have decibel levels that are used universally across the province with regard to noise, especially coming from highways. We take mitigation efforts where required, depending on whether or not it is because of recent activity that the department has undertaken in terms of creating a new road or if it is a situation where the development has grown up around a highway, which is often the case, because we know that highways are economic generators.

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

EECD - ISLAND VIEW HS: IB PROG./SKILLS TRADES - EXPLAIN

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: For a couple of years now, the residents of the Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage constituency have been wondering what is going to happen to the opportunities in all of their communities, depending on whether Cole Harbour or Auburn High School is going to be closed. We're still waiting for that review. It impacts the new Island View High School in Eastern Passage. I had an opportunity to speak with the Superintendent of Schools on Monday, and asked him point blank, is there going to be an IB program and skills trades available at this new high school? The answer was, no.

My question is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Can the minister tell me what I should be telling the parents of the Eastern Passage-Shearwater area is going to happen to their students who want to participate in those programs when they are no longer going to be available?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: As the member would know, those are operational decisions that are made at the board level. We are in the process of reviewing that administrative model with the idea of ensuring that there is consistency across the board in terms of application of policy and opportunities. This is an important question for Doctor Avis Glaze to consider, absolutely.

[2:30 p.m.]

MS. ADAMS: I just want to be very clear when I get the phone calls after tonight - is the minister saying that he is going to try to ensure that those programs are offered or that he's going to find a way for the students to participate in those programs at another school?

MR. CHURCHILL: What we're doing is reviewing the administrative model of the education system. Currently, those decisions are under the jurisdiction of our boards; however, we do want to ensure that there is consistency in terms of opportunities for our kids from one classroom to the next, from one region to the next. This is an important topic for consideration for our world-renowned expert in the field of education and administrative models. We'll make sure that she gives this question full consideration.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

H&W - DART. GEN. HOSP.: EMERG. MENTAL HEALTH SERV. - ACCESS

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. The Dartmouth General Hospital serves 120,000 people, covering Dartmouth and stretching down the Eastern Shore. When someone in mental health crisis presents at the emergency department of the Dartmouth General, they are not able to access mental health clinicians at that site. If a patient needs to be admitted, staff have to call Halifax to see if one of the three beds is available.

Does the minister think it is reasonable that people in Dartmouth do not have access to emergency mental health services in their hospital?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Of course, as I've mentioned before, I think all members of this Legislature, indeed all Nova Scotians recognize the importance of the mental health of our citizens. We all would have family members, friends, who may find themselves - and indeed, even ourselves from time to time, may require these types of services.

That's why I'm pleased that in the budget we've been debating the last several weeks sees significant investments going towards enhancing mental health support services across the province. Indeed, there is access to crisis supports when individuals in Dartmouth and across the province are in need; those services are available throughout the province.

MS. LEBLANC: I look forward to hearing more about that, and find out if there are going to be mental health services available at Dartmouth General, but my next question is about access to primary health care.

We know that primary health care is critical for people with ongoing health issues. This is particularly true for individuals with mental health concerns. People need access to a family doctor to monitor their condition, prescribe appropriate medication, and ensure a treatment plan is working. There are thousands of Dartmouth residents without access to a family doctor, and thousands more who have doctors who are soon to retire.

Will the minister tell people in Dartmouth how much longer they have to wait for access to primary care?

MR. DELOREY: Again, particularly to those around the mental health support services, with the investments outlined in our budget we'll see over 70 mental health clinicians hired, to spread out across the province to increase access throughout communities, depending on the nature of the mental health challenges that one is dealing with, or working through.

A variety of clinical expertise is to be provided, and not all those services are provided or need to be provided by physicians. Again, we're taking very seriously our commitment, and the needs of the people of Nova Scotia to receive those supports, particularly the mental health space.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

JUSTICE - BILL NO. 16: CONSTITUTIONALITY - ENSURE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: My question is for the Minister of Justice. More than a year ago, the courts struck down Nova Scotia's Incompetent Persons Act, calling sections of it unconstitutional. The court gave the government until December 17th of this year to pass and proclaim new legislation that will be constitutional.

My question is, what steps has the minister and his department taken in the process to ensure Nova Scotians it is constitutional?

MR. SPEAKER: We'll allow the question because you are asking what steps have been taken not what advice.

The honourable Minister of Justice has the floor.

HON. MARK FUREY: I appreciate the question. We have undertaken a consultation process that includes those internal and external of government. There has been a tremendous amount of work go into that, the opinions and views of many have been gathered. Based on the collective information that we have and the lens of those professionals both in the academic and legal community, we believe the bill is constitutional.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the Committee on Law Amendments there were many presenters who indicated it is unconstitutional. Yesterday - I will table this - the minister told reporters that trying to portray that through the consultation process and having engaged all of those players, we came to a collective decision that the bill was constitutional. Will the minister commit today to take the proper steps that should have been taken a year ago, to make sure the bill withstands a constitutional challenge, which I believe will happen?

MR. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, that is in fact the role of the legal professionals, is to review any bill that comes before the House to determine its constitutionality. In these circumstances, based on the collective work that we've done, we believe the bill is constitutional.

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

EMO - VICTORIA CO. (C.B.): CELL TOWERS/ANTENNAS - INSTALL

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Minister of EMO. Earlier today I tabled a petition from the residents of Victoria County and area asking the government to ensure that cellular antennas and towers be installed to improve areas of poor communication throughout Victoria County. The situation became even more crucial over the summer when residents of the St. Anne's-North River area lost their landlines for days due to road construction and had to travel for 15 to 20 kilometres just to be able to use their cellphones. My question to the minister is, does the minister feel that this situation is acceptable in today's times?

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the honourable member for the question. This has come up a number of times in our discussions in this session and we're always monitoring the situation across Nova Scotia. We have a very strong relationship with our municipal partners, who all design municipal plans as per the Emergency Measures Act. If there's a specific situation that the member has, we'd be more than happy to hear about it.

CRTC controls the regulations with regard to phone lines, but in saying that, we're always interested in hearing these stories and we do whatever we can to build strong relationships within partnerships with the private sector, to address some of the concerns that come from residents.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, many of these under-serviced areas have seniors, some of whom require lifeline services. Because of this unpredictability of their landline service and no cellphone coverage, all the residents would be unable to contact emergency services such as EHS, the fire department, or even the police, and time could be very precious. Will the minister commit to working to ensure that cellular antennas and towers are installed to improve areas of poor communications throughout Victoria County?

MR. MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, again I would like to thank the member for the question and I'd like to recognize the work that our government is trying to do to enhance connectivity across the province. As I've said before, municipalities are the first line of defence when it comes to any kind of emergency situation. In the situation with Richmond County, our staff actually reached out to Richmond County to receive more information on the situation that the member for Cape Breton-Richmond was dealing with with her constituents. I will make the same offer to the member opposite, to have EMO reach out to Victoria County representatives to continue the conversation and get some more information.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

H&W: CUMBERLAND HOSPICE SOC. - MIN. MEET

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, palliative care is an important part of our health care system. The Cumberland County Hospice and Palliative Care Society have been aspiring to build a residential hospice facility for several years. A generous citizen has donated several acres of land and our community is committed to raising the funds for the physical structure. Large donors want a commitment first from the Department of Health and Wellness, that they approve of the operational plan.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, will the minister meet with the Cumberland Hospice Society and have staff work with them to approve their operational plan so that construction can begin?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Indeed, we're seeing more and more interest in palliative- and hospice-type services from one end of the province to the other. Her community is no exception and I think that's fantastic recognizing the services for all Nova Scotians. That's why I want to commend the work of my predecessor, the current Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage for having established and spent a considerable amount of time in the Department of Health and Wellness to establish a hospice framework to have guidelines.

So, indeed, if the member wants to encourage her community of that organization to reach out to the Department of Health and Wellness, we'll make sure they get in touch with the appropriate group within the department to begin those conversations.

MS. SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the minister for his answer.

As Health and Wellness Critic, I've received concerns throughout the province around palliative care issues. For example, in Cape Breton-Richmond, there is a palliative care physician who has decided to retire at the end of this year because the NSHA in that area is not willing to work with him and incorporate his work into the palliative care strategy. Also, I've received concerns from the Hospice Society of Victoria County, where

the member for Victoria-The Lakes is from, that they have inadequate funding to meet the palliative care demands of their area.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is, will the minister make a commitment to meet with this physician and the Hospice Society of Victoria County to better understand the palliative care needs of those areas?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's question. As I had mentioned previously, indeed, the interest and the demands or interest and desire to receive and expand our palliative and hospice services across the province is important and we do have a framework in place now which was not previously in place. So, that was work that was done in the last couple of years. That's a framework to ensure that we have a model available for all Nova Scotians. It's fair across the province, the same model being - the same approach being taken.

I think it's also important to recognize that there has been work indeed in Nova Scotia with other health care professionals, like paramedics, are able to provide palliative-type services as well. So, there is a lot of creative work being done here, and innovative work in Nova Scotia in palliative hospice care for all Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

IMMIGRATION: INTL. STUDENTS - MSI ELIGIBILITY

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, last week on a question to the Minister of Immigration, I noted that international students are not eligible for MSI until they have been in the province for 13 months. I asked the minister if she had any plans to improve upon this situation given that the Government of New Brunswick recently announced they will provide MSI coverage for all international students, their spouses, and dependents throughout their degree program. However, the minister avoided the question by repeating general talking points.

So, I ask her again, does the minister have any plans to improve MSI coverage for international students and their families?

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I want you, and I want everyone to know that immigration and particularly international students are a priority for us at the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, and our government has made it a focus and we are doing incredible, incredible progress.

Just to let you know, I have met with StudentsNS. They brought in a number of issues related to immigration and I'm happy to say over the last two years we have built a number of pathways to allow them to stay here once they graduate. We've also done a

program that is recognized in Nova Scotia as a leader all over the world because it does not exist anywhere and that is they are able to open up businesses here.

MS. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Immigration talks about attracting and supporting international students as a priority for long-term immigration for Nova Scotia and she references this pathway, the International Graduate Entrepreneur Stream. However, the office's own website shows that only four international students have thus far been invited to apply. So, would the minister explain the dismal results of the International Graduate Entrepreneur Stream?

MS. DIAB: Mr. Speaker, for the record, we have made incredible progress. We have nominated over 500 international students in 2016 alone. That, compared to 100 in 2013.

In terms of the international graduate stream, that only came onboard a year ago and it takes 12 months before anybody is able to graduate - sorry, after they graduate, in order to open up a business. Part of the condition is, they have to be in operation for at least 12 months and then provide us proof of that. So the first person who actually was nominated was in April 2017, and we are excited about that. There is a lot of work that has been done on that. (Applause)

[2:45 p.m.]

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

H&W - DOCTORS N.S. FUND: MATERNITY LEAVE - IMPACT

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I think we've got two physiotherapists over here when they hurt their shoulders from patting themselves on the back so well over there. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, a doctor in Cape Breton named Katherine MacInnes wrote to All Nova Scotia to express her concerns with the Liberal Government's contract dispute with Nova Scotian doctors. I'll table the letter.

In the op-ed Dr. MacInnes said she's having a baby in December and, like many other female physicians in Nova Scotia, she is counting on Doctors Nova Scotia's parental leave program to pay her secretary and her office expenses while she is on leave. Up until recently, doctors had a fund to protect from any changes the government might make to benefit funding, but after the government failed to make payments twice, the funds have been depleted.

My question to the minister is, what is the Health and Wellness Minister going to do to ensure that female physicians in Nova Scotia are able to take maternity leave, now

that they are in dispute with Doctors Nova Scotia over the protection fund that many female physicians rely upon?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for raising this question. I think it's an important question to be brought to the floor of the House to clarify, and I hope the member takes it back to the individual who raised the concern through an op-ed or letter to the editor.

Throughout the process, the requirements of what benefits the Province of Nova Scotia - I believe it worked out to about \$600,000 per month that goes from the Province of Nova Scotia to Doctors Nova Scotia to cover our share, as defined in the Master Agreement. We continue to make those payments, Mr. Speaker. At no point have those benefits programs for individual physicians throughout the province gone unfunded. Indeed, the money and our commitment to continue making those payments is ongoing.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, they stopped making payments to that fund twice and it was depleted, so there were no funds there available for those doctors at that time. Dr. MacInnes is a hematologist in an underserved area of Cape Breton and says she can attest to the impact this will have on the health care services and doctor recruitment.

Why would young doctors who have spent over a decade in school and are ready to settle down and start a family, want to come to a province where you are on your own financially if you decide to have a child? Today, on the Day of the Person, I would hope that this government would at least recognize that women across the province deserve to have access to maternity leave.

My question to the minister, will the minister commit to finding a solution for doctors like Dr. MacInnes, so female physicians in our province are able to keep their offices afloat while they are on maternity leave?

MR. DELOREY: Again, I'll reiterate to the member and to all members in the Legislature and I hope they'll take the message back to the physicians within their communities, Mr. Speaker. The province remains committed to fulfill its obligation to make payments, our portion of those payments to Doctors Nova Scotia, to ensure that those benefits get paid. If there's a physician in this province who is concerned about whether or not their benefits will be paid, I think that concern would be with Doctors Nova Scotia because we remain committed. We'll continue to make our payments, as invoiced per the Master Agreement criteria.

We continue to do that, Mr. Speaker. We will commit to continuing to do that, just like we do with the Nurses' Union, the Teachers' Union, with the NSGEU and all other collective bodies that we have an obligation to pay these benefits for. (Applause)

MR. ORRELL: I'd like to hear the minister tell us that they did not deplete that fund by stopping payments twice. Twice, Mr. Speaker, they stopped those payments and I'd like to hear the speaker tell us again that they didn't do that or that fund wasn't depleted. (Applause)

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

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Boy, that was a little noisy from their side.

Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Private Members' Public Bills for Second Reading.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 44.

Bill No. 44 - Mental Health Court Expansion Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: I'm always pleased to rise in my place and speak to all kinds of bills. Today, I'm particularly honoured to stand and speak on Bill No. 44, introduced by my wonderful colleague John Lohr from Kings North - An Act to Require the Expansion of the Mental Health Court Program.

I think we can all say that we can look at jail as being a situation where the same behaviour over and over and over again we use it, but we're expecting a different outcome. When we don't see a different outcome for an offender, we all gasp: oh, my goodness, did nothing change in that individual's life? Did jail not necessarily make them better and put them through programs that would have them come back out into society and have them transition into society without any problems?

The system lets thousand and thousands of mentally ill Canadians down every year, but it doesn't have to. There exists an alternative for mentally ill offenders charged with

minor offences. They are called Mental Health Courts, and of course outside of any legal circle, they remain relatively unknown to the general public.

As we see here in the Province of Nova Scotia, we have one of these courts. By no surprise, it is located in HRM. Sadly, but surprisingly, it does not offer any services to anyone living outside HRM. These specialty courts operate in a similar way to what some of us might be familiar with as drug courts. They offer prohibition and treatment as an alternative to punitive action on the offender.

Jail and justice don't always have to go hand in hand. As we see, jail and the justice system aren't set up at all to deal with addiction, with mental health, with poverty, and with all of the social aspects that we know are directly related with juvenile delinquency and adult criminality. Mental Health Courts are absolutely a recognition that people with mental health issues aren't best served in a residential setting, meaning not locked up, but best served by an approach that has multiple resources rather than just the resources that one would receive through being put in jail.

In a Mental Health Court, the accused will either volunteer or be referred to a program, and his case will be reviewed to see if he is a good fit or not. If selected, they will work with the court to get the proper treatment for their illness, as opposed to jail time.

It's not an easy way out, Mr. Speaker, as many people think it may be. It's a very gruelling and invasive process for the accused. They will have to strictly adhere to the treatment. This can include mandatory counselling, medication, random drug tests, and much more. The goal is for the offender to be rehabilitated to the point of stopping all future re-offences and offering a support structure for these people. It's an attempt to stop the revolving door, which we all know.

It brings me great difficulty to know that the rest of Nova Scotia does not have these courts in place - no other region but HRM. It may be a different story, maybe we wouldn't be standing here today if HRM at least offered those services to all other citizens in Nova Scotia, but they don't. There's no fairness in this. There's no justice in this decision, really.

I just want to provide the members of the House some highlights of the court's first four years. We know that it began in 2009 and within that time 687 individuals were referred to the court; 232 of them, which would equal 34 per cent, were able to participate in the program; and 199 of those who participated, 86 successfully graduated. I think that speaks volumes.

The majority of the people who were referred to the court were men - 67 per cent were men - and the age of the people who were referred to the court ranged from the age of 18 to 86, which also indicates to us that mental health has no gender, there are no real demographics to it. All we know is that anyone can be affected. The largest single group of those referred, the 38 per cent, were 18 to 30 years old. The most common diagnosis

was schizophrenia and that was mostly for men, while we saw women who battled mostly bipolar disorder and major depression.

Criminal offences faced by the people who were referred varied from minor mischief, theft and breach offences to more serious assaults, weapons and threats. Each participant who graduated was very pleased with the program and reported noticeable positive changes in their lives, making huge differences, giving them confidence and making them feel worthy and valued in society.

In sharp contrast with the approach of traditional criminal courts which often will lead to jail, the Mental Health Court is a collaboration between justice professionals and mental health/addictions clinicians. Together they work with the accused to help them connect to services, develop rehabilitation plans and improve their well-being and living situations in order to decrease their likelihood of reoffending. Those are all positive steps. At the same time, they continuously assess the potential risk the accused may possess to the public. Along the way as well, the court monitors their progress and, if necessary, orders them back to regular criminal courts if need be.

During the first four years, 2009-13, 232 of the total number of people who were referred to the court were deemed able to participate in their rehabilitation program, as I mentioned earlier. I think it's important to realize that people facing criminal charges - they are meeting very stringent criteria in order to be referred to this program and then to qualify to appear before a court. In order to continue in the court program and eventually graduate a participant must follow the rehabilitation program developed for him or her by the Mental Health Court team of professionals in the fields of justice, mental health and addictions. Along the way the court monitors the participants' progress.

In June 2015, Dr. Mary Ann Campbell, of the Centre for Criminal Justice Studies in Psychology at the University of New Brunswick, was commissioned to do a comprehensive 72-page report of three of the courts past five and one-half years. The first of Dr. Campbell's six recommendations was to continue investing in the Nova Scotia Mental Health Court.

From the report, Mr. Speaker, almost all the research on the effectiveness and impact of MHCs has been conducted in the United States and this research has found that the participation in any mental health court increases access to mental health services. It enhances the capacity for independent functioning and living, reduces substance use, improves mental health functioning, and reduces future potential to go back to court.

From a reduction in criminalization perspective, MHC participation has been associated with much fewer days in jail, and that's one of the goals that we're trying to achieve by this bill, Mr. Speaker. Longer time without reoffending, fewer arrests and fewer self-reported acts of violence relative to periods prior to MHC involvement, or as compared to any other comparison groups that we may be aware of. Thus, it is clear from this research

that being involved in the Nova Scotia MHC does not lead to a worsening of outcomes for individuals with mental health issues who come in conflict with the law, relative to going through the traditional criminal justice system.

[3:00 p.m.]

Overall improvements, Mr. Speaker, in mental health functioning were observed in the traditional correctional system and the trend was in this direction for participants supervised in the MHC context.

Madam Speaker, there is no question in anyone's mind that a patient or an individual with mental illness sometimes gets involved in criminal acts that they are not even aware they are doing. They are not conscious of what they're doing because they are in a place, a very dark place, where they do not know right from wrong and they have no guidance. We often see people roaming and then they can become hypersensitive to society and because of feeling alone and that the world is against them, that really triggers their defensiveness. That's when we find they often get into trouble with the law.

I think if we all go and look around our own community, we witness many of these individuals. The sad part is that these individuals are all across the province. So why does HRM have the ability to have this type of court, but no other region in Nova Scotia? There's absolutely no fairness to that. The people living outside HRM are no different and, yet, they are treated differently and are unable to tap into this type of system that could help them move forward in a positive direction.

The success rate is wonderful and the success rate has proven to us that there is a great need of more mental health courts. I hope that everyone will step back, take a look at their own community and realize the individuals that they are aware of in their community who could easily have success with this program, if the court was within a close vicinity of where they are from, and not have to go through the agony of knowing that just because I don't live in HRM, I cannot have the ability to access this type of service and resources.

So with those few words, I hope everyone will give some consideration. This is a very important bill. Mental health - we know it's in a crisis here in Nova Scotia. It's something that just continues to escalate with our youth and I hope everyone gives heart and soul to considering this bill.

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

MR. HUGH MACKAY: Madam Speaker, I rise to speak with deep respect for the member opposite, who introduced this bill, and for his reasons for doing so. Mental health is an issue that this government and I myself view with utmost seriousness and compassion for those affected. This government has made and continues to make significant

investments and progress in research and treating mental illness. This includes those who, due to their mental disorders, come into conflict with the law.

Individuals living with mental health issues are highly overrepresented in our criminal justice system. Mental disorders among inmates in our correctional system are up to three times as common as in the Canadian population at large.

Treatment of people living with mental health problems is reflected in the current legal position in Canada. Our position is that no person is criminally responsible for an act committed while suffering from a mental disorder that rendered the person incapable of appreciating the nature and quality of the act.

When a person is charged with a criminal act, there is a presumption that the accused is fit, unless the court is satisfied to the contrary. The accused is assessed by experts in the mental health system, and if an accused is found unfit to stand trial, criminal proceedings are paused until he or she returns to a fit state and the criminal proceedings can begin anew.

Mental health courts are a response to this reality. A more appropriate intervention can be achieved through successful participation in a treatment program overseen by a Mental Health Court team. The primary objectives of the mental health court teams are to slow down the revolving door of people with significant mental health issues coming into conflict with the law.

In Nova Scotia, as the previous speaker noted, it is found that the most common diagnosis for accused men is schizophrenia, and for accused women, it is bipolar disorder and major depression. The court also works with people with a variety of other mental health issues. As well, many of the accused struggle with some form of substance abuse.

Mental Health Courts began as grassroots initiatives in the mid-1990s. They are for people with mental health issues who come into conflict with the law as a result of their illness. These specialty courts have been a success and are now common throughout Canada.

In November 2009, Nova Scotia found itself in the middle of a public inquiry into the 2007 death of Howard Hyde, a mentally ill man who died in a holding cell 30 hours after he was tasered by police. The inquiry, which some members of this Assembly may recall, found that Mr. Hyde's death was caused by a struggle with jail guards, but it also concluded that parts of the health care, justice, and correctional systems failed to properly respond to his mental illness. The result of the inquiry was the formation of Nova Scotia's Mental Health Court Program, which has been operating in the Dartmouth Provincial Court since 2009.

In Nova Scotia the program can be offered to people who have been charged with a criminal offence handled by the Provincial Court, but only if the accused has a severe mental disorder that is linked to the offence. The Mental Health Court Program is designed for adults - those persons 18 years and older. Currently, all applicants must live in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Participants must acknowledge responsibility for the act that forms the basis of the offence they are alleged to have committed. The Crown Prosecutor in the mental health court must consent to their participation and the risk must be manageable in the community.

The Mental Health Court Program consists of four phases. Each phase involves court processes and requires the participant to attend and comply with court orders and directions. The phases are: an appearance phase, a screening phase, an assessment phase, and a program phase. The appearance phase identifies if the accused is a potential participant in the program. Identification of a potential participant can originate from the accused themselves or from the Crown Attorney, defence counsel, Sheriff Services, police probation services, community services, or the judge.

The accused must first appear in provincial court for an arraignment. At that hearing, with the consent of the accused, application may be made for a referral to the Mental Health Court. If after the appearance phase the accused is referred to the Mental Health Court, a screening assessment is done and a referral is made to the Mental Health Court team for further consideration. The team consists of a Crown Attorney, a defence counsel which is often Nova Scotia Legal Aid, a probation officer, and two mental health clinicians. It usually takes about six weeks to determine whether an individual will be invited to participate in the program.

Once the screening phase is complete, the Crown Attorney and the defence counsel meet to review the matter and determine if the accused meets the eligibility criteria for the Mental Health Court Program. If the accused is accepted into the program, a participation agreement is signed and an individualized support plan is developed. The support plan includes requirements such as participating in programming and attending clinical appointments.

Madam Speaker, the Nova Scotia Mental Health Court is of particular importance to me. One of my many nephews suffers from mental health issues. Ten years ago, he was living on the street, leading a dysfunctional and self-harming lifestyle in spite of efforts by family members to assist him. Eventually he ran afoul of the law; in his case, a senseless act of arson. When my nephew was subsequently arrested and appeared in court, he was given the opportunity to participate in the Mental Health Court Program. He was remanded to the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility where he began his support plan. He was released from custody after several months, he continued his support plan and faithfully followed his program and never missed a clinical appointment.

He also enrolled at Dalhousie University and completed his studies two years ago. Upon graduation, he was hired by one of our leading mental health facilities where he gives back every day helping others suffering from mental illness. Madam Speaker, my nephew is one of the fortunate ones who successfully emerged from the shadows to begin a successful recovery and a continuing life. We all know the challenges presented by mental health will still be here tomorrow, but the efforts of this and preceding governments to continue to build our network of wellness court programs will give more Nova Scotians the opportunity that my nephew was so fortunately given.

The mission of the Mental Health Court is to enhance public safety and improve the mental health and quality of life of persons with mental health issues. We have contributed to their involvement in the criminal justice system by assisting them to have access to treatment and service. The goals of the Mental Health Court are threefold: one, reducing the involvement of persons with mental disorders in the criminal justice system thereby addressing public safety concerns; secondly, improving healthy outcomes and quality of life of persons living with mental illness and mental disorders by increasing their capacity to successfully live in the community; and, thirdly, facilitating access to mental health and social support by connecting participants with needed services.

Nova Scotia's Mental Health Courts form part of our specialty courts which are sometimes called "wellness courts." These courts use therapeutic and restorative approaches to support vulnerable and marginalized people criminalized because of mental health, addictions, or other social issues. Wellness courts identify and address the root cause of the offending behaviour and develop a recovery plan that links people to services in their communities. These courts respond to the unique needs in each community and are best developed by a collaborative team of justice, health, and community-based service providers.

We are building on our successes as we expand these programs. The Department of Justice is a partner with judiciary and the Nova Scotia Health Authority on the Provincial Court of Nova Scotia wellness court programs working group which is looking at the feasibility of expansion of wellness courts. We are already at work in many communities in Nova Scotia. As mentioned previously, the Mental Health Court Program has been operating in Dartmouth since 2009. The Mental Health Court there has recently been expanded to include a court-monitored opioid treatment option. In addition, a court-monitored drug treatment program has been operating in Kentville Provincial Court since 2014. The court has recently expanded to include Mental Health Court programs for residents of Kings County and West Hants. A Domestic Violence Court program piloted in Sydney, operating since 2012, was made permanent in 2017. Work is well underway with our community partners to build on what we have learned in Sydney, to expand the Domestic Violence Court program to Halifax in the next few months.

[3:15 p.m.]

In partnership with Mi'kmaq leaders, service providers and the judiciary, work is well underway on Nova Scotia's first Gladue wellness court, opening in Cape Breton this Fall. Gladue courts address the unique needs of indigenous people involved in the criminal justice system. Wellness courts also sit in Port Hawkesbury and Amherst Provincial Courts.

An independent evaluation of short-term outcomes of the Mental Health Court Program in Dartmouth was released in April, 2015. The primary purpose of the evaluation was to examine the degree to which the Mental Health Court Program achieved the objectives of promoting mental health recovery, when compared to traditional courts. This study found that while in the short term, participants in the program were just as likely to reoffend as those in the traditional justice system, the court program was better than the traditional court system at meeting the unique challenges of criminalized individuals with mental health issues.

An independent evaluation of the Domestic Violence Court program, was prepared in April, 2015. The report found that the Domestic Violence Court program was successfully implemented and that those who opted into the program had positive experiences. The report also found that having staff designated to domestic violence cases and offering treatment prior to sentencing, offered substantial improvements in the justice system.

Nova Scotia's Mental Health Court Program is meeting its goal of dealing compassionately and sensitively with criminals with mental health issues. In the words of former Justice Minister Diana Whalen, "We recognize that we need more specialty courts. We believe in it. We think it's the right thing to do." It is the intent of this government to continue to examine options for expanding our specialty courts. All members of this Assembly respect the member opposite, who has introduced this bill and his reasons for doing so. We applaud his continuing efforts to focus our attention on the ongoing needs to continue to improve our Mental Health Court program.

However, further legislation is not required to address the needs of people marginalized by mental health, addictions or other social issues who are involved in the criminal justice system. The legislation is in place. We have demonstrated that we can make specialty courts happen in different regions across Nova Scotia, without the need for legislative change. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Madam Speaker, both the member for Pictou West and Chester-St. Margaret's covered a lot of ground in their comments, particularly as to the functioning and history of the Mental Health Courts. I won't repeat that here. I think

it's readily available and it's fascinating, but what I'd like to speak a little bit more to begin with is just the purpose of a court like this.

I had the chance to speak with the Justice Minister at length during Budget Estimates about the need to seek the least intrusive ways of achieving a sentence in our justice system. I think this court is a wonderful example of a way to do that. The purpose of our justice system as a whole, although it's often hard to see that when you're right on the ground, is and ought to be rehabilitation. We want to treat people fairly and we want people when they have served any kind of sentence, to return to the community in better shape than when they went in. Unfortunately, this is not normally the case and not just in Nova Scotia, but around the world. I think we have a lot of issues in our corrections facilities. I think, to the extent that we can find other ways that people can take responsibility for creating harm, and can come out the other side better than when they went in, then by all means, we should do that.

My colleague from Pictou West spent time emphasizing, and no doubt this is a concern, that this approach doesn't let offenders off easy. And that's true, and it's important to acknowledge, but I think, again, I would return to, what are the principles of our justice system. I think it's, in fact, more important to say that we're healing a harm.

So not only through this process do we heal a harm that is caused to a person upon whom a crime is committed, and these are all provincial court offences, but we're healing a challenge that the offender themselves is going through. We know that many of the offenders, throughout our criminal justice system, but particularly those with mental health issues, are victims themselves in many ways, if only just victims of their own demons.

So, I think that that is a rare situation, that I think we can look at a project or an institution that really embodies all of the highest principles that we think of when we think of an area that we deal with here in this House. In this case, I think, specialized courts, and in this case a Mental Health Court, it achieves that. It really is true to the basic values of how, from my perspective, we would like to be dealing with justice.

To speak to the bill itself, just for a moment, the only - I appreciate the comments of the member for Chester-St. Margaret's, that we don't need legislation, that we could create specialty courts without them. My response to that would be, great, I look forward to the member opposite, or another member of the House, bringing forward plans to introduce those courts across the province, that would be great. If they do that, terrific. In the absence of hearing any kinds of those plans, I would applaud and support the member for Pictou West for bringing this issue forward in this way.

I would say that the bill itself is short and the language is a bit broad, so I'm not sure what regions means, in terms of provincial regions, but, I think we do support the principle. We know that mental health care is in crisis. We know we have a mental health care crisis in Nova Scotia, it goes without saying.

We hear about it on the floor of this House every day, we hear about it in the media every day, we all see it in our constituencies, I'm sure we all see it in our constituency offices. We also know that the incidents of addictions, for those with mental health issues, is rising. So, as has been mentioned before, in the review done in 2014, this court has also been shown to be much more successful in helping offenders deal with addiction problems that arise coincident with their mental health issues. I'll say that we also know that we have an issue with controlled substances entering our corrections facilities.

I would say that that makes this doubly important, because for many folks who are experiencing mental health issues, who might not have the advantage of a court like this, who find themselves in a correctional facility, they're going to have access to those substances, which, in an ideal world, if we really are looking to rehabilitate people, looking to let people move on with their lives, that's not going to help anybody.

Corrections should be the very last resort in our justice system, as I've said before. I think, when being in a correctional facility exacerbates the root causes, of the offender and the reason that they did the offence, it seems very clear, just on the face of it, that it's not an appropriate choice. So, I think for that reason as well, it makes eminent sense that we would spread this system of Mental Health Courts throughout Nova Scotia.

I will say that the NDP was proud to be the ones to put forth the first Mental Health Court in 2009, and I'll also say that I'm personally proud that as MLA for Dartmouth South, I currently am the only district with a Mental Health Court in my district. Because, as we know, the Nova Scotia Mental Health Court is at 277 Pleasant Street, and I'm especially glad of that, on a constituency level, given the dearth of supports that we see for mental health in our district.

As my colleague for Dartmouth North mentioned in Question Period today, just on a constituency level, we certainly see a mental health crisis. So I'm very lucky that, at least as a last resort, should people find themselves in a great deal of trouble and in trouble with the law, there is a path through that darkness for them other than a correctional facility which likely would just land them back in the same place. Given the positive reviews and the good work being done by this board, I would just say that we are ready to support this bill, and I'm very happy to speak to it.

I would also like to urge this government to invest in community-based supports for those living with mental health. The reality is that many, many people who find themselves in a Mental Health Court or in a court if they have mental health issues - it's a long path before they get there. The member for Chester-St. Margaret's spoke about his nephew. I myself can probably count on more than one hand the number of people in my life who might have availed themselves of a mental health court at one time. People fall through the cracks all the time.

I think to the extent that we can start to address these issues in schools and address these issues in our community and weave that net where people don't get to the point where they're involved in criminality, the better off we'll all be. As the old saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Yes, we support this bill, but we know this current court is very busy. I'm sure that any further courts that open would also be very busy. I guess I would say the best case scenario would be that we could open all of those courts, and then we could work as hard as we can to keep people out of them. Those are my submissions.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: I would like to express my appreciation for the comments from my colleagues from Pictou West, Dartmouth South, and Chester-St. Margaret's. I really agree with their comments on the mental health court, and I appreciate their comments.

I know the member for Chester-St. Margaret's mentioned that a bill wasn't really required, that they had the power to do this already. I would say I understand that, and I would question why it hasn't been done already. It has clearly been a success in Dartmouth from the reviews that the member for Chester-St. Margaret's cited.

I guess some of the colleagues didn't uncover it in their research, but there is a Mental Health Court in Kentville. It is run on a voluntary basis by the Crown attorney, judge, probation officers, and mental health workers - voluntary in the sense that there really is no budget assigned to it. They're doing it as part of their job and making it work. In talking with one of the people who were involved in that about a year ago, this person said to me, John, our only problem is we don't have any funding at all - any base funding. We can't even generate an annual report because no one has time to write that. It has had a similar success rate as the Dartmouth court. It has been very well received in the community.

Not everyone who wants to get into that gets into that. Of course, it takes Crown attorney support right from the beginning even to get into it. There's a series of criteria that are necessary.

I say that to say that both the Dartmouth Mental Health Court and the pilot project in Kentville have been extraordinarily successful. The reason to put forward this bill is really about equity of access for all Nova Scotians to this type of court. There are many areas around the province, and I guess maybe the terminology, as the member for Dartmouth South said, could have been a bit more precise in terms of what regions. Really the intent is for all parts of the province to have access to this.

When I was talking to people in Kings North who were participating in this - Crown attorneys and people who were involved - they said, John, this is really needed in Pictou County and in Cape Breton. I think it's needed in Yarmouth too.

[3:30 p.m.]

We did bring this bill forward in the last session of the Legislature and we never did debate it. After I brought it forward and it was simply just reported on in the news, I had people who came back to me and I would put them in the category of people who wished family members who had a son or daughter - son, actually in every case - who could have benefited or they believe should have been in Mental Health Court but wasn't able to access it in Yarmouth, in Pictou County specifically, and another one in Kings County, and their son was sent into the regular court system.

I had a heartbreaking visit to the Burnside Correctional really just to see one individual who was in solitary confinement, whose family members believed he should have been in Mental Health Court and diverted - I don't really know, I mean that's a professional evaluation. I went just to make a connection with him. I mean that's over my pay grade to know if they are right or not, but I can appreciate their point of view and the fact that this is really a bill intended to provide equal access to every part of the province so that at least this opportunity is there for the families who would want to access.

The families of offenders know when their son or their daughter, or their family member, they kind of know that something is not right and there are reasons why this happened. And to have a court-mandated treatment program is far preferable to sending someone to a jail and into the correctional system with all of the hazards in that correctional system. Those individuals with mental health problems are very vulnerable in a jail setting, in a correctional facility setting, very vulnerable and not able to really defend themselves or look after themselves. What they need is treatment.

It is an opportunity, I think, and one of the stated goals of this Mental Health Court system is to save lives, really, to bring people back, improving the health outcome and quality of life of the person with mental disorders by increasing their capacity to successfully live in the community, so sometimes it is a court-mandated treatment plan.

One of the problems we see with people with mental illness in our communities is that oftentimes they don't stay on their meds. A court-mandated treatment program has a powerful effect on them and it an opportunity to alter their lives.

I would suggest that even though there would be a cost associated with establishing Mental Health Courts, I believe it would actually save money in the long run. Certainly, there's a very high cost to putting someone in prison. There is a very high cost in dealing with them when they come out, especially if they have been - in some cases prison can be

seen as a college for criminal activity. People can come in not maybe rehabilitated but worse off than they were.

It's an opportunity to save lives. I think that it's an opportunity in the long run to save money for our province if we can divert people out of the criminal justice system and into the Mental Health Court system. For me this is fundamentally a bill about equal access across the province to a program that should be available to everybody who would qualify for it, and it has the potential to rescue people who find themselves, for no fault of their own or for various reasons in a mental health issue, as my colleagues mentioned, schizophrenia, psychosis, and sometimes these things happen for various reasons.

For me, of course, this is deeply personal. My son - and I've been dreading this moment talking about this, but I feel I should - he was slated to be in Mental Health Court. He had a psychosis. The fact is that his psychosis in our belief - we knew he had a psychosis before he committed a crime. He had been seeing a psychologist and he was hearing voices. He believed that he had telepathy, he thought that he could read people's minds or hear their voices, and they weren't telling him good things.

When we realized we had a problem we had sought help and, truthfully, we found help relatively quickly. I know not everybody does, and I'm not sure why. Maybe it's because I'm an MLA. Some would suggest that. The guy who ended up treating my son, I played hockey with, so sometimes connections matter but, anyway, we knew he had a problem and he was hearing voices and maybe we didn't keep close enough tabs on him. He got loose in the city and committed a crime, a couple of crimes, and then tried to escape from those crimes on a canoe across the Northwest Arm. That makes no sense at all, of course, either so, but it was a tremendous reassurance to us as a family to know that Mental Health Court was an option and that he was in that system and that he would not, probably, come out with a criminal record, and he wouldn't have.

He stopped using marijuana after that big meltdown in Halifax, and just like turning the dial a click every day, we saw him slowly come back to the boy we knew and that's another side to this story for us. I didn't know that at the time but, afterwards, Dr. Phil Tibbo contacted me and provided me with information that's in the literature, that in particular young men, but young people below the age of 25 are very vulnerable, a certain number, not everyone, but some of them are very vulnerable to psychosis due to marijuana usage and it's in the literature. In fact, I will table two documents by Dr. Phil Tibbo, one of the leading researchers in Canada, on the subject of marijuana and the developing brain.

We really believed and our psychologist believed it and we saw him come back to the young man that we knew, slowly, from the time that he was charged to until he passed away and, in fact, there was - I know that the world thinks - I mean, we didn't know in the beginning, but the coroner ruled that it was not a suicide, based on evidence at the scene. He was free of drugs and alcohol. There were no drugs and alcohol in his system. He was going on a hike and I was thinking I don't know what I want to say about Cape Split but in

my opinion, a guard rail at Cape Split would have saved his life. He just arrived there at 5:00 p.m. in November, on a tremendously windy night, pitch black, with poor footwear, and being a young man without a care, not too careful, he fell and that's the reality. That's what we believe. That's what his friends believe. That's what we believed from the beginning - he didn't - so, it's what happened and I don't know why these things happen.

I know people tell me we've done remarkably well to get over it - to get through it, I don't think we're over it - to carry on. My friends have helped, some of you in particular - the former member for Chester-St. Margaret's who sat immediately to my left, was a big help in getting through this, actually - and working, just working. I knew I had to keep working and I tell people when you go through this sort of thing you've got to put one foot in front of the other. That's mainly what you focus on. My faith - I believe God has a reason for everything that happens and I don't have to know it, so I don't bother myself with why. I can't explain why, but I do have faith that I'll see him again and it helps. There's no one thing that helps you get through this. It's all of those things.

Somehow, sometimes in life you end up learning about things you really didn't want to know about. I wish I didn't really know anything about health courts, and all of that had never happened, of course, but I can't stop that. I can't prevent it. I can't turn the light switch off at night and make that go away, turn the lights out or just stop it. It's just there, so we've just got to deal with it. There have been other things too. I don't want to go into them right now. One way that I think would be a comfort to me, is to know that other families who find themselves in this situation with a son or a daughter or a relative, would have that access to Mental Health Court and that it should be available to every citizen of Nova Scotia, not just simply in the HRM.

I understand why the HRM Mental Health Court was written in the way it was and why it was specifically for people in HRM, or who had schooling in HRM. That was simply because there would be multiple treatments required, and if someone was on the other side of the province, they probably aren't going to be able to get maybe some of those treatments in the HRM.

I understand why the Mental Health Court in the HRM was set up the way it was, but I do think it's time that this service be available throughout the province, that's the intent of the bill. I do recognize as the member for Chester-St. Margaret's said that it's not really necessary, the government has the power to do this now and I believe, to me, the comfort that we had at that time, a very dark time for us of knowing this was available, I would like to see others have that same opportunity. Thank you. (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, I always like discussions in this House and when we know the feeling behind it and understand what

precipitated, the reasons for doing it, and when we lay our hearts on the floor I think we understand the strength that we all have together, not just as one Party or another.

I want to thank everybody for sharing in this discussion and thank our member for Kings North for that heartfelt speech. (Applause)

Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 47.

Bill No. 47 - Homes for Special Care Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

MS. KIM MASLAND: Madam Speaker, I'm delighted to rise today to speak to Bill No. 47 that the member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley has sponsored.

The intent of this bill is very reassuring to me. As a young girl, I went to live with my grandparents and was brought up by them. I was surrounded by seniors most of my life so this is very reassuring to me, it's extremely important and the intent of the bill is - I feel it's important to read it: it enshrines residents' rights and law and standards in long-term care facilities; it allows residents to live in dignity; it affirms the province's commitment to preserve and promote quality accommodation; it provides a safe, comfortable, home-like environment; and it supports a high quality of life for all residents of long-term care homes.

It affirms the province's commitment to the health and well-being of Nova Scotians living in long-term care homes now and in the future. Most importantly, it supports mutual respect among residents, their families, friends, long-term care providers, service providers, caregivers, volunteers and government to ensure the care and services provided meet the needs of the residents and safety needs of the residents.

Madam Speaker, this bill is for seniors and their families and Nova Scotians who expect to one day live in a long-term care facility.

Since being elected, I've stated in this House a couple of times now that I was a senior safety coordinator working out of the RCMP in Queens County. I feel very honoured and privileged that I had that job. It was one of the most rewarding, but most challenging jobs that I've had in my career. I got to see first-hand and come to understand the challenges that seniors face on a daily basis - challenges with safety, health, well-being - and during that time I assisted so many seniors who were victims of elder abuse either by a spouse, a child, or caregiver, consumed with fear and anxiety, just looking for someone to help them make it stop.

I became that trusting voice to so many seniors who had very limited contact with the outside world. I remember one of my first ladies that I went to visit who lived way back

in the woods and I was just totally amazed when I walked into her house. It was pristine. She was 86 years old, she was living by herself, she didn't have a car and I just walked away that day thinking how is she doing all of this on her own?

[3:45 p.m.]

I went back to visit her again and I said to her, you know you are way back here all by yourself, you've got this big house, do you think that maybe it's time to start thinking about downsizing or moving closer to where you'll have care? She said to me, dear, I've thought about that but I'm worried about my independence. If I leave, there will be no independence. If I go to a long-term care facility I'm going to be stuck into a room, there's going to be nothing to do. And I thought, well you're stuck in the woods right now really with not a lot to do.

I worked with her, I visited with her for eight months and at the end of the eight months she said to me, I think it's time, Kim, I think it's time that I move on to a long-term care facility. We sat down and she listed the things that were important to her for when she was making her choices of where she'd go for placement. Many of those things that were important to her were things that I really wouldn't even have thought about. She was worried about where all of her possessions were going to go. She wanted to make sure she was into a private room. She wanted to make sure that she could take some of her special photos with her and she wanted to take her rocking chair that she sat in every night.

Before I finished my senior safety position, I did pick her up that day that she was being transferred to a long-term care facility and I drove her to the place that she was going. Sadly, when we arrived, she was very upset. She was told that she would be going into a private room but when she arrived she was forced to share a room with someone else - very close quarters - and this lady with still a very lucid mind, was put into a room with another resident who had advanced dementia.

For the first two weeks, that lady never slept. The lady who was between the curtains separating them was in her purse, she was in her clothes, she was taking her pictures down, she was in her rocking chair. It was totally upsetting for this lady. She finally made the decision to go where she would be safe and where she would be looked after, and now this is what she was forced to deal with. Nobody helped her. There were no other places for her to go.

You know that lady went to long-term care quite willingly but during senior safety, that year and a half, there were many times that I met seniors in their homes who were scared to go. I remember one time, and I think I mentioned this person in my maiden speech, when I found this gentleman he was extremely neglected, cold, had not eaten. When I said to him, let me take you to receive some care, his response to me was, no, because if you take me from my home I will never get back. I want to die in my home, this is where I want to be, I don't want to go into a long-term care facility. Sadly, he never got

there. He died five days later but he had that fear of going to a long-term care facility, that his rights would be taken from him.

This bill affirms a high quality of life for seniors and ensures that the standards remain high now and in the future for them. That was one of the things that the lady I spoke about earlier said to me. She said, I just want to make sure I have a good home-cooked meal. I won't be able to make that for myself anymore. Sadly, she was placed there and last August Nova Scotians were shocked to see in the news that seniors in nursing homes were eating for about \$5 a day - and that, Madam Speaker, was three meals for \$5 a day.

And I witnessed that. I visited long-term care facilities and I watched what seniors were eating in some of those facilities - powdered potatoes, basically soup broth with a little bit of vegetables. It's not right, Madam Speaker. Sadly, they heard that family members were supplementing menus with fresh vegetables, fruit, butter and good coffee. Many times, when I would go there, I would see family of residents bringing in lots of treats for their family members, just because they were not getting them in the facilities they were living in. After working hard and contributing all their lives, seniors in long-term care facilities deserve much better than that. They deserve the simple pleasures of meals that are healthy and taste good. It was that sad situation that was the inspiration for this bill.

Madam Speaker, when we think about seniors living in long-term care facilities we should think about parts of their lives that we cherish. We appreciate being safe, we appreciate living in a comfortable home. Seniors want that and they deserve that, too. We cherish our privacy - seniors also want and deserve that.

I mentioned in my maiden speech my grandmother when she was dying, my two daughters and I sat by her bed and there was almost like a paper curtain that separated us. There was no privacy for my grandmother; there was no privacy for my daughters Kelsey and Kieran. We sat there trying to say goodbye to our grandmother while a lady was screaming next door that she wanted tea and coffee or she was hungry. It was not right. It was not fair to my grandmother; it was not fair to me or my two daughters. Those were our last moments with her and she deserved better.

For most of us, living out our lives without a spouse is very disturbing. Many seniors who have lived 50, 60 years with their spouse want to be able to spend their last days with their spouse. That was another case that I discovered as a senior safety coordinator. I went into this home, it was a new lady who had just arrived and I was making my way around, popping in and saying hello to all the residents there, sharing stories.

I went in and introduced myself to this lady and she said, I need you to help me, dear. So, I thought she wanted me to sit and read to her. I said, what can I do for you? She said I need you to get my husband here. I said oh, where's your husband, can I call him? Well no, he's in a nursing home, dear, 150 kilometres away from me; he doesn't drive, I don't drive and I have no way to see him; my son lives in British Columbia, I need you to

help me; we are celebrating our 60th Wedding Anniversary next weekend and I have no way to see him. That is not right.

Luckily, I did help her and I was fortunate enough to find the right people that I could bring those two together. But sadly, many die without being with their spouse under that same roof.

Madam Speaker, Nova Scotia is blessed with many quality long-term care facilities and thousands of medical professionals and nursing home staff who love the seniors in their care and treat them just as if they were their own family.

I want to share something with you very quickly because my time is running out. It is something that was told to me during a dementia course that I went to, and it's the story of a man and his son. The old man sat at his home with his adult son and suddenly a crow landed on the window, and the old man says, what is that? And his son says, it's a crow. And the man said, what's that? And the son says, I just told you it's a crow. The man asked for the third time, what's that? And the son answers very angrily, a crow, dad, it's a crow. The man asked the same question for the fourth time, the son started shouting, I told you a hundred times, it's a crow dad, can't you hear me? The man went out and returned with a notebook. He said, read it, and read it aloud. The son read, today, my three-year-old son was sitting with me in the park, and a crow stopped in front of us. My son asked me 21 times, what it was and 21 times I responded with love, it's a crow son, it's a crow.

So, you know what, Madam Speaker? This bill is about respect, and that's what all of us need to do. We need to respect our elders, we need to love them, we need to care for them, they built this province. And we need to make sure that we have the laws, the rights, for them, to make sure that they are protected, and they're living the last days of their life with dignity.

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

MR. BEN JESSOME: It's a great opportunity to be able to participate in today's discussion, and certainly, all members of the House would share the sentiment that we want to see things done in the best interests of the people that we love: our mothers, our fathers, our aunts or uncles, grandparents. You know, there's a tremendous amount of people out there, who work in the industry, the long-term care industry, who are truly motivated, passionate, and extremely sympathetic to caring for seniors in a time of vulnerability in their lives.

I do have to say that this particular bill, brought forward by the Official Opposition, is one that does put forward the values that we do wish to see as a government. I think we can all share in confirming that it's important that we hold these values that are expressed through this bill, at the forefront of policy-making, and accountability in the sector.

I do want to acknowledge some of the comments made by the member for Queens-Shelburne. She indicated through a number of examples, the expressed value and importance of senior citizens to remain in their homes, and independent, as long as possible. That would be something that is consistent with the things that I've heard in Hammonds Plains-Lucasville and, certainly, I would suggest throughout the province.

Members throughout the province would share in that. Seniors are people for whom, like everybody else, it's important to have that sense of independence. It's important to contribute to society. We as a government, have made a priority to invest in home care, in nursing, expanding safety grant programs. In the most recent budget, we've allocated funding for seniors to be trained on how to use the Internet. There's a targeted program to engage seniors in entrepreneurial endeavours. The point I'm trying to make is that we're listening to seniors and we want to do as much as we can to foster programming and policy to empower them to continue to be contributing members of our society and remain independent for as long as possible.

[4:00 p.m.]

At some point in time yes, we will all get to that point in our lives where we're unable to take care of ourselves. It's part of life. When that point in time takes place we need to be sure, as government, that we've created a framework that protects seniors who are required to move into homes that ensure that they are fed, they are cared for, they have the freedom to practise their religion, their beliefs.

There are some very particular items in this bill that I do need to highlight for the purposes of this debate that are already embedded in policies - for example, the Long Term Care Program Requirements policy - and the Protection for Persons in Care Act. Now these are concepts again, as I opened up saying, that we all want to ensure at the forefront of policy-making and ensuring these types of things are considered when we are looking at caring for some of our most vulnerable seniors. Again I want to stress that these are objects that are already embedded in policy that governs this sector.

I do want to take a moment, Madam Speaker, to mention that I've got a long-term care facility in my constituency in Hammonds Plains-Lucasville which I've spent a considerable amount of time in. I participate there as a volunteer, helping out with their recreation time. On numerous occasions I've been asked to come into the facility to speak with the residents there, my friends and constituents at that facility in Upper Hammonds Plains. They are certainly a group of people who are very engaged in what is going on throughout the province and are very interesting and fun people to be around. The people who are there in that facility are there to serve the best interests of those residents. They do a tremendous job of providing services, keeping the facility clean, and providing recreation opportunities for them.

In one of the clauses of this bill, with respect to spouses having the opportunity to live under the same roof, there is actually a couple who live at this particular facility together. Again, to my other point, there are considerations made and people in addition to the existing policy framework, people are extremely receptive to trying to ensure that spouses have the opportunity to live with one another as long as possible.

In Hammonds Plains-Lucasville, there is a great example of a wonderful couple who have spent many years together and they've been accommodated in the sense that they have the opportunity to live together, to continue to live together. I think that's really important.

I do want to add to my previous comments about empowering seniors to live in our communities, that part of that is ensuring that they have the financial means to continue to live on their own. Madam Speaker, I know it has been said many times in this House, but for the purposes of this debate, I think it's important to highlight that this government has just reduced taxes for our most vulnerable Nova Scotians. In many cases, seniors are on a fixed income, and they are in a category financially where that tax relief is going to create a significant benefit in their households.

I do want to add that, in instances in long-term care facilities where there is a disagreement or there is an issue presented, there are a number of bodies that are charged with dealing with situations that, quite frankly, can't be handled by the facility's directors. I know based on my experience with the director out in Hammonds Plains that she does a tremendous job. If there is something that comes up, she's a great listener. She is extremely passionate about helping out her residents. In every case that we have come across, she has been able to work with the resident to find a solution.

Beyond that, and I'm speaking generally, in instances where there is a complaint or there is a concern from the family based on the level of care that their loved one is getting in that facility, there are, as I started to say, bodies within the Department of Health and Wellness that are responsible for ensuring that complaints that come about are addressed. I would be remiss on this subject if I didn't acknowledge a constituent I have who was having concerns such as this and has actually gone through the process from start to finish to see that there are protections in place to address the concerns that you might have with a family member in one of these types of facilities. It does have the opportunity to come out the other side.

In addition to all of the staff who are on the ground, all of the policy-makers who are out there invested in ensuring that our seniors are well looked after, and all of our enforcement people who make sure that complaints that come about are addressed, I would strongly suggest that all members of this House can become - or have become in many cases - an advocate for somebody who is in one of these facilities who is having some type of an issue. On a personal note, I have spent, like I said, a considerable amount of time listening to these types of issues. I represent a community that has a number of young

families that are, at some point in time, likely the not-too-distant future, going to be charged with making a decision on what to do with their mother or father or both of them.

It's a topic that is extremely challenging for families to address and to find out what's right for their personal situation. Oftentimes it creates a bit of a delay in establishing where a loved one will live. I think it's important that we, as legislators, if we have the opportunity in conversation, to encourage people to make those types of arrangements, make decisions on where their loved one is going to go based on the needs of that individual and what the family needs as well.

I think the member opposite raised some concerns about food. I did want to mention, it's important to highlight that we have targeted funding in this budget for food and recreation. There are concerns out there and this is part of our effort to demonstrate to Nova Scotians, and specifically Nova Scotian seniors, that we've heard from them, we want to do our best to accommodate them, and targeted funding towards recreation and food is a step in that direction. Thank you for the time to participate in today's debate.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Madam Speaker, I have to say it really shocks me that we're even getting up to talk about this bill, that we have to talk about something that strengthens the protections and policies that should innately be in place for seniors, to care for those who came before us. It really saddens me that this is where we are in life, that we have to actually put pen to paper to ensure that we look after our seniors.

While the bill is a good idea, it's an idea that needs funding behind it. We can't implement this without money. Government has cut long-term care funding, cut and cut and cut so deep that there's barely anything left. If this government wants to protect the rights of seniors, then they need to be willing to put the money where their mouth is, quite frankly. If I could go specifically line-by-line, because I think each and every line in this bill is quite important to discuss.

It talks about the right to be treated with courtesy and respect in a way that fully recognizes seniors' individuality and respects seniors' dignity. I have to ask, how does a senior sitting in their own waste respect a senior's dignity? How does a senior sitting slumped over in her or his commode chair because there's not enough staff to pick him up, how does that respect a senior's dignity? It doesn't.

The second one talks about the right to be protected from abuse. Many Nova Scotians talk about their loved ones being neglected in long-term care, and I have to say as I stand in this House, that it's not because of the lack of care provided by these long-term care facilities and the staff who work in them. It's the structural problem. There is not enough funding for these homes to operate to the capacity at which they should, to provide

the care that they should be providing and to be able to watch and see what these seniors are doing to one another.

My in-laws were in a home just outside of HRM and each on two different ends and my father-in-law looked like he was in probably the worst fight of his life at 91 years old, because another resident in his unit decided to attack him. We did not blame the staff, we did not blame the facility - we blame this government for not having enough staff in place. This 91-year-old man who weighed maybe 90 pounds - his face was completely black and blue, his arm was in a sling, he had an egg on his head, and blood coming out of his ear. How is that respectful for a 91-year-old man who was a veteran? I say it's not respectful at all.

[4:15 p.m.]

Again, the staff can't be everywhere because these residents roam. When staff are tied up with a resident in a separate section or in a room screaming and fighting and hollering, they don't know what's going on down the hall. I would urge everybody to ask facilities in your area what the ratio is for staff, especially on nights. You would be shocked to think that there's one or two staff for 40 or 50 patients or residents.

The next bullet is the right to be properly sheltered, clothed, groomed, and cared for in a manner consistent with the senior's needs. I don't know about anybody else here, but I don't think a bath a week is nearly caring for seniors' needs. My grandmother was in the hospital. She was in an acute-care bed waiting for placement, and my mother had to go up every day and bathe her because that's something she was used to. She's used to being clean.

I don't think that should be a privilege. I think that's something that should be provided to the seniors who are in these homes. To think that we have to have family members to come up and bathe our seniors so they're not sitting in their own mess, so that they're not developing rashes and infections and all of the things that come along with not being bathed on a regular basis. I can tell you, a bath a week is a luxury in a lot of nursing homes in this province, and I think that's disgraceful.

I'll talk about my father-in-law again. He was eating a sandwich with a spoon, but he had more of it over his face. When we got there, it was hardened to his face so again, it's not the staff's fault but absolutely the fault of this government that he had to sit there for however long it takes for sandwich pieces to harden on your face before he was cleaned. I think that's disgraceful. I think a lot of Nova Scotians think that our seniors deserve a heck of a lot better care.

I spoke many times about my uncle who I recently put in a home in Tatamagouche. We went to see him. He is immaculate. He likes to be shaved and showered with clothes pressed every day. He was in jogging pants and ripped shirts because the laundry staff and

the staff on the floor don't have time to monitor where his clothes go, even though his name is sewn in everything. So he's walking around in other people's clothing. These are actual things that are happening in long-term care facilities because this government continues to cut funding. Yes, you put something back, but you only put back half.

The right to high-quality nutritious meals - cuts to dietary and recreation were \$8 million over two years. Sure, you put money back, but you didn't back near enough. You didn't put back what you took out.

The right to live in a safe and clean environment - staff do their utmost to keep those places clean and safe. But when we have nursing homes that are fundraising for lifts so that the staff can move patients safely without injury, that is disgraceful to the residents and the seniors of this province. We should be ashamed of ourselves to sit in this House and say we are doing all we can for seniors. Let me tell you, Madam Speaker, this government is not doing everything it can for seniors.

We have heard from some nursing home administrators that they may have to give up their accreditation because they know they're not going to make it. They know that their substandard level of care is not going to meet the accreditation standards because of safety issues specifically.

Again, I'll speak to the nursing home in my constituency where we have residents in wheelchairs who cannot get into their own bathroom because the door is too small. They cannot get into their own bathroom. We have to hope that there's staff there to help them because if not, they're going to mess in their wheelchair. I don't know how anybody can believe or attest that this is respectful to seniors because it is absolutely not.

The right to keep and display personal possessions, pictures, et cetera - I'll talk about my uncle again. We decorated his room, put up a family picture with everybody pertinent in his life, a picture of his dog. He is a strong Catholic; we put up a crucifix. The next week when we went back, there was nothing left in his room - nothing, not one thing.

It's not the fault of the staff. They don't have time to wonder who is stealing his prayer beads or taking prayer beads out of his room. They just disappear because the staff are too concerned with trying to change people without everybody else seeing that person being changed. But when you have only one person on the floor or one person in that section, you can't shut the door and change people in privacy. You have to have the door open so you can see what Jane and John and Joe are doing because, if not, your prayer beads are disappearing. People are sitting in their own mess. Clothes are disappearing.

The right to live in the same facility or receive placement so that it doesn't negatively affect the spouse. In my maiden speech, I talked about a constituent of mine who at age 81 has a very old van - probably because he doesn't drive much, he only drives around in the Town of New Waterford - who had to place his wife in a home in

Tatamagouche. He's 81, she is 79 and they had been married in excess of 55 years and she is in a home in Tatamagouche. His heart was broken and I had to tell him, you know what, the Liberal Government in its first mandate didn't open one new long-term care bed and after this Estimates session we've come to find out that the Liberal Government has no intention of opening any new long-term care beds in this province. So I guess they'll die apart because she is very ill and he is not well and incapable of making a trip to Tatamagouche every week to see his wife. So I guess that's just the way they die. That's something to be proud of.

While I put my uncle in a home in Tatamagouche, this past week we had to put my aunt - his wife of 56 years - in the hospital. She was admitted and is still admitted to an acute care bed. She has full-blown dementia and she is in an acute care bed because there's nowhere for her to go - 56 years. He's in Truro, who knows where she'll end up. The times that they do remember each other won't matter anyway because they'll probably never see each other again, so they'll die alone and die separately. I can't believe we're even talking about this, to be quite honest. It makes my stomach turn.

The right to pursue social, cultural, religious interest, to develop seniors' potentials - I know in the nursing home in my constituency that they have wonderful programs when they have the staff to run them. They have people come in to administer communion and/or perform church services, but the residents can only get there if the facility is staffed to take those residents to these services.

My community fundraised for a van so that they could take those capable of going around to different events. We have Coal Dust Days and different events that go on in the community and again the van sits empty and unused most of the time because we don't have anybody to take the seniors, unless there are volunteers who are coming from the community.

We do all of this in an attempt to provide care for those who came before us, those who fought for what we have now, who defended our country, who raised our children, who provided us with the basics, the necessities of life and now - and I spoke of this before and this is a 110 per cent fact, because of the cuts of the Liberal Government - we have nursing homes in this province that only allow seniors to be changed four times a day.

Let me tell you, from a health care perspective, when flu season comes, four times a day is not nearly enough. When a stomach bug comes, four times a day is not nearly enough. I have people who have told me they would rather be fired than to leave my loved one, your loved one, anybody's loved one sitting in their own mess, because they know exactly what that means and what's going to happen.

How can anybody in this House believe this is the way people should go out? How can anybody stand up and say - we need to strengthen this because we're not doing it now; we're not looking after seniors the way that we should be.

If this government was concerned with long-term care and the rights of seniors and ensuring that their privacy is protected and that their rights are protected and all of this wonderful stuff, they wouldn't have cut funding to their food. As I said yesterday or the day before in a question to the Premier, I believe, I think it's disgraceful that we're even talking about cutting funding to seniors' food. How can we as citizens of Nova Scotia, Canadians and good, loving and honest people talk about cutting food budgets to seniors' care? It is ridiculous.

You know what? I hope more Nova Scotians find out about exactly what's going on. I for one will make it my mission to ensure that the people of Nova Scotia understand that we've got not one new long-term care bed in this province - not one. So, stay in the acute care bed and hope you don't fall down or need surgery because there's no bed for you because we have nowhere to put the seniors.

While they're there they're going to be sitting in their own mess and I think it's a disgrace, and I think this government should be embarrassed.

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

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Madam Speaker, I have to say I want to start off by echoing the comments from the member for Cape Breton Centre in that I wish I didn't have to speak towards this bill, because I wish it wasn't necessary.

When I'm standing here today trying to think of what words might carry any weight, I thought we might need to talk about why do we even need this in the first place? We have a Homes for Special Care Act so why do we need an amendment, if you will, to establish rights - shouldn't they be in this bill? For those who aren't as familiar with it, I thought we might take a look at that.

It was established in 1989 - revised in 1994-95 - and it was called An Act to Revise and Consolidate the Boarding Homes Act, the Nursing Homes Act, and part of the Social Assistance Act. So it should carry quite a bit of weight.

If you go through the pages of it - it's nine pages which doesn't seem all that long - Page 2 is about definitions, so that's not useful in terms of what it might mean for our seniors and their rights; Page 3 is about licensing requirements, like you would for a daycare centre; Page 4, though, talks about how you might suspend a licence and I want to refer to Section 7(a). It says that the minister may cancel or suspend a licence where, in the minister's opinion, the licensee is not giving or is not capable of giving adequate care to the resident. I find it a little ironic that the minister can cancel the licence of the nursing home licensee when they're not able to give adequate care, but when that care is dependent on the funding that's given to them by the minister - it's a bit of a Catch-22.

On Page 5 we talk about inspections and when you read what the inspector can inspect, it says that he can examine the premises, equipment, facilities, books and records - and it sounds like you're inspecting a new home. We have somewhere between six and ten inspectors going in to inspect a new home - I'm not sure how often we have inspectors going into our nursing homes to report on the level of care there.

On Page 6 it says that a patient can be examined by a qualified medical practitioner or nurse, but it doesn't say what they're being examined for, just that the inspector can allow a physician to go in - it doesn't talk about evaluating quality of care over time.

On Page 7 it says Offence and Penalty, Section 18 - "Every person who violates or fails to observe or comply with any of the provisions of this Act or the regulations or with any term, condition or restriction attached to a license held by that person is guilty of an offence punishable by summary conviction and is liable to a penalty of not more than one hundred dollars."

[4:30 p.m.]

When I read "one hundred dollars," I thought, "Oh my God, my speeding ticket is higher than that." Not that I've ever had any. I'm just saying.

We're talking about how it's an offence not to provide every statement in this Act, but if you don't, you're only fined \$100. I think, with due respect, that we might need to change that fine, and we might need to add some things that need to be inspected.

On Pages 8 and 9, it talks about some regulations. Some of them are around maintenance of the building; not a lot of talk about standards of care. In fact, I found very little, and the words "standards of care" are only used a couple of times that I can find. I think that when we look at this, the Homes for Special Care Act is not enough as it stands. If it were enough, we would not be hearing the complaints that we're hearing from the constituents in our communities, from our family members, from the people we love who are calling us up and saying, can you bring me some food? I'm hungry, or, they won't get me out of bed because they say there's not enough staff, or, I pressed the call button for somebody to come take me to the bathroom and they tell me they're in the middle of giving someone else a bath and we'll just have to wait.

We do need to change the Homes for Special Care Act, and Bill No. 47, in my opinion, is just the beginning of it. All we're asking for is to establish a bill of rights. But as previous members have said, you can't ask for a bill of rights if you're not going to supply the funding that you're going to need to do that.

Why are we ending up with more complaints over the years? Well, there are a number of people who have addressed this in the past already, but one of the things I want to mention is that when the Homes for Special Care Act was created in 1989, there were

approximately 110,000 seniors in this province. I know, because I was one of them looking after my grandmother, that there were enough of me and my mother and my kids to look after seniors in their homes. But of my four children, only one is still here. My mother has only two children, and we're here, but we don't have the kids still here or the adults who have the freedom to go look after their seniors.

Now the number of seniors in 2021 is expected to be 202,000. We're going to have almost double the number of seniors since this Act was created, and we have not kept up with the times or the demands or the fact that the number of young people who are there to look after parents and grandparents has dwindled along with the increase in age.

As mentioned before, funding cuts are one of the major problems. I was privileged to start work in 1984, when nobody had to wait to get into a long-term care facility. If you needed home care, you got it. There was no need for private home care physiotherapy. Either you could stay at home because your family was there to look after you, or there was a bed for you to go to. I've watched over the last 34 years as the situation changed completely.

This was an article on April 26, 2015. It says, "Long-term care cuts will help save province \$3.6m." In case people aren't aware, these headlines do not make the public happy, because they're saying "but." You made those cuts; who's getting hurt? So, the Department of Health and Wellness stated that, "Another effort to achieve savings is the decision to cut in half the per-bed funding for small equipment purchases. Previously, nursing homes not governed by a service agreement received \$356 per bed, but operators were notified in a letter from the department Friday that the amount will be halved."

Well, I'm not sure how we're going to help seniors age in place and be mobile in nursing homes when we keep cutting not just the funding for food and staffing but for the equipment, so when I'm asked to donate for a sling to put somebody back in bed, it resonates, because if we don't, those staff are going to get hurt.

This is just one of the issues that happens when you cut funding.

That was in 2015, so we had another year to go, and then another article on August 17, 2016 said, "Long-term care homes feeling impact of budget cuts." I don't know how anybody can say, I'm going to give you less money, but I want you to do the same with it. Yes, I know all about economies of scale and the bargaining power you have when you order in bulk. But that change in policy did not result in an improved diet. It did not result in the sustainment of the current diet. It resulted in a worsened diet. I know of family members who have told me that they believe that nursing homes are so desperate to not have patients waiting to go to the bathroom that they don't give them quite as much liquid to drink. This is the impact that it's having all across the province.

This article from CBC said, “Those two years, back to back, this government has cut more money from this nursing home than any other government has done to this home in the 34 years we have existed,” said Taylor.”

When we talk about all the monies we have invested everywhere else, they’re going to celebrate pre-Primary and everything else, but the impact of not having funding and having cut funding is, as the article says, just another kick in the teeth.

“Saunders said smaller homes were already operating on shoestring budgets before reductions started to happen; she only has one person on staff.

“Basically we operate in overdraft and on credit most of the time anyway. So a one-per cent reduction for us is just another kick in the teeth,” that we cannot absorb and sustain.

Then we have another article here from November 16, 2016. The deputy minister was quoted as saying we have cut \$8.2 million over two years, but it’s only going to affect 103 out of the 134 long-term care facilities because some of them have guaranteed funding. Then they go on to say, “We’re listening to what the sector is saying and we’re working with them as best we can.” We’re going to maintain that if you’re listening, then we’re not responding.

I get calls weekly. I had one this morning, and I had one last night from somebody who is being discharged home who is in a wheelchair whose family has gone bankrupt trying to support them at home, and they can no longer stay there. But they’re going to be sent home because there are no more beds. This person who is in a wheelchair is up all night long with seizures and has been told they are not a priority.

In the Nova Scotia Government subsidized long-term care playbook, if you will, it says to be eligible for subsidized care in a long-term care facility, there are three requirements. You must be a citizen of Canada. You must be a resident of Nova Scotia. And this is the one I really want you all to listen to: you have to have health care needs that cannot adequately be managed by the family or by home care services in community services. There are over 1,800 people whose families have already indicated that they can’t cope - we do not have the skills, training, time, money, resources, or mental health. We cannot manage.

I suspect that we may need to change the requirements to just being a resident of Nova Scotia and a permanent resident of Canada. If we’re basing that on getting a long-term care bed to everyone whose care cannot be adequately managed by family, we do not have the funding to do that, and keeping them all at home is not possible.

The last time we built a long-term care bed was in 2009. We all know the senior tsunami isn’t just coming - it’s already here. We’re already hearing the complaints, which

tells us that we're not managing it now. In 2030, give or take, when it's my turn to be in that nursing home bed, there's going to be twice as many seniors as there are now, but we're not building long-term care beds. The PC Party has already said that we would build long-term care facilities.

I know because I worked in the homes and in the long-term care facilities, you cannot do in the home what needs to be done in a nursing facility when you need two or three people to help lift somebody up off the floor. We simply can't keep every frail senior in the home. We need to build nursing homes, and we need to start now. Similarly, we need to replace the VG Hospital, and that's what people are asking for.

The last thing I want to mention is that none of this anywhere mentions the quality of care, which is completely dependent on the staffing levels. I know for sure that I have never met a single health care professional who didn't go in planning on giving excellent care 100 per cent of the time. In 2002, there was a task force on resident-to-staff ratios in nursing homes. It spells out how many staff there should be for every resident there.

We do this for daycares, you can't get your licence unless you guarantee that the number of people looking after those children is exactly what you have set as the target.

In 2015, the Nurses' Union wrote an article called *Broken Homes*. I just want to read what it says: "The resulting report noted that no overall provincial human resources management plan exists for the [long-term care] sector. It also noted that [long-term care] facilities were not being asked to report human resource statistics . . ." - how many staff they had to let go because of their budget cuts or what the impact is when staff call in sick and you don't have the funding to replace them.

The last thing I want to mention is on Page 29 - what the Auditor General said, because he is completely impartial: "Recent reports from the Nova Scotia Auditor General make it clear that staffing standards are not being monitored and that we do not know if they are based on recognized standards."

If we implement policies and procedures and we want people to put them into practice, we have to give the facilities that are required to do this enough staff to do it. That means we don't want them cutting their food budget and their recreation budget in order to maintain that staffing level; indeed, with the increased level of frailty of those in nursing homes, they need an increase in budget well beyond what this government has put back in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. As the honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage did a fair bit of quoting from various documents, I'm going to ask her to table those documents, if you wouldn't mind.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, that concludes Opposition business for today, so I'll turn it over to the Government House Leader to tell us what we're doing next, call business for tomorrow, and see how the rest of the week is going to be.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, that concludes government business for today. We'll meet again tomorrow, Thursday, October 19th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Following the daily routine and Question Period we will call Private and Local Bills, Bill No. 30; Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill No. 39; and, time allowing, we will call Committee of the Whole House on Bills on Bill Nos. 7, 15, 16, 17, 19, 29, and 33.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for adjournment and for the House to meet tomorrow, Thursday, October 19th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

We have reached the moment of interruption. The topic, once again, as submitted by the honorable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, is:

“Therefore be it resolved that by demonstrating strong fiscal management and achieving balanced budgets, the provincial government can now invest in key programs, economic development and attracting investments while not burdening future generations with more debt.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

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

GOV'T. (N.S.): BALANCED BUDGETS - FUTURE INVEST.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to get up and speak about why not burdening our future generations with more debt is so important. With debt comes interest, and with interest comes less ability to pay for the goods and services that we require and need in this province. Good fiscal management will not only support citizens of today but citizens in the future.

I heard once that the only problem a company or government cannot solve is a cash flow problem. If we dissect this statement, it says that every problem can be solved if we have the cash for it. I would say that is the case in most instances.

Of course, we'll leave health - the primary, most important thing is our own health and our family's health - but if we have the cash flow accompanying a government, we can invest those monies towards many things we talk about in here: more doctors, better education, more affordable tuition for low-income Nova Scotians, and more supports for low-income Nova Scotians.

[4:45 p.m.]

Let's dissect in terms of, how did we get to the point we're at? What was four short years ago - four short years ago, the Cabinet of the Liberal Government was not even sworn in. We were still under the Executive Council of a New Democratic Party Government. Mr. Speaker, when the Liberal Government was sworn in, what we found was a province that had a half-billion-dollar deficit. That's billion with a b; \$500 million deficit in the budget. Over five per cent of our budget was in the hole and what we had seen was record debt being added to this province.

The last year of the Progressive Conservative Government in 2008-09, a spending spree like this province has never seen, \$1.15 billion added to the debt of Nova Scotia. Did we turn around from that? The New Democratic Party when they came to power in four, long, miserable years, \$3.17 billion in debt. This is the debt that we borrowed, the debt we pay interest on and you know what the interest on those two amounts combined amount to today. We are today paying over \$250 million a year, for the debt. What do we have to show for it? We have the slowest growing economy for a decade.

We were trying to buy our way to prosperity. It wasn't working - high unemployment rate. We had the Jobs Fund which spent \$892 million and, yet, our unemployment was rising. Many companies under the Jobs Fund no longer exist. They took the money, they shut down, they ran. We'll get back to that, Mr. Speaker, but what we also had at that time was an HST increase of two per cent, which brought in \$400 million into the Treasury of the province. We had a very large public sector wage increase which, if we had just provided a wage increase that was in line with inflation we'd have another \$250 million today.

So, when you start adding up what we faced coming in - a half-billion-dollar deficit, we faced an increase of tax of \$400 million which crunched the economy and reduced spending, and we also faced an increase in our wages payable of \$450 million a year. So, what did that amount to? That amounted to a lot of tough decisions if we want our sons and daughters to stay in the province. I'd like my daughter to stay in province. I think it's the best province in the country and we are the best country in the world.

So, as we look at those financial aspects, even today from the New Democratic Party Jobs Fund, and this budget that we just have in front of us that we just passed last week, \$36 million today is going to the Jobs Fund because of future commitments that were made in that. Where did that money go? We had a company in Trenton receive over \$50 million. I don't even know if they cracked 50 or 100 employees in their time. The money is gone now. I have personal experience with Trenton because I worked at TrentonWorks and, when it shut down, it was devastating to the area and government had a responsibility but the responsibility was to support the individuals there and help them transition, not to pay a company to come here and take the money and not help those individuals.

Bowater, \$200 million and the company up and left six months after receiving the last \$100 million they ever received. So, we're looking at the situation this government faced coming in. This was the bleakest, bleakest financial future a province had in a province. Do you want to know how bleak it was, Mr. Speaker? In the last budget the New Democratic Party tabled, they cut income assistance by \$30 million by eliminating a whole month of it. The Leader of the New Democratic Party voted on that. I have it right here and I will table this document.

The last New Democratic Party budget on income assistance that they ever brought in, income assistance from \$400 million down to \$368 million. They cut out a whole month and, now, in Opposition, he's claiming, oh, help the poor, help the poor. My question is what did they do when they were in power because their actions speak louder than their current words. They don't support, you know, our most vulnerable citizens today. I can tell you that. Well, how can they? They emptied out the cupboards. No money was left. When we came in, we had a lot of difficult decisions to make. Why? For our kids and our grandkids to make sure this province was on a sustainable path. Now, we are on a sustainable path. Things have turned the corner.

We recently had a bond agency improvement. Standard and Poor's improved our bonds and how we issue our bonds, which should result in about \$2 million in savings every year. That's a good-news story. The reason that they did it is because they recognized that this province, in the last four years, was not adding more debt and that this province was living within its means. S&P realized that this province was a good risk for its investors.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer released a fiscal sustainability report for 2017. Two provinces were deemed to be fiscally sustainable in all of Canada. Nova Scotia was one of the two. The report said that the only provinces with fiscal trajectories that will be sustainable over the long haul, leaving them room to introduce tax cuts or to increase government spending, are Nova Scotia and Quebec.

This is important because that gives us the ability to pay for things that we need, which is what this government is doing. We saw increases in this budget to forgivable

student loans to any Nova Scotian who graduates, completely forgivable - five years of student loans wiped out upon graduation. In this budget, we saw investments in health care. We saw investments in education. All of the \$65-million cuts that were made in education under the NDP are back and then some.

I want to talk about those cuts. During the election, I was speaking with someone. He said, I'm a teacher, I teach junior high. I want to tell you, there are students of mine who can't read or write. I asked the teacher a simple question, do you think that the cuts to Reading Recovery and math mentors had anything to do with that? It's like a lightbulb went off. He said, you know what? Those programs are gone from our elementary schools. I'm proud that this government has brought them back.

I would like to talk about another bond rating agency and what they have said about Nova Scotia because I think it's very important that everyone in this province knows that we are on a good, sustainable fiscal track. We have a lot of indicators that are showing what a great place this is fiscally and economically.

Just recently, I spoke about how we're retaining more youth than those leaving the province two years running. That is the first time that's happened since the 1980s. Unemployment rates have been trending lower, because the private companies in this province see confidence. They are hiring, not only youth, but citizens to work. In retaining more youth, this government led the way with programs and with changing hiring requirements amongst the PSC. That resulted in 2,000 more students staying in the province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Before taking my place, I ran over to the window to look out and see if a stallion was tied up out there. I didn't see one. I ran into the coatroom to see where the knight's armour and helmet were put. If you believe the minister, he rode in on his stallion and saved the province. But I didn't see it out there, and I didn't see the armour.

What he forgot to tell us is, he didn't reference that the Conference Board of Canada came out yesterday and said GDP growth for Halifax is forecast to be the lowest of the 13 major cities in Canada. The lowest possible GDP growth of the 13 is going to be in Halifax. It's going to be higher next year - it will take us up to the middle of the pack. That's not what I was getting from the minister over there, with all of his accolades for himself and his government today.

He didn't mention the fact that that low GDP growth for Halifax was 1.4 per cent. You know what's interesting about that is the growth for the entire province is forecast to be 0.3 per cent. I know the minister is an accountant and if he did a little math on that he

would realize that the GDP growth for the rest of the province outside of Halifax is forecast to be - yes, you guessed it - negative.

The day has not been saved as much as the minister would have us believe. Losing thousands and thousands of jobs. I tried to listen intently but I didn't hear those references, but those references did show up in the budget that was tabled. The budget was tabled and the personal income tax revenue forecast is down - down. The personal income tax revenue in this province is dropping, and yet the minister's topic that he submitted was all about the strong fiscal management, achieving balanced budgets, and that the provincial government can now invest in key programs, economic development, and attracting investments.

I would like to focus on - maybe I didn't read it carefully enough because it says, "can now invest." Maybe that's going to start at some point in the future because it certainly hasn't started yet. If we look at the key programs that have been invested in, have we invested in more EAs? I don't think so, I don't think it's having the impact when I listen to the families and the struggles their kids are having in the school system. Have we invested more in seniors? We've just talked about a bill here - the bath a week, maybe that's the upgrade that we're getting, the bath a week for our seniors.

Have we invested in our roads and our potholes? We should go for a little drive - as my colleague says, not in Cape Breton but we can drive numerous parts of the province and we can say, well, the minister said things are great, but I must be missing something. Maybe did we invest in new schools? Oh shoot, yes, we did. We had a process for deciding which ones we should invest in, but we didn't follow that process. Possibly I guess because of the strong fiscal management we can get at some of these things we need to get at.

But if we ask ourselves what programs are we investing in that people are feeling so prosperous - are people in the province feeling prosperous? I do remember the minister referenced attracting investments and I remember and some members of this House might remember back in January 2015 where the Premier returned from a big trip to China with a \$50 million venture capital fund backed by Chinese investors who were just in love with Nova Scotia. That was two, two and one-half years ago - might that be the investment that this government is attracting? I don't know, I never heard a peep about it since then. In those two and one-half years, I haven't heard a peep about that and I do believe that if there was an investment I might have, because the Premier and his Cabinet never miss an opportunity to stand in front of the cameras and talk about the wonderful things they're doing.

I didn't see it, I might have missed it, but I'm guessing it didn't happen. So, when we talk about things that will allow the provincial government that they can now invest in key programs and economic development and attracting investment - maybe that will start as we move a little forward, because it hasn't started yet.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the very minister who submitted this topic and took the accolades for the strong fiscal management was once upon a time the Minister of Internal Services. We talked about Internal Services today, and we talked about an RFP for a computer system that was issued for \$3.8 million that has now cost, so far, \$7.3 million plus another \$1 million on a different line item, plus another \$500,000 buried somewhere else - plus, plus, plus.

[5:00 p.m.]

That \$3.8 million RFP, close to \$10 million now - maybe we need to go back and look at our economic textbooks and see how strong fiscal management is properly defined, because that's not what it had in mind. From the very minister who would stand up and talk about all of the wonderful things that presumably he put his hand to. He often talks in here about some of the wonderful things he is behind - he forgot that. He forgot to mention what the Conference Board of Canada says, forgot to mention some of the things that were happening in his department at the time on computer systems, computer implementations run amuck.

Guess what's not news, Mr. Speaker. What's not news is when you go to Public Accounts Committee and you learn about a computer installation project implementation that's two times over budget. I think pretty much everyone in Nova Scotia just kind of shrugs their shoulders and goes, yeah, a major project by the government is way over budget? Okay, what's the weather supposed to be like tomorrow? But yet, this is the type of strong fiscal management that's delivering Nova Scotians from the grasp of bad government.

We'll see where it all goes, Mr. Speaker, because there were a number of projects that I could have talked about today in Public Accounts Committee, just from the minister's tenure at Internal Services, just from that short time that he spent in that portfolio, a number of projects that have kind of really run amuck. But we didn't talk about those today. When the minister gave his words, he didn't talk about that. He didn't talk about the Conference Board of Canada and he didn't talk about some of the issues that we're facing in this province. Somebody might say, oh isn't it good news to read the headline of a back-to-back balanced budget - but they need to ask the questions of how and why, and is it.

We know what's happened, that the budgets are balanced in many cases because you don't spend. If you don't spend any money, you shouldn't have a problem balancing the budget. If you don't have doctors for people, you shouldn't have a problem balancing the budget. If you don't want to provide the supports through the education system, you shouldn't have a problem balancing the budget. If they couldn't balance the budget, I'd be very surprised.

The reality is that time will tell. History will make the decision on this government when the court cases come to finalization, when they're finally decided by the courts. We

could be looking back at these years and saying oh boy, those years were almost as bad as the NDP years, in terms of balanced budgets. But we don't know what will happen when the lawsuits are finally decided - it could be hundreds of millions of dollars.

People in this province aren't feeling the positive energy from this minister and the reason they are not feeling it is because this government has gotten to where they've gotten by disrespecting Nova Scotians of every single stripe, in every single walk of life. It's not fair, it's not right. Better days are ahead for Nova Scotians.

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

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad for a chance to offer a few reflections on the thoughts that have been put forward by the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

I would like to say first, that I felt that the member's remarks in a certain sense were bringing my personal integrity into question. In his questioning of whether or not - in his view, not - it is legitimate in the larger sense for me to offer the criticisms and our caucus to offer the criticisms that we have been offering of the government's economic program, in particular their budget. He was suggesting that it is not legitimate because, in his judgment, of the record of the government which I have been a part of between 2009 and 2013, on these very subjects. I think this is an unhelpful way for the member to put his thoughts together.

I will say a couple of things about the work of the government of which I was a part, on the subject of financially-based suffering. I was very proud, particularly, when the budget of 2010 was brought in. It included a provision - I'm sure that the member would be aware of it, although he didn't mention - called the Affordable Living Tax Credit.

The Affordable Living Tax Credit had the effect, as it continues to do, of transferring around \$20 million a year to the homes of people making less than - I think the number is \$34,000 a year. It is, I think, a misrepresentation to not acknowledge the Affordable Living Tax Credit as a worthwhile and significant component of the effort to abolish poverty in Nova Scotia.

Similarly, in that same year, I thought quite an important initiative was brought forward. That was an initiative that I'm sure someone as informed in these matters as the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island would be aware of, although he didn't mention it. It was the fact that, in that year, a provision was introduced by which seniors who received GIS, the supplement, no longer had to pay, as they do not any longer now, any provincial income tax in Nova Scotia. I thought that this was a significant change in our taxation structure.

If I can just speak personally as a rural minister, in the area that I served in for many years, in the Musquodoboit Valley, where we had many residents who had never had the privilege of going to school. It's not uncommon that people bring their government papers to the church for the minister to help them with - often people who are just able to read a little, or sometimes not at all. There were no lawyers in that community, no doctors, no social workers, so it was kind of a custom. It was expected that one thing, at least, about ministers: they usually would have a sense of being able to keep things to themselves and they might be able to help you with those papers.

So I had occasion over the years to help a lot of seniors with pretty simple income tax returns, although I have no expertise in this area at all. But many times when I did this, I thought to myself, gosh, I'd better go and get somebody who really knows this field, because I must be doing this wrong. How can it be that this person who's made, let's say, \$13,000 or so - I make it that they owe, let's say, around \$380 - it would be of this order in provincial income tax. I would go and get it checked and find that, in fact, that was the case. That was the way our system was set up. I thought that was a significant improvement.

I think, too - I can't recall exactly the year, although I think it was 2012, when a change was made by the government I was a part of. I was proud to be associated with this provision, under which children aged 10, 11, 12, 13 no longer had to pay for their dental care, and this could be covered by MSI. I thought, when we brought this in, members will know that this was a provision that had previously applied a couple of decades before, but it had been cut back, I think in the 1990s.

I remember in particular being at a person's home one time. I've forgotten if it was in connection with going door to door in an election or if I was at the door in a pastoral visit, but I remember the person saying - this was a woman who had two or three kids and obviously not a great deal of money in the home. She said, look, I remember when my parents were bringing me up, they were able to get - we were all right as far as our teeth went, because that was covered. Can you tell me why now, here - my husband is working, but I'm here with the kids, and look, we can't do anything to keep the teeth of the ones that get up over 10. Can you tell me how come that was then, and it isn't now? I remembered what she said, because she said it with a great sincerity, and when that change was brought in I was proud to be associated with that change.

At no time in those four years did I ever think to myself, on this issue which is such a crisis before us, a crisis of need for people to even be able to feed their families, that I had wasted my time, that we had made no advance.

I think an honest reading of those four years would say a couple of things. First, significant advances were made in the area of income redistribution. I find it troubling that anyone would look at that record and diminish the advances that I have just described and speak of them as though they were not significant changes. I would also say very plainly that in those four years, in the government of which I was a part - as I said at the time, as

many people who were part of that government would say at the time, as I would say now - these changes were of course inadequate because the problem persisted. We still had the depths of poverty that in fact are worse today.

But I felt that in our government, at least we had made some significant strides, and we approached the problem with a tone of humility. If ever we were asked, have you done enough? No one ever in that government said, oh yes, look at us, how wonderful we are. We are the people who have done enough. Never. There was never anything of this sort, never on this front, never.

In this area, if I may say respectfully to my friends across the way, I think that it is possible to have some improvement in the tone in which these subjects are discussed. When we raise the financially-based suffering of people, I find it jarring to hear - I've tried to think of the right word for the tone with which the present government discusses these matters. Sometimes people have said to me that it's arrogance, but I don't think that's the right word. I have to reach into a word from the world of religion, I guess, to describe it. I find it triumphalistic.

I think a triumphalist tone when in a moment it is the case - no one in our caucus is making it up that we have the worst child poverty in the country. We're not manipulating statistics to say we have the fastest rising food bank use in Canada. These are present facts. In the face of these facts, I think a tone of greater humility and sleeves rolled up, recognizing the inadequacy of anything that doesn't take us a long piece down the road, would be appropriate.

So I recommend this change in tone to my friends across the way. I would particularly recommend it to the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, in whom I found this kind of wisdom absent in the remarks he earlier made.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. The time allotted for the Adjournment debate has expired.

The House now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 5:13 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 376**

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas Paula and George Joukhadar of Halifax Armdale are blessed with two wonderful and accomplished sons, Joseph and Nadim; and

Whereas this year Joseph marked two major milestones in his life, graduating from the University of Leicester with a Bachelor of Laws and marrying his beautiful wife Laura; and

Whereas this year also saw Nadim mark a significant moment in his academic and professional life, graduating from Dalhousie Medical School;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Joukhadar family on the tremendous accomplishments of their sons, Joseph and Nadim, and wish both of them all the best as they enter exciting new chapters in their lives.

RESOLUTION NO. 377

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team competed in Canada Soccer's National Championships this October in Surrey, British Columbia, after having placed first in regular season play; and

Whereas the talented team of young women played well, placing sixth overall in the tournament and only narrowly missing the medal round after tying eventual silver medal winners Surrey United in the group stage; and

Whereas forward Beatrice Currie contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Surrey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 378

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team competed in Canada Soccer's National Championships this October in Surrey, British Columbia, after having placed first in regular season play; and

Whereas the talented team of young women played well, placing sixth overall in the tournament and only narrowly missing the medal round after tying eventual silver medal winners Surrey United in the group stage; and

Whereas goalkeeper Ashley Blank contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Surrey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 379

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team competed in Canada Soccer's National Championships this October in Surrey, British Columbia, after having placed first in regular season play; and

Whereas the talented team of young women played well, placing sixth overall in the tournament and only narrowly missing the medal round after tying eventual silver medal winners Surrey United in the group stage; and

Whereas central midfielder Ally Read contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Surrey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 380

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team competed in Canada Soccer's National Championships this October in Surrey, British Columbia, after having placed first in regular season play; and

Whereas the talented team of young women played well, placing sixth overall in the tournament and only narrowly missing the medal round after tying eventual silver medal winners Surrey United in the group stage; and

Whereas central back Candace Conrad contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Surrey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 381

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team competed in Canada Soccer's National Championships this October in Surrey, British Columbia, after having placed first in regular season play; and

Whereas the talented team of young women played well, placing sixth overall in the tournament and only narrowly missing the medal round after tying eventual silver medal winners Surrey United in the group stage; and

Whereas left back Holly Buckler contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Surrey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 382

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team competed in Canada Soccer's National Championships this October in Surrey, British Columbia, after having placed first in regular season play; and

Whereas the talented team of young women played well, placing sixth overall in the tournament and only narrowly missing the medal round after tying eventual silver medal winners Surrey United in the group stage; and

Whereas forward Jayden Boudreau contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Surrey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 383

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team competed in Canada Soccer's National Championships this October in Surrey, British Columbia, after having placed first in regular season play; and

Whereas the talented team of young women played well, placing sixth overall in the tournament and only narrowly missing the medal round after tying eventual silver medal winners Surrey United in the group stage; and

Whereas right back Jeanette Huck contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Surrey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 384

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team competed in Canada Soccer's National Championships this October in Surrey, British Columbia, after having placed first in regular season play; and

Whereas the talented team of young women played well, placing sixth overall in the tournament and only narrowly missing the medal round after tying eventual silver medal winners Surrey United in the group stage; and

Whereas left wing Josie Oickle contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Surrey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 385

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team competed in Canada Soccer's National Championships this October in Surrey, British Columbia, after having placed first in regular season play; and

Whereas the talented team of young women played well, placing sixth overall in the tournament and only narrowly missing the medal round after tying eventual silver medal winners Surrey United in the group stage; and

Whereas central midfielder Kate Macdonald contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Surrey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 386

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team competed in Canada Soccer's National Championships this October in Surrey, British Columbia, after having placed first in regular season play; and

Whereas the talented team of young women played well, placing sixth overall in the tournament and only narrowly missing the medal round after tying eventual silver medal winners Surrey United in the group stage; and

Whereas central back Kim Hardy contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Surrey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 387

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's Soccer Team competed in Canada Soccer's National Championships this October in Surrey, British Columbia, after having placed first in regular season play; and

Whereas the talented team of young women played well, placing sixth overall in the tournament and only narrowly missing the medal round after tying eventual silver medal winners Surrey United in the group stage; and

Whereas forward Leanne Huck contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Surrey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 388

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team competed in Canada Soccer's National Championships this October in Surrey, British Columbia, after having placed first in regular season play; and

Whereas the talented team of young women played well, placing sixth overall in the tournament and only narrowly missing the medal round after tying eventual silver medal winners Surrey United in the group stage; and

Whereas central back Lianna de Koe contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Surrey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 389

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team competed in Canada Soccer's National Championships this October in Surrey, British Columbia, after having placed first in regular season play; and

Whereas the talented team of young women played well, placing sixth overall in the tournament and only narrowly missing the medal round after tying eventual silver medal winners Surrey United in the group stage; and

Whereas right wing Monica Diab, my daughter, contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Surrey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 390

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team competed in Canada Soccer's National Championships this October in Surrey, British Columbia, after having placed first in regular season play; and

Whereas the talented team of young women played well, placing sixth overall in the tournament and only narrowly missing the medal round after tying eventual silver medal winners Surrey United in the group stage; and

Whereas central midfielder Rachelle LaLande contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Surrey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 391

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team competed in Canada Soccer's National Championships this October in Surrey, British Columbia, after having placed first in regular season play; and

Whereas the talented team of young women played well, placing sixth overall in the tournament and only narrowly missing the medal round after tying eventual silver medal winners Surrey United in the group stage; and

Whereas central midfielder Rieka Santilli contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Surrey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 392

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team competed in Canada Soccer's National Championships this October in Surrey, British Columbia, after having placed first in regular season play; and

Whereas the talented team of young women played well, placing sixth overall in the tournament and only narrowly missing the medal round after tying eventual silver medal winners Surrey United in the group stage; and

Whereas goalkeeper Tiffany O'Donnell contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Surrey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax Dunbrack Premier Women's soccer team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 393

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Soccer Association's U-17 National Championships in Fredericton this October after having played an undefeated season during which they bested rival team Halifax Dunbrack in a dramatic penalty shootout; and

Whereas the diverse team of boys played as an incredibly solid unit and placed fifth overall in the tournament, winning two games and tying one; and

Whereas forward Sungbeen Song contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Fredericton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 394

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Soccer Association's U-17 National Championships in Fredericton this October after having played an undefeated season during which they bested rival team Halifax Dunbrack in a dramatic penalty shootout; and

Whereas the diverse team of boys played as an incredibly solid unit and placed fifth overall in the tournament, winning two games and tying one; and

Whereas central back Matthew Piercey contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Fredericton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 395

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

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

Whereas the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Soccer Association's U-17 National Championships in Fredericton this October after having played an undefeated season during which they bested rival team Halifax Dunbrack in a dramatic penalty shootout; and

Whereas the diverse team of boys played as an incredibly solid unit and placed fifth overall in the tournament, winning two games and tying one; and

Whereas goalkeeper Joey MacLatchy-Gaudet contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Fredericton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 396

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

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

Whereas the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Soccer Association's U-17 National Championships in Fredericton this October after having played an undefeated season during which they bested rival team Halifax Dunbrack in a dramatic penalty shootout; and

Whereas the diverse team of boys played as an incredibly solid unit and placed fifth overall in the tournament, winning two games and tying one; and

Whereas midfielder Isaac MacDonald contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Fredericton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 397

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

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

Whereas the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Soccer Association's U-17 National Championships in Fredericton this October after having played an undefeated season during which they bested rival team Halifax Dunbrack in a dramatic penalty shootout; and

Whereas the diverse team of boys played as an incredibly solid unit and placed fifth overall in the tournament, winning two games and tying one; and

Whereas central back Harry Eliot contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Fredericton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 398

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Soccer Association's U-17 National Championships in Fredericton this October after having played an undefeated season during which they bested rival team Halifax Dunbrack in a dramatic penalty shootout; and

Whereas the diverse team of boys played as an incredibly solid unit and placed fifth overall in the tournament, winning two games and tying one; and

Whereas right back Hari Bhujel contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Fredericton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 399

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Soccer Association's U-17 National Championships in Fredericton this October after having played an undefeated season during which they bested rival team Halifax Dunbrack in a dramatic penalty shootout; and

Whereas the diverse team of boys played as an incredibly solid unit and placed fifth overall in the tournament, winning two games and tying one; and

Whereas central back Erich Heckel contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Fredericton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 400

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Soccer Association's U-17 National Championships in Fredericton this October after having played an undefeated season during which they bested rival team Halifax Dunbrack in a dramatic penalty shootout; and

Whereas the diverse team of boys played as an incredibly solid unit and placed fifth overall in the tournament, winning two games and tying one; and

Whereas left back Eli Davis contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Fredericton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 401

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Soccer Association's U-17 National Championships in Fredericton this October after having played an undefeated season during which they bested rival team Halifax Dunbrack in a dramatic penalty shootout; and

Whereas the diverse team of boys played as an incredibly solid unit and placed fifth overall in the tournament, winning two games and tying one; and

Whereas forward Edmund Adza contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Fredericton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 402

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Soccer Association's U-17 National Championships in Fredericton this October after having played an undefeated season during which they bested rival team Halifax Dunbrack in a dramatic penalty shootout; and

Whereas the diverse team of boys played as an incredibly solid unit and placed fifth overall in the tournament, winning two games and tying one; and

Whereas right back David Warner contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Fredericton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 403

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Soccer Association's U-17 National Championships in Fredericton this October after having played an undefeated season during which they bested rival team Halifax Dunbrack in a dramatic penalty shootout; and

Whereas the diverse team of boys played as an incredibly solid unit and placed fifth overall in the tournament, winning two games and tying one; and

Whereas forward Cullen MacLeod contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Fredericton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 404

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Soccer Association's U-17 National Championships in Fredericton this October after having played an undefeated season during which they bested rival team Halifax Dunbrack in a dramatic penalty shootout; and

Whereas the diverse team of boys played as an incredibly solid unit and placed fifth overall in the tournament, winning two games and tying one; and

Whereas midfielder Carson Ripoll contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Fredericton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 405

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Soccer Association's U-17 National Championships in Fredericton this October after having played an undefeated season during which they bested rival team Halifax Dunbrack in a dramatic penalty shootout; and

Whereas the diverse team of boys played as an incredibly solid unit and placed fifth overall in the tournament, winning two games and tying one; and

Whereas forward Brandan Richards contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Fredericton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 406

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Soccer Association's U-17 National Championships in Fredericton this October after having played an undefeated season during which they bested rival team Halifax Dunbrack in a dramatic penalty shootout; and

Whereas the diverse team of boys played as an incredibly solid unit and placed fifth overall in the tournament, winning two games and tying one; and

Whereas left back Ben Rubinger contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Fredericton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 407

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Soccer Association's U-17 National Championships in Fredericton this October after having played an undefeated season during which they bested rival team Halifax Dunbrack in a dramatic penalty shootout; and

Whereas the diverse team of boys played as an incredibly solid unit and placed fifth overall in the tournament, winning two games and tying one; and

Whereas midfielder Ayoub Al Arabi contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Fredericton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 408

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Soccer Association's U-17 National Championships in Fredericton this October after having played an undefeated season during which they bested rival team Halifax Dunbrack in a dramatic penalty shootout; and

Whereas the diverse team of boys played as an incredibly solid unit and placed fifth overall in the tournament, winning two games and tying one; and

Whereas central back Alec Napier contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Fredericton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 409

By: Hon. Lena Diab (Immigration)

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

Whereas the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Soccer Association's U-17 National Championships in Fredericton this October after having played an undefeated season during which they bested rival team Halifax Dunbrack in a dramatic penalty shootout; and

Whereas the diverse team of boys played as an incredibly solid unit and placed fifth overall in the tournament, winning two games and tying one; and

Whereas midfielder Aidan McFarland contributed to the team's success and represented Nova Scotia proudly in Fredericton;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the Halifax City U-17AAA Boys team and wish them all the best as they continue to develop as players.

RESOLUTION NO. 410

By: Hon. Zach Churchill (Education and Early Childhood Development)

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

Whereas Laurie Barron is the Head Coach of the Yarmouth Junior A Mariners hockey team; and

Whereas Laurie Barron has been named an Assistant Coach of Team Eastlink at the Eastern Canada Cup All-Star Challenge in Trenton; and

Whereas this will be Barron's second straight year at the event, he was an assistant for the South Division team in 2016;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Laurie Barron on this honour and achievement and wish him the best of luck at the Eastern Canada Cup All-Star Challenge.

RESOLUTION NO. 411

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Environment)

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

Whereas Andrew Hamilton of Whites Lake was awarded the Alexander Graham Bell National Masters Scholarship through the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and he has received a second year of support through the Scotia Scholars Masters Award from Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation (NSHRF); and

Whereas Andrew is an honorary recipient of the Catherine Anne Godwin Memorial Endowed Scholarship through MSVU and spends much of his time in the research lab, and he is also an active member of his community; and

Whereas Andrew sits as a volunteer board member on the Chebucto West Community Health Board, he is a member of the Mount Saint Vincent Alumnae Association and serves as the National University Liaison with the Canadian Nutrition Society trainee initiative, as well as volunteering in the local community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Andrew for his academic research and his strong commitment to community.

RESOLUTION NO. 412

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Environment)

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

Whereas local residents and organizations came together to celebrate 36 amazing volunteers at the 3rd Annual Prospect Communities Volunteer Awards held June 10th this year at the Prospect Road Community Centre; and

Whereas these awards are a celebration of the many dedicated volunteers, community groups and organizations that passionately give their time and service to important initiatives in the Prospect Communities; and

Whereas the Resource Opportunities Centre (ROC) facilitates this annual volunteer awards event for residents of the Prospect Communities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the ROC for placing such value on the significant contribution of volunteers in making our communities welcoming and inclusive for all.

RESOLUTION NO. 413

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Environment)

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

Whereas Sandra Hennigar of Prospect Bay is very involved in St. James United Church in Goodwood which is a point of Crossroads Pastoral Charge; and

Whereas Sandra is a trustee, chairman of council and chairman of the Pastoral Care Committee, and as chairman of St. James Council Sandra sits on the Crossroad Council and is St. James' representative at Halifax Presbytery; and

Whereas volunteers are the heart and soul of our communities and the dedication of individuals such as Sandra ensures that our local churches are vibrant and valued institutions open to all;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Sandra for all she does for St. James United Church and the community at large.

RESOLUTION NO. 414

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Environment)

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

Whereas the Prospect Road Elementary School community worked collaboratively to enhance the outdoor play experience for students and children from the community; and

Whereas parent volunteers and school staff held numerous fundraising events, they partnered with the Prospect Road & Area Recreation Association and their municipal councillor; and

Whereas one individual, Terri McGinn, worked diligently to secure funding through grants to create a welcoming space for children to enjoy a variety of outdoor recreational and interactive play options;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking everyone involved, and I am proud to represent a community that comes together to invest in our children's health and happiness.

RESOLUTION NO. 415

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Environment)

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

Whereas Rita Mae Schwartz of Shad Bay has given over five years to volunteering with the Souls Harbour Rescue Mission, and during this time Rita Mae has developed a huge capacity to care for others, especially those less fortunate than herself; and

Whereas Rita Mae, often with the assistance of her husband, John, buys the food and prepares large pots of homemade soup at home, then happily delivers and serves it to their friends at the soup kitchen; and

Whereas she has also raised money for Souls Harbour and is constantly on the lookout for items needed by her friends, and even though Rita Mae gives selflessly to this cause dear to her heart, she insists that it is an honour and a privilege and that she gets back tenfold what she gives;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in showing Rita Mae our deep appreciation for all she does for others and wish her all the very best for the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 416

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Environment)

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

Whereas Suzanne Bishop of Hatchet Lake is very involved in St. James United Church in Goodwood, which is a point of Crossroads Pastoral Charge; and

Whereas Suzanne is a trustee and chair of the Worship Committee and sits on the Crossroad Council, she also ensures the sanctuary is ready every week, and she is always ready, willing and able to help out however she can; and

Whereas volunteers are the heart and soul of our communities, and the dedication of individuals such as Suzanne ensures that our local churches are vibrant and valued institutions open to all;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Suzanne for all she does for St. James United Church and the community at large.

RESOLUTION NO. 417

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Environment)

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

Whereas Thanksgiving weekend, Petra Spires of Hubley joined hundreds of runners in the 25th Anniversary Valley Harvest Marathon in Wolfville, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas with a time of 3:38:01, Petra placed third in the women's division and 19th overall; and

Whereas Petra, a Grade 4/5 teacher at Burton Ettinger Elementary School and a busy mom with a large family, sets a wonderful example of discipline and determination for her students and her own children;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Petra on her achievements and wish her well in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 418

By: Hon. Zach Churchill (Education and Early Childhood Development)

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

Whereas Maple Grove Education Centre in Hebron has begun running a late bus that leaves the school for town at 5:15 p.m.; and

Whereas the bus will travel the same route from Monday to Thursday each week; and

Whereas the addition of this bus run will make it easier for students to participate in Maple Grove's many after-school activities and sports programs;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate the staff and administration of Maple Grove Education Centre on their hard work in obtaining this important service which will surely be a welcome and positive addition for many Maple Grove students and their families.

RESOLUTION NO. 419

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (The Speaker)

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

Whereas Harbour Lites New Horizons Club in Musquodoboit Harbour has recently celebrated its 40th year in operation; and

Whereas Harbour Lites provides an important meeting place for area seniors to gather for social events, meals, activities, meetings, and learning opportunities; and

Whereas Harbour Lites' strength comes from its membership of diverse and talented local seniors;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Harbour Lites New Horizons Club for being an important piece of our community's fabric.