



House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia

**DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS**

**Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy**

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**First Session**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2017**

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House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 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. We'll now begin with the daily routine.

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present a petition. The operative clause reads as follows:

Whereas, the staff at the Waterville Youth Detention Centre have continually requested proper training and tools to effectively manage high risk offenders, And

Whereas, a hazard assessment conducted by the province following the 2016 riot at Waterville made several recommendations, including the guards carry tazers and peeper [sic] spray have not yet been implemented, And

Whereas, a now 19 year old repeat violent offender characterised as the most violent offender they have had to accommodate, is scheduled to be transferred back to the Waterville Youth Detention Centre,

We the undersigned urge the Liberal Government stop the transfer of this prisoner and that he continue to be housed in an adult facility which is properly equipped for such offenders.

Mr. Speaker, I have affixed my signature to it and there are 52 signatures.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable Premier on an introduction.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to draw the attention of the House to the east gallery where visiting with us is Suellen Smofsky whom I know the Leader of the Official Opposition would know well. She looked after my former Premier here, Premier Hamm, but she's a daughter of Bridgetown which is the most important title in here today. With her joining us in the east gallery is Cathy Farley and Luana Pohe, both all the way from Australia, who are here with Suellen to take in the proceedings. They had a tour of Province House and they have been travelling around our beautiful province and they would have visited many of your constituencies over the last number of days.

On behalf of all of us, welcome to Nova Scotia. Stand up and receive a warm welcome from the House. (Applause)

#### **PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

#### **TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

#### **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

#### **GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of the Public Service Commission.

HON. TONY INCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I take leave to have an introduction, please?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. INCE: Thank you. In the east gallery are two women, if they would like to stand - my mother and her friend, Marlene Clyke, and my mother, Thelma Coward-Ince. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of the Public Service Commission.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 420**

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

Whereas today I'm proud to recognize Thelma E. Coward-Ince, the first Black Senior Secretary in the Department of National Defence, Secretary to the Chief of Staff and to the Admiral and, in 1954, she joined the Navy becoming the first Black female in the Naval Reserves in Canada; and

Whereas Thelma was promoted to Manager, Administrative Services, becoming the first Black manager in the Ship Repair Unit Atlantic, and the unit had 2,000 employees from 1979 to 1992 with fewer than 100 women and one female manager; and

Whereas Thelma was involved in the health care system such as the CDHA and the Atlantic Health and Wellness Institute, sat on multiple boards such as the Health Association of African Canadians, the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, the Black Community Work Group, and Hope, and Thelma was appointed Commissioner to the Advisory Commission on AIDS;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House please congratulate my Mum, Thelma, and thank her for her years of service. (Standing Ovation)

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 Premier.



**RESOLUTION NO. 421**

THE PREMIER: I liked the phrase “my Mum.”

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

Whereas the mission of the Afroglobal Television Excellence Awards is to showcase the achievements and aspirations of individuals, organizations, businesses, and agencies that make a profound difference in the lives of people of African heritage worldwide and transform the communities where they live; and

Whereas the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Legacy Award is presented to an individual who has made substantial contributions towards eliminating barriers in society and continues to work towards socio-economic development; and

Whereas the member for Cole Harbour-Portland Valley, Nova Scotia’s Minister of the Public Service Commission and African Nova Scotian Affairs, will be awarded the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Legacy Award on Saturday in Toronto at an awards gala;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate the member for Cole Harbour-Portland Valley on this achievement, and thank him for his work in the African Nova Scotian community and for his dedication to strengthening our province. (Standing Ovation)

Mr. Speaker, the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree. (Laughter)

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 Labour and Advanced Education.

**RESOLUTION NO. 422**

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

Whereas for many years more youth have left the province in search of opportunities elsewhere than young people who migrated here from other provinces; and

Whereas government, our community partners, and the private sector have worked diligently together to attract more youth to the province and give young people opportunities here in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas for the first time in 32 years we have seen two consecutive years of attracting more youth from other provinces than those leaving and our focus on immigration has helped us gain more than 4,000 in the past two years and Nova Scotia's youth population is growing at an even faster rate than our overall population;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in thanking our many community partners and businesses who have been mentors, made space for youth in their organizations, and maintained a positive outlook about the success that youth can find here in Nova Scotia.

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

[1:15 p.m.]

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 the Public Service Commission.

**RESOLUTION NO. 423**

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

Whereas today I'm proud to recognize Marlene Clyde, better known as "T", as the first Black woman to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces, as a Corporal, during the Second World War with the Women's Army Corps, and she also belongs to the Order of the Eastern Star, Chapter 28, Halifax, the Daughters of the Nile, Halifax, and in 2011 was elected Queen of the Athena Temple 149 of Nova Scotia and P.E.I.; and

Whereas the Canadian Women's Army Corps was formed in 1941, and women joined for patriotic reasons and initially performed gender-specific duties that eventually included duties of ciphering and decoding, vehicle maintenance, signalling, and engaged in range-finding and spotting duties for anti-aircraft units stationed in Canada; and

Whereas Black Canadians served in multiple wars shaping our nation, while experiencing segregation, and Marlene faced another battle of gender inequities in the Second World War;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House please congratulate Marlene Clyde and thank her for her service and her strength, and being an inspiration for all Canadians. (Standing Ovation)

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 Natural Resources.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 424**

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

Whereas the Horizon Achievement Centre is a vocational training and employment service centre for adults with mental disabilities or those facing multiple barriers to employment in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality; and

Whereas the staff of the Mira and Petersfield Provincial Parks are Horizon Achievement Centre supporters and have had many memorable and rewarding experiences by working with individuals and families of the centre; and

Whereas on September 27<sup>th</sup>, the Department of Natural Resources received an Employer Partnership Award from the Horizon Achievement Centre in recognition of the department's support in employing people with disabilities;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House recognize the staff of the Mira and Petersfield Provincial Parks for the guidance, support, and friendship they have given to the individuals of the Horizon Achievement Centre.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 425**

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

Whereas two beloved Canadian cultural giants - actor John Dunsworth of the Trailer Park Boys, and musician Gord Downie of The Tragically Hip - passed away this week; and

Whereas throughout their artistic careers, John Dunsworth and Gord Downie fostered an emotional connection with their audiences, including Canadians and fans around the world; and

Whereas as a result of their remarkable contributions to music, film, theatre, and television, John Dunsworth and Gord Downie have brought great credit to the culture communities within Nova Scotia and across Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House join me in recognizing the legacies left behind by John Dunsworth and Gord Downie, and celebrate their tremendous contributions to the culture of our country.

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 Acadian Affairs.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 426**

HON. LENA DIAB: Monsieur le Président, à une date ultérieure, je demanderai l'adoption de la motion suivante:

Attendu que La Société Saint-Pierre marque cette année son 70<sup>e</sup> anniversaire; et

Attendue que depuis sa création, l'organisme a aidé les Acadiens de Chéticamp et de la région à préserver et à promouvoir la culture acadienne et la langue française de notre province; et

Attendue que après sept décennies, La Société Saint-Pierre poursuit toujours son travail qui consiste à préserver la culture et le patrimoine acadiens à Chéticamp grâce à son musée et à son Centre de généalogie;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les députés de l'Assemblée législative se joignent à moi pour féliciter La Société Saint-Pierre à l'occasion de son 70<sup>e</sup> anniversaire et pour faire l'éloge de son rôle dans la promotion et la préservation de la langue française et de la culture acadienne à Chéticamp et dans la région.

Monsieur le Président, je demande l'adoption de cette motion sans préavis et sans débat.

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

Whereas La Société Saint-Pierre is celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year; and

Whereas since its inception, this organization has helped Acadians in Cheticamp and the surrounding area preserve and promote our province's Acadian culture and the French language; and

Whereas after seven decades, La Société Saint-Pierre continues its work in preserving the Acadian culture and heritage in Cheticamp thanks to its museum and genealogy centre;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating La Société Saint-Pierre on its 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and commend them for their role in promoting the French language and Acadian culture in Cheticamp and the surrounding area.

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.

Just before we move on to the next item, there was one notice of motion submitted that was incorrectly formatted, so I'm going to leave it to the Clerk and that particular minister to get it formatted properly.

#### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 57 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1995-96. The Education Act, Respecting School Capital Construction. (Ms. Susan Leblanc)**

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

#### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

#### **STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

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

**PETERS, TERRY: CD RELEASE - CONGRATS.**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Terry Peters from Marion Bridge, who, after years playing in halls, bars, and basements, recently entered uncharted territory. Terry Peters and his band recently recorded their first CD, entitled *After All These Years*.

Terry says he was definitely influenced over the years by country music legend Merle Haggard. Peters admits to shedding a tear or two the day Haggard passed away.

I am proud to congratulate Terry Peters and his band as they continue performing for many years to come.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

**GUNN, KIMBERLY: CELEBRATION TARTAN - CONGRATS.**

THE PREMIER: I rise today to congratulate Kimberly Gunn, tartan designer and owner of Tartan Wave in Annapolis Royal.

In 1605, Champlain was welcomed to Port Royal in peace and friendship by Grand Chief Membertou to establish the first permanent European settlement. In 1629, the first Scots landed in the area that we now know as Annapolis Royal. This area is often referred to as the cradle of our nation.

Kimberly Gunn designed a 2017 celebration tartan as a legacy to the community in Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> year of Confederation. The tartan was inspired by the seasonal colours of the North Mountain, the Annapolis River, and the Bay of Fundy, as well as the lush green landscapes, lupins, and red soil. The dark blue represents the Scottish Saltire and the interconnected threads represent the rich shared history with the Mi'kmaq, the Acadians, and the English, all of whom have shared this special place in our province - the place where multicultural Canada began centuries ago.

I am proud to stand in my place to share the story of this beautiful tartan with the House of Assembly, and also to wear my tartan that was provided to me by Kimberly. We are very proud of our history, and as Nova Scotians, we should be very proud that multicultural Canada was founded in our own province.

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

**ALLISON, CHASSITY: YOUR LOCAL MAGAZINE - CONGRATS.**

MS. KIM MASLAND: In the spirit of Small Business Week, I would like to recognize a young woman from Queens County who, in September, published the very

first edition of *Your Local*, a magazine that highlights what it means to live, work, and play in Atlantic Canada.

Chassity Allison of DvL Publishing Incorporated believes in the importance of buying local and showcasing the amazing people and resources of Atlantic Canada. In her Publisher's Note, it is obvious that Chassity is passionate about our region, and her positive attitude is more than evident.

I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Chassity and her staff, and wish her all the best as she sees her vision brought to life.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

### **LUN.-QUEENS EXCEL. AWARDS: COM. BUS. - RECOGNIZE**

HON. MARK FUREY: The Lunenburg-Queens Business Excellence Awards is an amazing forum developed to acknowledge and recognize exceptional businesses in my community.

Since its inception in 2011, the business community has gotten together each February for a dinner and awards ceremony to celebrate our local businesses, the entrepreneurs who have worked hard to create a superior product or service, and those employees whose dedication to their employer have helped create a thriving business community.

In particular, we've all seen businesses like All Outdoors Landscaping, Mahone Marine, Ocean View Gardens, Bailey's Fuels, Gold River Marina, and Helping Nature Heal, recognized among their peers.

I have great respect for those who see a need who are able to develop a product or idea, and appreciate that the Lunenburg-Queens Business Excellence Awards is there to recognize our many community success stories.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

### **PICTOU CO. CRUISE COMM.: PROMOTE PICTOU - COMMEND**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: I stand today to commend the Pictou County Cruise Committee. The committee has worked hard to promote Pictou and the surrounding areas to the travel industry.

With the tourist season coming to a close, the Fall cruise ship season is beginning and members of the Pictou County Cruise Committee were able to secure the arrival of four cruise ships this season. Because of our hospitable nature, it seems that other cruise



ship lines are attracted to the Port of Pictou, and are entertaining Pictou to be added to their list of destinations for 2018.

This is just another example of what our area can offer, and how dedicated we are to the economic growth of our region.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

**PAIN, MALCOLM - BOSTON MARATHON:  
TOP FINISH - CONGRATS.**

HON. KELLY REGAN: I'd like to tell you about an inspirational marathon runner who lives in Bedford. Malcolm Pain was the third-place finisher, and the top North American in his age category, at this year's Boston Marathon.

At 79 years old, he was also the oldest Nova Scotian in the race. He ran it in four hours, four minutes, and 26 seconds. Mr. Pain plans to run in next year's Boston Marathon as an 80-year-old. He likes to run one at least every decade. He started running back in his early thirties. His first marathon was the Johnny Miles back in 1973, and since then he has run almost 50 marathons.

Back in May, I asked Mr. Pain how he maintains the discipline to run every day. He told me it's important to run first thing in the morning, otherwise it hangs over your head all day.

I know from seeing him running regularly along Bedford Highway that he's a great role model for those who would like to live a fitter lifestyle, and I look forward to congratulating him on next year's race results in April.

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

**SLAUNWHITE, KIM - N.S. ARTH. SOC.:  
AGING WELL PROG. - RECOGNIZE**

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Today, I would like to recognize the Arthritis Society of Nova Scotia's new Aging Well series.

Aging Well is going to be a TV program featured on Eastlink Community TV throughout the Fall on Sunday evenings at 8:00 p.m., and weekdays at 2:00 p.m.

Currently, there is one in four Nova Scotians living with, and suffering from, arthritis. The Arthritis Society of Nova Scotia recognizes the importance of aging well and its new series will benefit everyone, with or without arthritis.

Each week a different expert will be introduced to discuss their knowledge on topics like rheumatology, orthopaedics, psychology, nutrition, falls prevention, assistive devices, medications, exercise as medicine, and more.

I want to applaud Kim Slaunwhite, and the Nova Scotia Arthritis Society for producing such a wonderful series that will make such a positive difference in the lives of so many Nova Scotians.

[1:30 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

**MILLEN, CURTIS & ANNE: STRAWBERRY PROD. - RECOGNIZE**

HON. KAREN CASEY: During the last seven years, Curtis and Anne Millen from Little Dyke, Colchester North, have been cultivating various species of strawberries that produce fruit throughout summer and into the Fall, thus allowing them to extend their harvest season.

They have increased their strawberry revenues by heavily investing in new equipment and infrastructure, including housing for their employees, and an underground irrigation and filtering systems for a better product.

The Millens have over 200 acres of strawberries under cultivation at any one time. Curtis is quick to admit that his farm could not have undertaken the needed investment to grow these day-neutral varieties if it had not been for long-term commitment, and partnership with Sobeys, who prefer to stock the local produce.

Millen Farms employs over 250 people during the strawberry harvest and many days in September Millen Farms are still delivering two truckloads of berries to Sobeys, each truck filled with over 13,000 quarts of berries.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in thanking the Millens for being strong advocates for protecting our agricultural land and for promoting local sources of food.

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

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw everyone's attention to the west gallery, the front row there. On the left is my constituency assistant, Lisa Rochon. from Cole Harbour who has been handling everything for me while I have been over here. To her right is Robin Carter who is the current co-chair of the Serving Seniors Alliance, the owner of Carter Senior Care in Dartmouth and my amazing campaign manager.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**BAILEY, LIZ - WOMEN'S RUGBY:  
COACHING ACHIEVEMENTS - CONGRATS.**

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to recognize Dartmouth East resident Liz Bailey. Liz is an amazing young woman dedicating her time to promoting and coaching women's rugby. Liz has played rugby for many years and has taken charge of motivating young women to take part in the sport. She has maintained her positive attitude and welcoming spirit throughout her endeavours. Her motivation and dedication to both her sport and community impresses all who know her.

I would like to congratulate Liz on all that she has achieved as a coach and I wish her all the best on her future endeavours.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**KENTVILLE LIBRARY: REOPENING - CONGRATS.**

HON. LEO GLAVINE: In my tenure as Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage, I had the pleasure of meeting with library officials, board members, while visiting several sites across the province. I am pleased to see the revitalization of library services in the Annapolis Valley continue with the Kentville Library, whose doors will reopen in a newly-renovated space next week.

The journey to relocate the Kentville Library to the decommissioned United Church had support from former Mayor Dave Corkum, and former Kings County Councillor Wayne Atwater. John Parsons of Mid Valley Construction is to be commended for his personal and professional commitment to bringing the dream to an extraordinary reality.

I would like to congratulate the Annapolis Valley Regional Library, the Town of Kentville, Mayor Sandra Snow and all who worked towards the rejuvenation of the Kentville Library, which will continue to provide services to the community in a beautiful new space for years to come.

MR. SPEAKER: I'd just like to remind the honourable minister that items falling under portfolios of ministers are not to be mentioned in member's statement. Close. That's why we did it after.

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

**SAIL ABLE PROG.: POSITIVE IMPACT - STAFF THANK**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: I rise today to thank Georgina Hatcher and Maggie Bunbury for offering the Sail Able Program at the Northern Yacht Club in North Sydney this past summer. They make sure everyone has a chance to enjoy the open seas, regardless of limitations. Trained instructors teach people with physical or developmental disabilities to sail in this important program.

The number of people taking advantage of the program has been increasing yearly since its inception in 2013. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff involved in this program for the positive impact that it has had on all participants.

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

**KEARNEY, SHERRIE/DALE: MONKEYS AND MORE - CONGRATS.**

MR. GORDON WILSON: Anyone who has started their own business is aware of the long hours new entrepreneurs have to invest in their business. They hope that if they put the hours in, their unique idea will become a successful business. This was true when Sherrie and Dale Kearney started Monkeys and More, to produce the unique sock monkeys. They figured they were on the right track when the sock monkey was sold within minutes of opening their new website. The rest of us were surely convinced when the company had to shut down the website after being swamped with orders when they unveiled their new Canada 150 sock monkey on CTV Morning.

As Sherrie continues to expand their business, she has designed special sock monkeys to help others, like her Justin Trudeau sock monkey, auctioning them off to raise funds for Christmas Daddies.

I ask the members of this House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Sherrie Kearney on her success and thank her for paying it forward while she works to grow her business.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**WEEKS FAMILY - WALLACE RIVER GOLF COURSE:  
GRAND OPENING - RECOGNIZE**

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Today I stand to recognize the Weeks family on the grand opening of the Wallace River Golf Course. They have spent the last 15 years developing and maintaining this beautiful hideaway in Cumberland County. It's a wonderful addition to our community and to the recreational and social opportunities in the area.

The Weeks family designed and constructed this golf course themselves and it is located on the beautiful Wallace River. With its beautiful landscaping, the Wallace River Golf Course is a challenge and it's enjoyable.

I respect and admire their hard work as a family, and I look forward to the future of the Wallace River Golf Course.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

**CLIFTON, GINA/POSH PEPPERMINT HOME & GIFTS:  
NEW BUSINESS - CONGRATS.**

HON. RANDY DELOREY: New business in a community is a sign of growth, prosperity, and strength. I'm proud today to congratulate Gina Clifton on the opening of her new store, The Posh Peppermint Home and Gifts at 200 Main Street in Antigonish. Gina worked very hard all summer transforming her new space to a beautiful store and had her grand opening on August 24, 2017. She offers a wide range of items, everything from greeting cards and jewellery to quilts and baby products and other items for your home. Since her opening, she has continuously been updating her merchandise and making every customer feel welcome. It's not hard to tell that a lot of thought and care goes into every detail and display.

Mr. Speaker, it's great to see another new business on Main Street in Antigonish, and I wish Gina and her family nothing but great success with the new business.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**TRENTON MINOR SPORTS COM. CTR.: RINK STAFF - THANK**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, keeping ice in good condition is a very difficult job. That is something that manager Darryl Marcott and the rink staff at the Trenton Minor Sports Community Centre can be proud of. They continue to achieve a standard of ice maintenance, not to mention a very clean and welcoming environment. Visiting teams, players, coaches, and referees rave about the great ice surface that is always ready for them. A good rink is one where rink staff and rink users work to make it happen.

The Trenton Minor Sports Community Centre continues to be an important social centre in the community. The staff's care for this facility speaks volumes. A job well done.

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

**MULGRAVE MACHINE WORKS: COMMIT. - RECOGNIZE**

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Small Business Week, I would like to take the opportunity to recognize Mulgrave Machine Works, an established metal fabricator and custom manufacturer with over 45 years of industry experience. Located in Mulgrave, MMW proudly services its various industries including the onshore/offshore oil and gas, light/heavy industrial, and marine sectors across the globe.

Since its humble beginnings in 1969, MMW has experienced tremendous growth locally, nationally, and internationally. In 2004, the company expanded to a larger and more modern location within the Town of Mulgrave. This investment demonstrates the company's commitments to its customers, its employees, and its community in an ever-changing global marketplace. They are proud of their local community and are one of the area's larger employees.

I ask the members of this House of Assembly to join me in thanking Mulgrave Machine Works and all our small businesses across this great province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**MCGRAIL, MATT/LAWSON, IAN/BRIGHTWOOD BREWERY:  
EXPANSION - CONGRATS.**

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, as this is Small Business Week, I would like to recognize one of my favourite small businesses in Dartmouth North, Brightwood Brewery. Started as a labour of love by Matt McGrail and Ian Lawson, Brightwood produces incredibly high-quality and delicious beers in the basement of a home on Brightwood Avenue. They sold their first growler in July 2016, at the Alderney Landing Farmers' Market and haven't missed a market day since. Brightwood beer can also be tried on tap at a number of downtown Dartmouth restaurants.

The love affair continues and the business is growing and Brightwood has just announced that they will be expanding, opening an onsite brewery and pub alongside Lake City Cider House on Portland Street in Dartmouth. Although this means that the business will be moving to Dartmouth South, Dartmouth North can proudly boast as the birthplace of Brightwood Brewery.

I ask the House to join me in congratulating Matt, Ian, and the whole Brightwood team for their excellent beer and wish them all the best as they build and expand their business.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

**REDMOND, WYATT/BEAVER ENVIRO-DEPOT: SUCCESS - CONGRATS.**

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Small Business Week to highlight another successful story in my constituency: Wyatt Redmond's business, the Beaver Enviro-Depot in Spryfield. Wyatt is a proud business owner, father, motorcyclist, and member-at-large of the Spryfield Business Commission. He's involved in his community and recently hosted the second Spryfield Business Commission monthly morning mixture for local business people at his depot.

Wyatt is a recognized local leader in recycling and waste management, a strong supporter of the buy-local and sell-local initiatives, and just recently marked 38 years in the business. Almost four decades in any industry is an impressive feat, especially so when that industry is reducing waste and improving our environment. I know Wyatt is immensely grateful for his community's support over the years and has no plans to slow time any time soon.

Please join me in congratulating him for his decades of success and celebrate all the small and local businesses that make our communities great.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**KENTVILLE PEEWEE AAA WILDCATS - ATL. BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIP: QUALIFICATION - CONGRATS.**

MR. JOHN LOHR: The Kentville PeeWee AAA Wildcat team is one of two teams from Nova Scotia that qualified for the Atlantic Baseball championship playoffs. There was a total of eight teams from four provinces who qualified for the challenge. The tournament for 12- and 13-year-old boys took place September 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> in Moncton. I wish to congratulate coaches Don Mailman and Trevor Croteau and the 12 members of the team on their excellent accomplishments and wish them well in their future endeavours.

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

**MACDOUGALL, LAURA - HELPING HANDS DOULA: VOL. WORK - THANK**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: I would like to recognize Laura MacDougall of Prospect Bay. Laura has her own business, Helping Hands Doula. She is a birth and post-partum doula and a breastfeeding specialist, and has been trained in miscarriage support. As a mother of three young boys herself, Laura provides other new mothers with vital support and advice, giving them confidence and encouragement to be the best parent they can be to their children. Laura offers regular free breastfeeding support to new moms at the Prospect Road Community Centre, giving mothers helpful hints and instilling them with confidence. I'm proud to have Laura, her husband, Joel, and their sons Nolan, Cody and

Avery, as members of our community and would like to thank her sincerely for the volunteer work she does in the local area.

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

**WATSON, DAVID/SEARS, ROWAN - WBCSC JR. SOFTBALL WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP: SELECTION - CONGRATS.**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, after the Under-18 Men's Canadian Championship last August, a regional selection camp was held in P.E.I. to determine the final roster for the 2018 WBCSC Junior Men's Softball World Championship in July in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Approximately 200 athletes tried out, and 26 were selected to represent Team Canada. Nova Scotia will be strong in the representation in next year's world championship, with Milford's David "Bubba" Watson and Brookfield's Rowan Sears. Both young men are players for the Colchester Royals. I wish to extend congratulations to David Watson and Rowan Sears on earning a spot on Team Canada and wish them and the entire team the best of luck at the 2018 WBCSC Junior Men's Softball World Championship.

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

**ROBBINS, KIM - FAIRVIEW-CLAYTON PK. RIDING ASSOC.: DEDICATION - RECOGNIZE**

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: I rise today to recognize Kim Robbins, the President of the Fairview-Clayton Park Liberal Riding Association. Through this thriving organization in our community, Kim works tirelessly to ensure that each community member is given the opportunity to meet their elected representatives through various events that bring our community together. Kim is well regarded by everyone who comes in contact with him and his warm manners. Kim always has a story to share and is always willing to help those in need. Even with his busy schedule, he is always at every event in the community, helping out various organizations.

Without the help of Kim, the Fairview-Clayton Park community would not be as strong as it is today, and we are so grateful to have a leader with the passion and experience that Kim exemplifies. I ask that the members of this Legislature join me in recognizing the dedication of Kim Robbins to the Fairview-Clayton Park Liberal Association.

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

MS. ALANA PAON: I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.



MS. PAON: Today in the audience we have the honour of receiving Mr. Alex Garcia-Quintero, academic coordinator of bilingual programs for Medellin, Colombia, as well as Mr. Carlos Moncada, an international student agent with Study Union. These gentlemen are here as both chaperones for the students, as well as helping to promote the international student program in Colombia. Les damos una calurosa bienvenida. I ask Mr. Garcia-Quintero and Mr. Moncada, as well as Mr. Chuck Boudreau, who is the manager of international student programs for the Strait Regional School Board, to please rise and be received and welcomed by the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly. (Applause)

[1:45 p.m.]

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

### **STRAIT REG. SCH. BD. - INTL. STUDENT PROG.: STUDENTS - WELCOME**

MS. ALANA PAON: I rise today to acknowledge the International Student Program within the Strait Regional School Board. It started this school year by receiving 97 students representing 20 countries from around the world. The SRSB is once again the board with the highest percentage of growth across the province within the Nova Scotia International Student Program.

This year, the SRSB for the first time is hosting nine public school students from Medellin, Colombia. This is the first and only time that the public school students have been funded by the government of Medellin to travel outside of the country to develop their English language skills. I am happy to hear that all nine students attending school at Richmond Education Centre Academy and Strait Area Education and Recreation Centre have settled in with their host families and have been enjoying activities like attending their first hockey game.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the parents who have opened their homes to these students and I would like to welcome all international students who are visiting the Strait Area Regional School Board and the Province of Nova Scotia as a whole.

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

### **HAGS ON THE HILL: SMALL BUS. WEEK (2017) - RECOGNIZE**

MR. HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Small Business Week to recognize and congratulate the Hags on the Hill for another successful season. Hags on the Hill is an artisan's co-operative located in Peggy's Cove on beautiful St. Margaret's Bay. Lodged in the oldest building on the Bay and close to Canada's iconic lighthouse, the Hags on the Hill offers authentic Nova Scotian crafts, including silver jewellery, glass art, woodworks, acrylic and watercolour art, leatherworks, fairy doors and much, much more.

Led by Head Hag Debbie Crooks and consisting of 10 women plus one man - fondly named Hagard - the Hags on the Hill is representative of the authentic, non-contrived nature of Nova Scotia's craft industries, which are obtaining global attention and acclaim.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Hags on the Hill, as well as all of Nova Scotia's entrepreneurial-minded crafts folks.

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

**FULTZ HOUSE SOC. - 35<sup>th</sup> ANNIV.: VOLUNTEERS - RECOGNIZE**

MR. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I stand today to extend a sincere congratulations to the Fultz House Restoration Corner Society who celebrated their 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary last evening during their annual Heritage Dinner. The society, who maintains the Fultz House Museum, which has become the keeper of the heritage for the communities of Sackville, Beaver Bank and Lucasville, also maintain a beautiful flower garden on site, which is used annually by residents for both weddings and graduation photography, as well as their annual weekly luncheon.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like members of the Legislature to join me today in recognizing and thanking all those community volunteers who have dedicated many hours over the past 35 years and who have helped the society to reach this significant anniversary.

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

**EARTH ELEM. SOAP CO.: SUCCESS - RECOGNIZE**

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Earth Elementals Soap Company on the success of their small business venture. Earth Elementals is run by a mother-daughter combination, Lynn and Jennifer, from Hammonds Plains, who started the soap company in 2007, to offer a safer alternative to commercial body care and cleaning supplies.

Earth Elementals soap is suitable for anyone's needs from those committed to maintaining a healthy lifestyle and environment, people who are challenged with chemical sensitivities and allergies and those who appreciate the moisturising healing properties of quality, natural, handcrafted soap and body care products. You can find them online and at the Halifax Seaport Farmers' Market on Saturdays year-round. Along with their line of soaps and cleaning supplies, they offer candles and even toxin-free products for dogs.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the House of Assembly to join me in recognizing Earth Elementals Soap Company for their initiative and wish them all the success in their future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**INFLUENZA: VACCINATE - INFORM**

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to encourage all MLAs here in the House of Assembly and all people throughout Nova Scotia to get vaccinated against influenza. The flu vaccine provides protection to you, to your families and most importantly, to the immuno-compromised in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage anyone who is unsure if they should get vaccinated to understand that if you are not protected, you are not protecting others. Remember, it's not about me, it's not about you - it's about helping those in our community who need to be protected. Encourage everyone to get a flu shot.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

**HAUGHN, PETER - LUNENBURG DEP. CAO:  
RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.**

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Ditto to that statement. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate Peter Haughn on his recent retirement. Peter spent 35 years working for the Town of Lunenburg as Deputy CAO. He has worked on various projects for the town, including being involved in the process of having the town declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Peter has been witness to a lot of change over the past 35 years with the Town of Lunenburg, most notably the increase in communication that the town has had with the public. With advancements in technology, Peter has noted that there are more demands on local government than there were prior to the onset of emails and computers.

In his retirement he is looking forward to spending time riding his mountain bike, working in his garden, as well as enjoying time spent with his family.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you and the members of this House of Assembly please join me in congratulating Peter Haughn and wish him nothing but the best in his retirement.

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

**PENROSE, BEN - HFX. WEST WARR. HOCKEY:  
CAPTAINCY - CONGRATS.**

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ben Penrose on being named the captain of the Halifax West Warriors hockey team.

Ben has played for his high school hockey team for the past three years, and this season, to no surprise, he was given the title of captain of his team.

Ben has been playing hockey almost his whole life. Not only does Ben show tremendous ability on the ice, but he is a natural leader to his fellow teammates, making him the perfect fit as a captain. This season the Warriors will be in great hands with the help of Ben as their captain and we wish them the best of luck in their upcoming game.

Mr. Speaker, will the members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Ben Penrose for being named captain of the Halifax West hockey team.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South on an introduction.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to introduce to the House someone sitting in your gallery, Mr. Steven Myers, who is the Progressive Conservative Member of the Legislature for Georgetown-St. Peters, Prince Edward Island and a past Leader of the PC Party of P.E.I.

I'd like him to rise and I invite all members to give him a warm welcome. (Applause)

He is joined today by his son, Luke, and I say that because Luke is in Grade 12 at home in P.E.I. and he is here looking at places to go for his first year next year and I hope all members give him a warm welcome to the Nova Scotia Legislature as well. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

### **ELLIOTT, WENDY: JOURNALISM CAREER - RECOGNIZE**

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize ace reporter Wendy Elliott of the *Kings County Advertiser and Register*. For over four decades, Ms. Elliott has used journalism to bring people together and to make her community an even better place to live. She has documented the successes and struggles of local residents, brought light to important issues, and ensured that local history is not forgotten.

Her efforts have been recognized by numerous awards and accolades and have positively impacted the lives of so many community members.

Wendy has recently decided that it's time to step back from full-time journalism although residents can still look forward to her column in the local paper.

I ask the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating her on a tremendously successful career thus far and commending her for her deep commitment to celebrating, informing, and entertaining our community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**BOB & THE BOYS MARKET: SMALL BUS. WEEK (2017) - CONGRATS.**

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, Bob and The Boys Farm Market is a multi-generational seasonal operation that has found success in the offering of fresh local produce, friendly staff, and a great location in Hebbs Cross. Those of us who live on the South Shore know it's Spring when all of our wonderful farm markets open for the season; Bob and The Boys is no exception. From strawberries to blueberries, ice cream to all the fixings for hodge podge, Bob and The Boys has it all.

During Small Business Week, I'd like to congratulate the Hebb family for the many successful years they've enjoyed operating their farmers' market and I wish them all the best for future success.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

**LYNN, MAKAYLA: ALBUM RELEASE - CONGRATS.**

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate East Hants teenager Makayla Lynn who has just released her newest album, *On a Dare and a Prayer*. This album, with 11 originals, shows her ability as a songwriter as well as a co-producer.

The recent issue of *Rolling Stone* magazine had a top 10 list of country artists who you need to know and Makayla Lynn was included in this quote: "Lynn isn't old school, but she's not new wave either - leave it to a teenager to find a sweet spot in the middle."

This young singer recently opened for Sons of Maxwell at the Waverley Village Green Summer Concert series, as well as the kickoff for Tide Fest.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

**ANTIGONISH C OF C - EXPORT REC. AWARD:  
NOMINEES - CONGRATS.**

HON. RANDY DELOREY: During Small Business Week, the Antigonish Chamber of Commerce hosts its annual Antigonish Business Gala and Awards Night. The Chamber asks for nominations from the community for its five awards.

Mr. Speaker, the Chamber's Export Recognition Award recognizes the success of a business that has taken on the challenge of expanding its market outside of Nova Scotia and has entered new markets for exporting its good or services. This year, nominees for the export recognition award are Bio-Innovations and Ocean Lab IT, or Dragon Veterinary.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the nominees for this year's export recognition award. Finding new markets outside of our province is no easy task, but it is smart and can have big benefits. I'm pleased to see two Antigonish businesses being recognized for their success in exporting.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

**BEDFORD BAP. CHURCH: 118<sup>th</sup> ANNIV. - CONGRATS.**

HON. KELLY REGAN: I would like to congratulate Bedford Baptist Church on 118 years of serving our community. Bedford Baptist has a very active congregation. They're always putting on a musical, doing something for someone, or raising money for a worthy cause. They run a radio station, and they often have family movies on the weekend. Some of the kindest, most thoughtful people in Bedford go to this church.

On September 24<sup>th</sup>, a special anniversary service took place at the church on the hill, as it's often called. Parishioners planted a tree in commemoration of the anniversary and to celebrate Canada's sesquicentennial. I would like to take a moment to congratulate the leadership and congregation of Bedford Baptist Church on 118 years of service to the Bedford community and beyond.

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

**HENNEBERRY, TIM: MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS - RECOGNIZE**

MR. GORDON WILSON: At this summer's Scallop Days Rendez-Vous 2017 Tall Ships Regatta, Tim Henneberry was one of the many vendors there selling his line of Fog Off Clothing. Mr. Henneberry founded Fog Off Clothing in 2014, in part to raise awareness for mental illness. He has since formed relationships with the Canadian Mental Health Association and several different mental health associations across the country.

The name he chose for his line of clothing refers to his belief that no one should have to travel down the foggy path of mental illness alone. The company's logo is designed to grab people's attention in hope of starting a conversation about mental health.

I would like to recognize Tim Henneberry's efforts in trying to start this conversation. I would also like to thank him for his contributions to mental health initiatives in our area. Mr. Henneberry contributes a total of 10 per cent of the profits of his sales to such initiatives in the area where he sells his Fog Off Clothing.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

**AWAD, MICHELLE: ATL. LITIGATOR (2017) - CONGRATS.**

HON. LENA DIAB: I would like to congratulate Halifax Armdale resident Michelle Awad, Q.C., on being named Benchmark's Atlantic Litigator of the Year for 2017. Michelle is recognized annually in LEXPERT's guide to leading lawyers, and has been named one of Canada's top 25 women in litigation for the past three years.

Michelle was acknowledged as 2013 Atlantic Female Litigator of the Year and Halifax Insurance Lawyer of the Year and received the LEXPERT Zenith Award. She has been recognized as a leading woman lawyer in Canada. Michelle is a partner at McInnis Cooper, serving on the board of directors, past president of the Nova Scotia branch of the Canadian Bar Association. She has recently been inducted as a fellow of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers. She has represented numerous clients in all of the highest courts of Canada.

I ask all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Michelle on all her accomplishments in law and applaud her for serving as an inspiration to future lawyers.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, may I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. LEBLANC: I would like to introduce in the west gallery my mom, Barbara Leblanc. She will soon be joined by my father, who is parking the car. They're from Prospect Bay, Nova Scotia, very proud supporters of all of their children and excited to see me in my new theatrical adventure. Welcome to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much for those great members' statements.

[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.: PROCUREMENT POLICIES - PUBLIC REVIEW**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday in this House, the Minister of Internal Services said that the government has procurement processes that are very in-depth and that they “. . . follow procurement law to the letter.” I’ll table that quote from Hansard.

It seems very odd, since a freedom of information request confirms that the government has gone around its own procurement laws over 9,000 times since they took office in 2013, and I will table the list of exemptions the government has provided to itself from its own procurement laws. I’d like to ask the Premier, why does this government claim to be following the letter of the procurement law when they exempted themselves from that very law over 9,000 times?

THE PREMIER: As the minister would have said yesterday, we would follow all of the protocols and procedures required when it comes to making sure that we get the best value for dollar, and I think that demonstrates what a very active government we’ve been.

MR. BAILLIE: Yes, indeed, they are very active. The Minister of Internal Services also went on to say the procurement processes have a “. . . strict policy of being as open and transparent as possible and all of our RFPs and awards are posted.” So, let’s just see how active the government has been in its purchasing.

Among those 9,000 items: \$5,400 so that the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage could buy three paintings; \$8,389 to the Liquor Control Board of Ontario for “food and drink”; and \$135,000 to consultants in Ontario and B.C. so that the Premier could design his made-in-Nova Scotia carbon pricing law.

I’d like to ask the Premier, in light of these revelations, will he concede that his strict policy on procurement is, in fact, not very strict at all?

THE PREMIER: I am assuming, by the beginning, that he doesn’t believe that the government should buy any art from Nova Scotians. I’m assuming that’s what his assertion is in the first example. But I want to tell the honourable member, which I have said from the very beginning, I make no apologies for this. I’ve gone out to hire the best help that I could get, and if I need to hire that outside of this province, to ensure that when our



government goes out, whether it's in negotiations, whether it's ensuring that we deliver good public policy, we're going to do that.

The fact of the matter is, in four short years, we took a \$500 million deficit, provided two consecutive balanced budgets, introduced pre-Primary programs, made sure that the most vulnerable citizens of our province were treated properly, and we're going to continue to go looking for the proper help, so that Nova Scotians finally get the government they deserve.

MR. BAILLIE: Let's just examine further whether this government makes good use of taxpayers' money, when they exempt themselves from their own purchasing laws, or not, because additional purchases made by a sole source outside of the public tendering process are: \$8,500 so that the Department of Natural Resources could sole source a pregnant reindeer - I don't know what the market price for a pregnant reindeer is, but it seems like a lot to me - and \$50,000 to a company called Laughtersize Seminars, which offers, "A unique combination of music, humour and audience participation . . ." to their clients, which apparently include the Government of Nova Scotia. We could all use their services right now as we see the use of taxpayers' money.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

MR. BAILLIE: I would like to ask the Premier, will he commit to a public review of his government's purchasing policy, when they exempt themselves from their own laws, and make that report public?

THE PREMIER: Again, I want to thank all of my colleagues for the hard work they're doing on behalf of all Nova Scotians, to continue to deliver the government. To respond to the first example he had around the reindeer, it's a great example of getting two for one.

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

### **PREM.: MINIMUM WAGE - INCREASE**

MR. GARY BURRILL: I'd like to direct my question to the Premier, it's about the minimum wage. Yesterday, the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education publicly characterized people making less than \$15 an hour as teenagers and young adults just starting out, as only temporarily in a low-wage position.

But we know that 70 per cent of minimum wage workers are not people who live with their parents. All of us know people like Simone Maillet, who has worked at the cafeteria at Université Sainte-Anne for 41 years and makes \$14.32 an hour. Do people like Simone Maillet fit into the Premier's picture of low-wage workers in this province? Or does he agree with his minister that it's all okay because they're mostly just kids?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As he knows, we've had this discussion I think in every Question Period since this session started and I'm looking forward to continually reminding him he voted against the budget that took 60,000 Nova Scotians off the tax roll - those are low-income Nova Scotians, middle-income Nova Scotians.

He voted against the budget that would have given a \$3,000 increase to the basic personal exemption, Mr. Speaker, for low-income Nova Scotians; he is voting against pre-Primary which would allow 75 per cent of children, four-year-olds, some of whom come from low-income families, access to a play-based, evidence-based program that would give them a better look to their future; and he has voted against every rent supplement that we've had in this province for low-income Nova Scotians, as we reduced the wait-list for affordable housing by 20 per cent.

We're going to continue to work with Nova Scotians in every category to ensure that this government continues to write public policy that reflects their concerns, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BURRILL: Tax reform and educational policy and social housing policy, these are all questions for the debates of another day. Today I'm asking the Premier about a \$15 minimum wage.

Just recently 40 leading Canadian economists joined together to write an open letter explaining that a \$15 minimum wage does not impede job growth, because it increases the customer base for the things that businesses have to sell.

Mr. Speaker, how does the Premier think our economy in Nova Scotia can prosper when 130,000 people - that's just short of one-third of our province's whole workforce - are making under \$15 an hour?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Again, I want to tell him that this is a philosophical difference between the honourable member and myself.

The fact of the matter is that we believe there's a better way to leave more money in the hands of low-income Nova Scotians - we've increased the basic personal exemption and that means those making the least amount of money in this province are getting the largest benefit from that.

If you look at the investments we've continued to make, we increased the HARP program so that 5,000 more Nova Scotians will have access to support when it comes to heating their homes. The list continues to go on.

I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is when that government had an opportunity to be in power to move this province forward, they ignored the challenges being faced by low-income Nova Scotians. The economy suffered. They gave more corporate welfare I believe than any government in the history of this province. Where were the social values when they had an opportunity to actually do something for Nova Scotians?

MR. BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, we are not interested in a demonstration of the Premier's abilities as an historian. We are interested in the question of \$15 an hour as the minimum wage.

Now this government in four years has increased the minimum wage by a grand total of 55 cents an hour - that works out to around 14 cents a year. At this rate, it will take 30 whole years for Nova Scotia to reach a \$15 minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, does our Premier really think it's acceptable to tell the people of the province that they should wait until 2047 to have a \$15 minimum wage?

THE PREMIER: What I think is important, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that we had an opportunity to ensure that the most vulnerable in our province were treated properly - every piece of public policy reflects that.

I want to remind the honourable member, again, 5,000 Nova Scotians now have access to HARP; I want to remind the honourable member, rent supplements, affordable housing for low-income Nova Scotians; I want to remind him, again, 60,000 more Nova Scotians do not pay tax.

Let me be very clear about this, Mr. Speaker, when that Party had an opportunity to improve the lives of Nova Scotians, what did they do? They became paralyzed by the opportunity and they handed corporate welfare out in this province like it was candy and they forgot about those people who require the support of government.

They talked about it time and time again, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is they were paralyzed, we acted. (Applause)

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

**PREM. - NSHA: PURCHASING POLICIES - PUBLIC REVIEW**

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Can we get back to the pregnant reindeer, Mr. Speaker? It was much more fun. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Internal Services claimed that the government had a strict procurement policy, one can only wonder if she was also counting the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

Last week I asked the Premier if he could name the external agency that the Health Authority has engaged to recruit doctors. I asked him that because the Health Authority refuses to tell the public who it is.

I will say, Mr. Speaker, that we now know that it was NATIONAL Public Relations. They may be a great PR firm, but they are not specialists in doctor recruitment. Perhaps that's why the Health Authority didn't want to tell us.

I'd like to ask the Premier, since he agreed he would check into this, if he can explain to this House why the Nova Scotia Health Authority refused to tell Nova Scotians who they had engaged to recruit doctors. Was it because it's a public relations firm and not a doctor-recruitment firm at all?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to continue to remind him, on this very important issue, that the current budget that he voted against provides funding to provide 70 collaborative care centres across the province and allow us to have access to primary health care teams in communities that require them.

He would also know that there are 10 additional residency seats on top of the 35 that are currently at Dalhousie. On top of that there will be 10 residency seats that will allow - in terms of allowing foreign-trained doctors to get Canadian credentials and be able to operate in this province.

Yesterday I was very proud of the Department of Immigration, which has worked with the Health Authority to go to the U.K. to continue to attract and retain more physicians. We know there's more work to do, and we'll continue to do so.

MR. BAILLIE: Mr. Speaker, the Nova Scotia Health Authority claims to have complied with the government's purchasing rules - the rules that the Minister of Internal Services says are so strict. That's odd, since there is no record of a publicly posted competition for the important work of hiring an agency to recruit doctors - and now we know why. It's not a doctor-recruitment firm at all. It's a public relations agency.

What could be more symbolic of the way the health system is being run than that they hire PR people when we need more doctors?

I'd like to ask the Premier, if he won't commit his own government to a review of the purchasing, will he commit to a public review of the purchasing policies of the Nova Scotia Health Authority and tell Nova Scotians what's really going on over there?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to thank all those hard-working public servants who are working with our government to continue to ensure that we provide those services to Nova Scotians.

We put an RFP out looking for bids across the province. We want to thank all those across the country and all those who continued to apply for those bids.

We're going to continue to make sure we provide the most cost-effective way of providing services and goods to Nova Scotians. I'm very proud of the work that our government has been doing, and I'm really grateful to be given the privilege to continue to do it.

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

**PREM. - RENT CONTROLS: HANDS-OFF APPROACH - EXPLAIN**

MR. GARY BURRILL: My question, on the subject of rent control, is for the Premier. Rents have gone up 10 per cent in Halifax this year. The city is now on the list of the top-10 most expensive rental markets in the country. Average rent for a two-bedroom apartment across the whole province has now gone over \$1,000.

The Premier has dismissed our Party's rent control proposal, but how does he think our economy can prosper and function when here in the HRM alone there are 42,000 households paying more than 30 per cent of their income in rent?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. It's unfortunate he didn't realize this was a problem when he was in government and he was sitting on the \$40 million that the federal government transferred to this province for housing.

While they were paralyzed, in 2013 we started to use rent supplements that provide low-income and medium-income families with access to affordable housing. We know that across the province - some of our constituencies are not served by this area. There are challenges around affordable housing as well. We know there's a required investment in the housing stock that we own as a province, that the public of Nova Scotia own. We're going to make that investment. The budget he voted against had money to continue to make those investments.

Again, I want to remind the honourable member that while he was paralyzed, we're acting on behalf of Nova Scotians.

MR. BURRILL: Once again, the Premier's dubious skills as an historian are not being upgraded during Question Period.

I want to return to this subject. In dismissing our rent control proposal, the Premier said publicly two days ago that the thing that should set the price for rent is the market, and that we need to make sure property investors are making money.

Quebec doesn't think this. That's why they brought in rent control and Ontario doesn't think this either. That's why rent control is being implemented there. Can the Premier offer any evidence from anywhere for his view that a hands-off approach by government can solve the problem that we've got 42,000 households in the HRM paying out more than 30 per cent of what's coming in just for their rent?

[2:15 p.m.]

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again, I want to thank the honourable member for his question. We're going to continue to make sure that those vulnerable families, those Nova Scotians who require affordable housing are going to have a myriad of options to access housing, whether it is with subsidy to a rent, whether it's a fact of working with the private sector to build affordable housing in communities across this province, or whether we continue to invest in our own housing stock to ensure that we have many options in many of our communities across this province.

The fact of the matter is, this is a philosophical difference between the honourable member and myself, but the fact of the matter is, his bill that he's referring to, has not made a lick of difference for any Canadian but I want to remind the honourable member, this is the fact. We are helping Nova Scotians now find themselves into affordable housing. I want to remind the honourable member we've reduced the wait-list by 20 per cent that was under their government, and we're going to continue to reduce as we go forward.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

#### **INT. SERV.: SIERRA SYS./FLEXTRACK - EXPLAIN**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: My question is for the Minister of Internal Services. Yesterday, I mentioned that Sierra Systems was awarded a tender for \$3.8 million, a tender that we've now come to learn that we've paid \$7.3 million for, and that number will continue to climb. We also learned that for the same projects Sierra Systems also received \$1.7 million in contracts awarded through alternate procurement practices. Now, a FOIPOP request reveals that Sierra Systems received an additional \$43,000 for that same project, \$43,000 that we didn't initially know about because it was wrapped up in payments made to Flextrack. The department already had multiple agreements with Sierra Systems including a seemingly wide-open tender. Why did the department need to use the cover of Flextrack to pay more money to Sierra Systems?

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: I'd like to thank the member for the question and I'd like to reiterate my statements from yesterday in that our government is dedicated to being

open and transparent and we use our procurement processes in their entirety including alternate procurement process, following that law, the law it falls under. In terms of alternate procurement, there are many reasons why: emergent situations, specific situations and I will table for the member the use of our procurement protocols which detail why these would be the case.

MR. HOUSTON: The same IT helpdesk application involved another tender awarded to Livus Consulting. That tender was awarded for \$300,000 but Livus Consulting ultimately received \$535,000 for that tender, again, almost double. I feel like I'm repeating myself, Mr. Speaker, but a FOIPOP reveals that Livus Consulting received an additional \$32,000; \$32,000 that we also didn't know about initially because it was also wrapped up in Flextrack. So, if we're really interested in openness and transparency, my question for the minister is, will the minister promise to table in this House a full listing of all contracts that her department has awarded through Flextrack?

MS. ARAB: I'd like to thank the member for the question. Flextrack replaces many of our traditional government procurement standing offers and I'd be happy to table the most recent report that we've had.

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

#### **H&W - GRAHAM, JACK: LABOUR NEG. - EXPERTISE EXPLAIN**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, while we're on the alternate procurement run, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. A FOIPOP revealed that on March 27, 2015, the Department of Health and Wellness applied to the Department of Justice for permission to retain private legal counsel. The Department of Health and Wellness needed a lead negotiator for physician compensation negotiations with Doctors Nova Scotia and decided that the expertise was not available within the legal services division for this purpose. The application was signed by the Deputy Minister of Justice approving \$150,000 for Jack Graham to act as lead negotiator.

With all the labour negotiations that this government has engaged in, I'm surprised that the expertise could not be found within the Public Service. Could the Minister of Health and Wellness tell the House what expertise did Jack Graham provide that the government did not already possess?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for the question. As the member would know, as you would know, Mr. Speaker, and as others in the Legislature would, if they look back at the negotiating process with Doctors Nova Scotia, the bargaining agent on behalf of physicians throughout the province, the member would realize that that was an agreement that was ratified in 2016. We know we have a number of other collective agreements that are outstanding, and work is continuing internally. Again, I think the work

that was done by Mr. Graham, and the negotiating team and the supports, certainly helped us achieve our outcome, which was to get an agreement with Doctors Nova Scotia, that had about an 86 per cent vote in favour by physicians. I think that's a job well done.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: A second FOIPOP revealed that on March 27, 2015, the Department of Health and Wellness applied to the Department of Justice for permission to retain private counsel once again. The Department of Health and Wellness needed a lead negotiator in physician compensation negotiations with Doctors Nova Scotia and cited that legal service lawyers were not immediately available to do the urgent work. The application was signed by the Deputy Minister of Justice, approving another \$440,000 for Jack Graham to act as lead negotiator.

To recap, we have two applications for two different amounts for two different reasons, but the applications were on the same day for the same person to do the same job. Did the Minister of Health and Wellness need private counsel because of the lack of expertise as the first application stated, or was it an urgent need as the second application stated, or did the government decide that it was just going to give Jack Graham \$440,000 and figure it out when they could sit down and talk about it?

MR. DELOREY: I thank the member for the question. As I stated, as you and the members of the Legislature would know, Mr. Speaker, the negotiations within the health care system are complex. That's an approach that was ongoing. Of course, the importance of our primary care providers, including physicians, is paramount to ensure that our health care system continues to operate through the negotiation process. Part of that is the team that was negotiating on behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia. Indeed, that's on behalf of the people of Nova Scotia, the taxpayers of Nova Scotia. They achieved an agreement that received about 86 per cent support by the physicians of the Province of Nova Scotia. (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness has the floor.

MR. DELOREY: As I said, that resulted in an agreement between the Province of Nova Scotia and Doctors Nova Scotia, which resulted in ratification by about 86 per cent of the physicians of the Province of Nova Scotia. That is a job well done.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**EECD - LEMARCHANT ST. THOM. ELEM. SCH.:  
REPLACEMENT DELAY - EXPLAIN**

MR. TIM HALMAN: My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. This week, we learned that the replacement for the LeMarchant St. Thomas Elementary School in Halifax has been delayed to 2019. The department



concluded that enrolment would be higher than expected because of local demand for the French Immersion program. The secretary of the school advisory council said that demand was clear and that the department's small enrolment numbers never made sense, and I'll table that. My question is, why was the department unable to accurately project enrolment before promising families a new school?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: In fact, enrolment numbers are projected by the boards. It was the board who projected the original number, and then they came back and said that they thought the number was going to be much higher than it was. We have evaluated those numbers, and it does look like there is going to be an additional 100 students going into that school. The same issue happened in Yarmouth, in my own constituency. We had to have a delay because there was an increase in enrolment at a school that wasn't projected. The fact of the matter is, these schools are going to serve our communities for generations. We want to make sure they're built to the proper size so they can do just that.

MR. HALMAN: Government committed funding to this new school eight years ago, yet hundreds of families are still waiting. Now students are crowded in a facility that's over capacity. There's no art room, no music room, and the EXCEL program is impacted. There is also not a proper gymnasium. There simply isn't enough space at this school. Does the minister believe that it's fair for students to shoulder the burden of government's mismanagement?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mismanagement would be doing what that member has asked us to do, to build a school that isn't at the proper specs. We're actually taking our management position very seriously and ensuring that the school we build, which is going to serve that community for at least 30 years is built to the proper size, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how anyone in this House can argue the logic of that.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

### **TIR - NEW SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION: DECISIONS - EVIDENCE**

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is for the Minister of TIR. Time and time again the Premier tries to argue that his government only makes decisions based on evidence; however, I think this argument is lost on all those communities in need of a new school who are no doubt frustrated to learn that new schools would be built in the ridings of the Premier and the Deputy Premier. This, despite the evidence provided by the School Evaluating Committee that suggested that these two new schools were not a high priority.

I ask the minister, can he explain how the decision to build two new schools in the ridings of the Premier and Deputy Premier was evidence-based?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. She is referring to my constituency, Mr. Speaker. I know she is a new member to the House. The fact of the matter is that the school approved for my riding was approved by the New Democratic Party when they were in government. The fact of the matter is if she followed the process it was on the list. If she goes back to the school in Tatamagouche it was approved in 2008.

What she should be appreciative of, Mr. Speaker, is that we're actually acting and getting the job done.

MS. LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, there could very well be reasons, good reasons for those schools in those ridings, but the point is we don't know them because the process is not transparent. I think as the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal or the Premier, the members opposite should be taking the lead to ensure that the decisions about public infrastructure are open and transparent - getting a new school should not depend on whether or not you live in the Premier's riding.

I ask the minister or the Premier, would he not agree that it is time to take the politics out of the school capital planning process?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure whether she was suggesting that by her Party approving a school in my riding they were trying to buy my seat - that actually didn't happen; it didn't work.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, we continue to move forward, continue to invest in schools across this province. I'm very proud of the work we've done. She would know that the school board would put those in a priority - and I would encourage her to pick up the phone and call the Annapolis Valley School Board; I would encourage her to pick and call school boards across this province about the boards on the list.

To the honourable member, it was on the list.

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

#### **JUSTICE - NAVIGATOR ST. OUTREACH PROG.: FUNDING - ASSIST**

MR. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, through you I ask the Minister of Justice - on Tuesday this week Halifax Council voted to provide additional funding for the Navigator Street Outreach program. As *allNova Scotia* reported, the program cost \$90,000 a year and a recent report showed that last year it helped over 220 people. The program funds a social worker who assists people by way of clothing, training, helping with damage deposits, bus tickets, utilities, et cetera. The Department of Justice used to provide a series of grants to help pay for this program, but have recently stopped.

My question is, does the minister see the merits of this program and does he agree that the province has a responsibility to assist in its funding?

HON. MARK FUREY: I thank my colleague for the question. As he would know, being a former municipal councillor, the relationship between the municipal and provincial government is absolutely essential to find progress and advancements in program delivery and services to our communities.

I applaud the Halifax Regional Municipality for continuing the support of the program. We certainly support the program but, more importantly, we support the roles that our municipal governments are taking in providing lead responsibilities and ensuring the programs continue.

MR. JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for the comments. Of course, the number of people who are in dangerous and inadequate housing, along with those being forced onto the street, continues to grow. Halifax now is one of the 10 most expensive cities in Canada to live and the cost of a one-bedroom apartment has risen by more than 10 per cent in the last year. I will table an article that was in *Metro*.

It has become harder and harder for people to find good jobs, and without a roof over their head it is even harder. All these factors contribute to making programs like this even greater.

My question is, will the minister commit to restoring funding that once was provided by the Department of Justice towards this program?

MR. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, again I agree with the circumstances that my colleague has presented. This is a very worthwhile program, but what's not lost is the relationship between municipal and provincial governments and municipalities taking a lead role in continuing to provide services. They recognize the challenges that we all face, they have found room in their budget, I applaud them for that and we will continue to work with them wherever we can.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**JUSTICE: WATERVILLE YOUTH DET. CTR.  
- SAFETY CONCERNS**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Minister of Justice. The 19-year old who had Waterville Youth Detention staff terrified, is now reportedly back at the Waterville facility. Earlier today I tabled a petition expressing local citizens' concerns. Earlier this session I asked the minister about the Waterville Youth Detention Centre being prepared to have this person. At the time, the minister reported being 84 per cent complete on the recommendations stemming from the last event this offender triggered.

My question for the minister is, since the offender is now back at Waterville, can the minister inform this House if the remaining 16 per cent of those recommendations were completed?

[2:30 p.m.]

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, what I can share with my colleague is that we continue to work on those recommendations. One of the ones that I am most familiar with is the CCTV system. When we spoke last, that equipment had been on order; we now know that equipment is on site and we're waiting for the service provider to do the installation.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for that answer. Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Section 82, which I will table, a violence risk assessment is required in circumstances of significant change in the workplace or if the interactions that occur in the course of performing work change and I've just tabled that. I think in the opinion of the citizens of the Valley this offender's presence there would be very significant.

My question is, the minister has an obligation under the Act to keep staff safe - has a violence risk assessment been done for the reintroduction of this offender?

MR. FUREY: Mr. Speaker, shortly after the incident, the Director of Correctional Services himself initiated a process to review the circumstances of that event. It aligned with all of the Occupational Health and Safety requirements. There were a number of recommendations, 42 categories, 103 recommendations came out of that. My understanding as of today is that 91 of those recommendations have been implemented.

We continue to work on ensuring the Waterville facility is safe for both young persons and employees who work there. There is a process, internal responsibility system, that allows for that to happen. We encourage employees to engage managers so those issues and concerns can be advanced through that system.

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

**H&W - COLLABORATIVE CARE TEAM (C.B.):  
EXPANSION - UPDATE**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. In June 2016, with great fanfare and just a few days before hundreds of people gathered to talk about the lack of doctors, this government announced an expanded collaborative care team for Cape Breton. It was a \$400,000 announcement to recruit two doctors, a nurse practitioner, a family practice nurse, a dietitian and one other member that would be named at a later date.

Mr. Speaker, the question I have for the Minister of Health and Wellness is, can the minister update the House on the number of positions that have been filled for this collaborative health care team?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. As the member would know there's ongoing work recruiting throughout the province, for primary care providers. A big part of that initiative is providing opportunities and supports to attract and provide opportunities in collaborative practices. That includes supporting individuals who provide the primary care services and supports.

The opportunity and the ability to work together to provide those primary care services, which is a new way of practising in the relative context of primary care services, that also includes in some cases as in Cape Breton, providing investments for an actual facility. The work for site location for a facility just outside the Sydney area is ongoing.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I think the member would know that there are 100,000 Nova Scotians who need a doctor today. Not a year ago, not two years ago - today.

On April 17<sup>th</sup>, this very government had another announcement in Sydney that they would be getting two nurse practitioners and two family practice nurses. According to the Physician Opportunities website, this week in Sydney alone we need four family physicians, four psychiatrists, three pathologists, one respirologist, one paediatrician, one infectious disease specialist, an ophthalmologist, a radiologist, and a child and adolescent psychiatrist - just in Sydney.

Will the minister tell the House if the Sydney collaborative care facility is ever going to be staffed? What is he doing to fill the rest of these positions?

MR. DELOREY: I appreciate the member's question. It gives the opportunity to highlight the many good things being done with respect to recruitment across the primary care services (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness has the floor.

MR. DELOREY: That includes investments that we have made in our budget to provide opportunities to expand the residency program and to introduce a clerkship program for third-year medical students that will encourage them to work. That's a program dedicated to Cape Breton in the early stages. Our announcements just went out yesterday. For the first time ever, the Nova Scotia Health Authority is partnering with our Office of Immigration to attract international professionals, physicians (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness has the floor.

MR. DELOREY: This work complements the commitment we made in our budget to provide an international medical graduate practice-ready program for assessment in Nova Scotia. These are all things moving forward (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg will come to order.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

### **NAT. RES.: FOREST MGMT. - PUBLIC CONFIDENCE**

MS. LISA ROBERTS: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Today outside this House, the Healthy Forest Coalition is holding a forest funeral rally. Woodlot owners, forestry workers, scientists, Mi'kmaq people, grandmothers, and more people are marching outside Province House to send a message to all elected officials that they want to see an end to irresponsible wholesale clear-cutting of our forests.

I ask the minister, will she admit that the people of this province have no confidence in the ability of this government to manage our forests?

HON. MARGARET MILLER: I thank the honourable member for the question. I certainly was aware of the event today and respect the public's passion about our forests in Nova Scotia. It certainly makes me feel very good to know that people are very passionate about our resources, as is our department. We have biologists and forest management specialists in our department and hundreds of very qualified men and women who make sure our forestry resource is looked after.

Beyond that, the reality is that 80 per cent of our land base in Nova Scotia is forested in one way or another. Only 1 per cent of our resource is used every year, and actually we have more land forested in Nova Scotia now than we had 100 years ago.

MS. ROBERTS: Land that is forested "in one way or another" is not necessarily suitable for wildlife habitat, economic activity, or ecological, environmental, and social values. That is what the people outside are saying.

One way to increase public confidence is to take the management of Crown land out of the hands of the department and place it within community. The Natural Resources Strategy called for the establishment of community forests on Crown land. That has led to the development of the Medway Community Forest Co-op, which is trying to develop a

long-term plan to manage the working forest and nurture forest-based businesses that support the local economy.

My question to the minister is, when will we see the next community forest in Nova Scotia?

MS. MILLER: The Medway forestry co-op is certainly a great venture, and they have been doing really great work, but they're not the only ones. If you look at the Crown land base in Nova Scotia, about a third of the land base in Nova Scotia is Crown land. Of that, almost 13 per cent is either protected or nearing protection. That only leaves a small resource that is actually Crown land that is still forested and subject to the regulations surrounding that.

We have an integrated forest management program that outlines that decisions are made based on science and evidence. We will move forward with that same procedure to make sure that our resource is sustainable and remains sustainable.

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

### **H&W: DOCTOR RECRUITMENT - TIMELINE**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness.

We hear the minister reply time and time again about what they're going to do in the future, yet there are 100,000-plus Nova Scotians who do not have a doctor today. He keeps on saying, we have a plan. That government promised a doctor for every Nova Scotian.

What the people of this province and the people of my constituency want to know - when are they going to be able to have a doctor? Not six months down the road, not a year down the road, Mr. Speaker. They need a doctor today.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: As the member would know, my comments aren't about what will be done a year from now, six months from now. Mr. Speaker, what I was explaining in a previous response, in a previous discussion, was actually what we are doing today, what we are doing right now, actively, with the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

I mentioned what we did in our budget, Mr. Speaker, which that member and his Party voted against. He voted against new residency seats in Cape Breton, in the Sydney area, dedicated to bring physicians to his community and that member and his Party voted against it. That has happened here, now. (Applause)

MR. MACLEOD: Yes, what I voted against was a bunch of hollow promises that were put forward by a government that doesn't care for the people of the Province of Nova Scotia, that don't care about how to get health care. I voted against an incompetent government that does not do what they said they were going to do. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, that member and that government promised over a year ago for a collaborative care practice in Sydney; this year they promised nurse practitioners and family practice nurses; they promised a doctor for every Nova Scotian and it is not happening. So the question is, when? When will the people who need a doctor today be able to finally get the service they richly deserve from this government?

MR. DELOREY: I thank the member for both his question and his passion on the floor. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite just indicated that he voted against - I believe the comment was "incompetence." Well I think the majority of people in Nova Scotia disagree with that member's opinion, putting this government back into power for a second term in office, the first time in decades that we got back-to-back majorities. (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness has the floor.

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, if the members on this side of the aisle are incompetent, then I wonder what that member thinks of the people of Nova Scotia who put us back here again. (Applause)

MR. MACLEOD: I hear what the minister has to say and he's bragging about the majority they have. You know what, Mr. Speaker? They haven't used it to help the people of the Province of Nova Scotia. In their election campaign, they made promises about the health care system in this province. This same government has not delivered on those promises.

You tell me, when you have a lady who can't get a mammogram, when you have a doctor's office that can't take any more patients - we're supposed to say they're doing a good job? I would like that minister to tell the people of the Province of Nova Scotia just exactly what we're supposed to do when we need the services of medical professionals in this province.

MR. DELOREY: I thank the member for the question. Again, Mr. Speaker, as the member would know, there are fantastic services being provided by the men and the women on the front lines of our health care system. The doctors, the nurse practitioners, the family practice nurses, the RNs, the LPNs - these people are providing fantastic services for Nova Scotia from one end . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: You're not doing a great job. They are.



[2:45 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

MR. DELOREY: These front-line health care professionals are providing fantastic services to Nova Scotians from one end of the province to the other right now. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I will not tolerate any more disrespect for the Chair.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness has the floor.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They're providing great services from one end of the province to the other. The commitments that we make - we continue to work with Nova Scotians. We've invested in over 2,000 additional orthopaedic surgeries since coming into office, and we've just committed more money to provide additional services.

We're moving forward with investments in our mental health services to improve those services for Nova Scotians. We continue to deliver on behalf of all Nova Scotians.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I just want you to know that that Health and Wellness Minister couldn't deliver a pizza, let alone good health care.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to ask the honourable member to retract that comment. I found that disrespectful.

The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg has the floor.

MR. MACLEOD: Out of respect for you, Mr. Speaker, I'll certainly do that.

Mr. Speaker, I am a product of the health care system, and there's nobody who knows more about how professional the health care professionals are in this province than I do. But I also know that there are hundreds of doctors and nurses across this province who are speaking out about the need for extra help because they cannot continue on in the pressures that have been put on them by this government.

Instead of singing his platitudes, would he please tell the doctors, the health care professionals, and the people of Nova Scotia, when is he actually going to do something real instead of making hollow announcements?

MR. DELOREY: Again, I appreciate the member's question. The work that I've been doing since having the privilege of taking my position as the Minister of Health and Wellness for the Province of Nova Scotia - I've reached out to front-line health care workers to hear directly from them and see what their concerns are. I have to tell you, Mr.

Speaker, that in not all cases are those concerns that I'm hearing from health care professionals the same as the Opposition are bringing to the floor of this Legislature.

I continue to listen and we continue to work together to move our health care system forward on behalf of all Nova Scotians. That's the commitment I make to Nova Scotians and the front-line health care workers. I continue to do so.

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

### **COM. SERV. - SENIORS' HOUSING: FUNDING PROMISES - FULFILL**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: The Westmount Manor in Bridgewater is a public housing unit that is designed for seniors. They've been promised a lot of things by this government. At the present time, they're living with dirty floors, mouldy floors, broken tiles, cobwebs, and broken doors and latches - I think it's probably pretty much the same as many seniors' housing units across the province.

My question to the Minister of Community Services is, has the minister allocated any funding this year to fulfill their promises to the residents of these facilities?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. In fact, we are investing quite a bit of money in our seniors' facilities, making sure that the physical side of those buildings are taken care of.

We've gone and done an assessment of the buildings and we're working through the list to make sure that those are brought up to speed.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, these are seniors who have worked and contributed their whole lives and find themselves living in a facility that gets a lot of promises from government but not many deliveries. Seniors living in a government-operated facility deserve better than this, as do all seniors.

The government has been promising an updated Continuing Care Strategy since 2013. This strategy is really late. I know it fits into the mandate of the Minister of Community Services. Will the minister tell members of this House and those living at Westmount Manor and many other manors across the province if their facility is part of the plan for the new Continuing Care Strategy, and when they will see their promised upgrades?

MS. REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I do want to be very clear with him: if there are any concerns that he or any member has about public housing or seniors' housing in their particular area, I would ask that they please bring them to my attention. I have directed our Housing Nova Scotia staff and the folks in the authorities to make sure that they . . .

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

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Public Bills for Second Reading.

### **PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 39.

### **Bill No. 39 - Financial Measures (2017) Act.**

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

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: I am delighted to have a chance to finish my brief remarks on the Financial Measures (2017) Bill. Members, like the member for Halifax Atlantic, will know that when I left off on the previous day, on this bill, that I was making the point that this government pats itself on the back for the way it's running our province. But when you're charging the highest taxes in the country and you're taking away such important services as family doctors, and other things, making the books balance is no accomplishment at all. To have charged people so much, to have dug so deep into their pockets, and then not provide even the basics of health care services, is nothing to be proud of; in fact, it's shameful.

I made the analogy - and I want to repeat the analogy right now for the benefit of all members, but particularly for the benefit of the member for Halifax Atlantic who seemed to be particularly interested in my analogy. If you imagine McDonald's and they decided that their business plan was to charge the highest prices for their hamburgers in the country and they were then going to take their hamburgers and they were going to take the beef out, and maybe leave the people with just a little bit of bread, say, for example, maybe a little lettuce on that bread, they may balance their books in the short term, I think we all know. Would that be a good way to run a company? No. That company would be headed for bankruptcy pretty quickly, if they were to charge the highest price for their hamburgers, and then sell their hamburgers by taking the beef out.

I say that, because in the provision of government services, it is health care, and particularly family doctors, that are the beef that Nova Scotians expect from their government. That's the problem, that the government thinks it's an accomplishment to sell

their hamburgers at the highest price, but then to take the most important ingredients, like the beef, out of those hamburgers - I know that analogy sunk in on the government side, because I was in receipt of an example of what I was talking about here in this House the next day, which I really appreciate.

To drive the point home, about the way this government runs health care, it's like a company like McDonald's that actually sells their hamburgers at a very high price and then takes the beef out.

I would like to table, for the benefit of the House, an example of what I'm talking about. I'll give this to the Page to table. I do hope that it gets back, I do hope that it gets back . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition that that's not a table-able piece. I'll classify that as a prop. But, if there is something in there, I'll take it down to my office, and deal with it later.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

MR. BAILLIE: It's also a day old, I don't recommend you taking it down to your office. But, you know, in a lot of ways, it is like the way this government is running the province, because we all know where hamburger comes from, and that is a big pile of bull, and that's exactly what the Financial Measures Act represents to us. So, with those few words . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, I'm going to take parliamentary offence to that phrase as well, and get you to rephrase that or retract it. And I'd like to also take the opportunity to remind the honourable Official Opposition House Leader that there's no eating in the Chamber.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

HON. JAMIE BAILLIE: Thank you for your ruling. What I mean to say is, this government's budget comes from the same place as the hamburger in a McDonald's Big Mac.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: It's my pleasure to say a few words on the Financial Measures (2017) Bill too. If we're thinking about the hamburger in a Big Mac, one thing I can say is, unfortunately, that hamburger probably doesn't come from Nova Scotia. In fact, if we look at the last four years that this government has been in power, and we start to look at some of the agricultural statistics for the last four years, we realize that things have changed

in agriculture in the last four years, and not for the better, despite what the Ivany report said that we should be doing.

In the latest census, the 2016 Census of Agriculture reports that the total number of farms in this province is down by 10.9 per cent. Actually, I was shocked when I read that statistic, because I didn't see that happening. It happened very quietly and I will say it didn't happen in our neighbourhood. My friends - most of my friends - are still in business, so I didn't see it right in Kings County. But I'm sure that it happened equally everywhere and it's a shocking statistic from what was in 2009 when this government came to power.

I distinctly remember hearing the minister say that we were one of the very few provinces in the country that had an increase in the number of farmers. In fact, at that point, that was true. There was a very small increase in the number of farmers in Nova Scotia, but we know now that in the last four years we've lost 10.9 per cent of the farms in Nova Scotia. We're down to 3,478 farms. Not only that, but we've seen the same decrease in the number of farm operators, and I will table this. We've seen an 11.4 per cent decrease in the number of farm operators. We've seen a 12.9 per cent decrease in the number of male farm operators and a 6.6 per cent decrease in the number of female operators. In fact, we know that the new face of farming is as much female as male, so we've had more females come in than males. But we've still lost females operating farms in Nova Scotia.

So, where is the beef? In fact, the beef industry is a good one to talk about in terms of this. Where goes the beef industry? We know that there was a decline in the amount of hay growing in the province at the same time. In fact, that same statistic says that there was a 4.8 per cent decrease in cropland, a 20.8 per cent increase in pasture land and, also, woodlands were down 10.5 per cent on farms. So, we've seen decreases in the total area that was farmed in the province, decreased to 915,000 acres. We know that the amount of arable land, the amount of land that could be farmed in this province, is approximately 2.5 million acres and we know that we're seeing a decrease in the amount of land farmed and, really, the decrease is in the number of people operating farms. It's a very significant decline.

Now, my county, Kings County, I'm very proud to say has a land preservation Act, to keep agricultural land in production. To my knowledge, there's no other county in the province that has that and, I mean, I'm all in favour of keeping land in production but, in fact, we're seeing the decrease in operators, the decrease in people wanting to farm is very significant and very troubling for our industry. As I said, I didn't see it happening but it happened very quietly and is a very real result. Statistics Canada is very aggressive in collecting their information. I know over the years that I was farming I'd have to do reports every now and then for Statistics Canada and they were unrelenting. If I didn't fill that report in, they would call me and, if I didn't do it, then, they would call me again if I said I'm too busy right now. I know some of the members across have dealt with them on that, I can see a head nodding. They're unrelenting. They get their data.

This data is very, very disconcerting and it says something about what is happening to the province and we know that the province peaked in beef, since we started talking about beef. The total number of cattle, there was approximately 340,000 in about 1925 and, today, we have slightly less than 50,000 head of cattle in the province. I would call upon the Minister of Agriculture to deal with this issue of the decline in the number of farms, in the decline of agriculture. It's one thing to be talking about just that decline if it wasn't the statistics are even more troubling than simply saying we had a decline. The reasons for the decline I think are more troubling, and that is the fact that farmers are not making money.

[3:00 p.m.]

I've heard the Minister of Agriculture say on a number of occasions, how the first time he talked to the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture - and I think I might have even been there. I can't remember. I heard stories so many times. Maybe I was there. Maybe I wasn't there. It's like the family vacation, one year kids didn't go on. After a while, they start to believe they were there. So, maybe I was there - but he said that he wanted them to make money. Well, I would agree.

In 2013, when the Minister of Agriculture came into his portfolio, the total realized net income for farms in Nova Scotia was \$53 million and, actually, when you change an inventory into account, it was actually \$55 million total net income for farms. In 2016, the total net income for all farms in Nova Scotia was \$3.158 million. In other words, every farm put together in the province, every farm that made money, and the farm industry lost money. That is Statistics Canada's latest information. To be honest, I'm shocked at those numbers.

The numbers are even more troubling than that when you think about the fact that a very large proportion of our agricultural is quota industry, which is broiler chickens, eggs, dairy, and turkeys. With quotas and supply management, those industries are very, very stable. So they would not have seen any drop in their income. In fact, I know that some of those sectors are doing very well and have done very well over these past four years.

If you think about the fact that the real core of our agricultural industry has continued to do very well, that is very troubling about the rest of the group, if you know what I mean. The other commodity groups in that mix had to have done extremely poorly for the whole thing to be dragged down to that level.

I want to say, and I believe that all three Parties would agree with me - we support supply management in this province. Our Party supports supply management. I would have love to have had the opportunity to be a farmer in supply management. If I was, I probably wouldn't be here. I would probably still be doing that. It has been very profitable, those supply-managed industries.

Those supply-managed industries are the backbone of our farming industry here. They keep our fertilizer plants and our tractor dealerships in place. They keep our seed salesmen going around the province. They have given such continuity and strength to our industry. I want to make that clear.

When we look at that stat, and we know that the aggregate was -\$3 million, then somebody lost a lot of money in the last year, I can tell you that. I know that it wasn't the guys in the farms, the men and the women who are farming chickens or eggs or dairy or turkeys. That probably accounts for nearly half of the dollars in the province. I'm just guessing on that number, but it's a lot.

Then you think, okay, what about the rest of them? What is this government doing to address the decline in the blueberry industry in this province? We brought in a bill about buying local. I know that there's an immense amount of blueberries produced in this province. It probably has more to do with what happens in China than buying local in reality.

I know the minister has made a number of trips to China. It probably has to do with whether we got a more favourable tariff. Apparently, blueberries from Chile have no tariff at all going into China. Our blueberries going into China face a 100-per cent tariff. The minister has been to China a number of times. Did we get that tariff fixed? That's a question. We need that tariff fixed if we want to compete. If our blueberries are \$1 a pound - I'm just making up a number - and Chile's are \$1 a pound, Chile can send them into China for \$1 a pound. Ours are \$2 a pound when they land, just by comparison. That's what that tariff means for the Chinese purchaser. It means that our blueberries are extremely uncompetitive in that area.

What about the mink industry, which has seen serious declines? That's probably another factor in that number. Whither goes the mink industry, we all know that there are massive international forces at play there, really. What kind of a winter was there in China? Was it a cold winter or a warm winter? That makes a difference on the mink industry. What's happening in Russia? Was it a cold winter or a warm winter? Were oil prices up? If oil prices are up, Russians have more money. Strangely, Russia is one of the leading exporters of oil in the world. It has immense reserves of oil. Oil prices being down hurt the Russians' ability to buy furs. The mink industry is subject to massive global swings in trade. That's a big factor in the change in that number, I know.

Another big factor is the vegetable industry. I have talked about the vegetable industry at length here. In these statistics, we have seen a 14 per cent decline in the vegetable area grown in the province in the years - a 14 per cent decline. It's a big number. That's more than the number of farms that declined, so more people were getting out of vegetables or cutting back on vegetable production.

I think we all get the argument about why local breweries are good if you have a local brewery versus a large multinational. The multinational ships the beer in and very little of that money stays in Nova Scotia. If you have a local home brewery, it's sticky money - it sticks around. It's very good to displace those imports with local product. That's true in vegetables too. It's very sticky money when a vegetable producer in Nova Scotia grows that crop - there's a lot of money spread around and the reason is because vegetables are a very labour-intensive crop. In any vegetable crop, there's a very high labour component in that. That means local labour, that means people eating and buying cars and spending their money in town.

That's why that's a very troubling trend to me and all of those things are things that I don't see the minister addressing in this budget. I think the budget is very focused on certain industries, but we've seen declines across all of our agricultural industries. I think we need to rethink how we're doing that. These are very, very troubling trends in these statistics. It's going the other way, and there are many other issues in that.

Another issue with the budget which I highlighted before is my deep concern about the fact this government has not adequately spent its capital and infrastructure budget in the Department of Health and Wellness. I mentioned that a couple of weeks ago - that every year for the past four years it's been underspent by 50 per cent and that number now is approximately \$80 million accumulating over four years of money not spent on the capital items.

I asked, when are we going to see a realistic budget? If you knew you were going to underspend it each year by that amount, why not just put in the budget exactly what you thought you really were going to do? But they're not doing that, they continue to present that number as \$35, \$40 million and spend \$17, \$18 million. They continue to present the number in the same way.

As I mentioned earlier, I think the reality is that number is subject to the tyranny of the urgent - the most urgent things are getting done and important things. It's always that dilemma in our running a business or a household - the urgent versus the important. We used to describe it on our farm as, are you working on the business or in the business? I'd be working in the business when I was packing cabbage or packing onions or whatever I was doing, I had my hands right in there. When I was sitting back thinking about where we were going and was this the right thing to be doing and planning, I was working on the business.

We need the government to be working on the business and making plans that come to fruition, and we see with this government announcement after announcement with nothing ever happening. We just went through Question Period where a number of things that were announced a year ago, or a year and a half ago, have not come to fruition because the announcement was made obviously with inadequate planning. I don't believe anybody makes an announcement knowing full well nothing's ever going to happen.



I think the announcements are likely made in good intent, but if there is not adequate planning in that announcement, then why make the announcement? If one thing or another happens, and that never happens then I would suggest we all look bad when an announcement is made and nothing ever happens. We can go through the capital infrastructure budget and go right through that list. I can recall in 2013, dialysis being announced for Kentville in a press release. I was delighted to see that. In fact, dialysis for Kentville was in the next year and the next year and the next year - and in fact it's been announced again. I hope this time it really will happen.

One of my colleagues said, John, you should put a press release out about dialysis happening and I said, well, I would, but I don't know if it will or not because we've had that announcement four years in a row and it still hasn't happened. So, planning put into announcements would make a difference I think in the credibility of the government on some of these things. Maybe that's just a little bit more work, but I would say, do your work then - like, get that done.

I would say that to the Minister of Agriculture, and in fact I recall saying that in the Spring when we were talking about bees. It wasn't until the beekeepers themselves came down and protested and were shown on the front page of *The Chronicle Herald* that the next day the minister shut the border to Ontario bees. Thank goodness he did, because the New Brunswick beekeeping industry now has to deal with the very pest that we wanted to keep out. Unfortunately, that very pest is now in Aulac, not very far away, and it's apparently very mobile. It can fly 10 or 15 miles.

It's unfortunate what New Brunswick did. It's fortunate that the minister did make that decision, but it was pressure that did it. We seem to see that time and time again, that this is how decisions get made.

I want to bring public pressure to the fact that let's do what we have to do in health. Let's have the infrastructure and maintenance budget spent in health. If anybody thinks that there aren't huge infrastructure and maintenance deficits in our health care system, I think you'd have to get out a little bit more and take a look.

I think these things are a factor in the working environment for all of our hard-working doctors and nurses and maintenance staff. All those people who work for us, the government, and for the people of Nova Scotia, deserve to have a good working environment. I'm very concerned about that in the budget.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, with those - I'm just going to say what I really wanted to say today. I've said that, so with those words I'll take my seat. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the members who spoke and shared their concerns.

We believe that this budget we have introduced is good for Nova Scotians. It makes significant changes in our tax. It adds money to both Education and Early Childhood Development and Health and Wellness, which are the two largest departments within government.

With those few remarks, I would say that we close debate on Bill No. 39.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 39. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Private and Local Bills for Second Reading.

### **PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 30.

### **Bill No. 30 - Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 30, an Act Respecting the Roman Catholic Archdiocesan Corporation of Halifax-Yarmouth and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth, be now read a second time.

This bill has the purpose of reorganizing the civil structure of the Roman Catholic Archdioceses of Halifax-Yarmouth. In accord with the proposed Act, the Archbishop will have the power to establish a parish as a separate corporation. Real and personal property held for the use and benefit of the parish and related liabilities will be vested in the parish corporation, which will thereafter have the responsibility for its management.

The existing Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Halifax will be renamed, as per the bill, and continue to hold and deal with archdiocesan property, business, and temporal affairs that are not attributable to any particular parish.

Mr. Speaker, those are my remarks for the second reading of this bill. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 30. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Private and Local Bills.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The House will recess for a few minutes while it resolves itself into the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

[3:14 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft in the Chair.]

[3:24 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

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

THE CLERK: That the committee has met and considered the following bills:

**Bill No. 17 – Solemnization of Marriage Act.**

**Bill No. 19 – Consumer Protection Act.**

**Bill No. 29 – Marine Renewable-energy Act.**

without amendments, and

**Bill No. 33 – Gas Distribution Act.**

which was reported with certain amendments by the Committee on Law Amendments to the Committee of the Whole without further amendments and the chairman has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Public Bills for Third Reading.

### **PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 10.

### **Bill No. 10 - Municipal Government Act and Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I move third reading of Bill No. 10, the Municipal Government Act and Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

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

MR. BRAD JOHNS: I think most of what's before us today is actually pretty good. It's well called for, and I think most of the municipalities across the province would see it as a move forward.

As was brought up during debate at Law Amendments Committee, I am somewhat concerned that it doesn't quite go far enough, as it could. It doesn't identify what the consequences are. I think that it's unfair to leave some of these things up to municipalities to make the decisions on. They continue to say that they would like some more guidance on those things. It doesn't say what the consequences are to somebody not following the code of conduct or if a member decides to not want to sign it.

In the past, there has been a number of questions around codes of conduct in municipalities being used as a gag order and to keep members quiet. I know there has been some reluctance on behalf of councils and councillors across the province to actually sign a code of conduct because of that. Although this bill goes forward and strengthens municipalities particularly around the expense policies and practices, it doesn't lay out and

highlight what those consequences for (a) not signing the code of conduct or (b) not following it.

Of course, as most of us know, if an elected official makes a decision or does something that goes against the code of conduct, where they are an elected official, municipalities' hands are somewhat tied. They can't really remove the person from office. They can't really fine the individual. There are some things that could happen that I think would make this bill a little bit better.

The other concern that came out as well is the fact that although it does talk about elected officials and CAOs, it probably could go a step further, as was suggested, and look at all senior managers, particularly in regard to expenses. I have suggested that it is a really good bill around the fact that it does lay out the hospitality and alcohol expenses that municipalities could have to report, but it doesn't go far enough. Where it only highlights CAOs and elected officials, it should probably go into senior management as well as that.

Finally, one final concern around the bill was in regard to if the CAO or CFO who have the signing responsibility to sign off on these things are friends. As we have seen in some other organizations, sometimes that could cause a problem if the CAO and CFO are friends too.

Other than that, I do think that overall it is a step in the right direction, particularly given some of the issues that some municipalities across this province have faced over the last number of years. I do feel that the majority of the bill goes forward to show transparency for municipal governments, and I think that's what residents want, to ensure that there is transparency and accountability.

I do support those parts of the bill, but I do think that it could go a little bit further.

MR. SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I would like to take a moment to make a few comments. First I want to thank the member opposite for his comments.

I want to take this opportunity again to thank the JMAT Committee, a committee that was represented by the Department of Municipal Affairs, by the Association of Municipal Administrators, the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, and the village commissions. This is a step in the right direction. This is something that a tremendous amount of work went into to bring it forward to this House.

[3:30 p.m.]

In touring the province, I had the opportunity to have this conversation with many of the municipal units that have already started to establish these policies and are working with our department to make sure that they adhere to this bill.

I'm happy to stand in my place today as the minister and recognize the former Minister of Municipal Affairs for the direction that he established in ensuring that this came forward, and thank all the elected representatives across the province who, every day work hard to represent their constituents, who work hard to push the agenda for their communities, and who put their name on the ballots.

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing a few comments and I would like to now close debate. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 10. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 8.

**Bill No. 8 - Pre-primary Education Act.**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and pleasure that I move the passage of Bill No. 8, the Pre-primary Education Act, for third reading. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, former U.S. President Abraham Lincoln once famously said: "Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe." This quote obviously is in reference to the importance of planning and preparation. Certainly, as a former educator in the Nova Scotia school system, I experienced first-hand the importance of planning and preparation.

An idea is only as strong as its implementation. This is indeed a significant piece of legislation that will alter the public school program of our education system. It is critical that we get the implementation right. Early education is critical to the development of the child. Planning, preparation, and proper implementation, Mr. Speaker, is critical in the delivery of our education program. We only have to look at the implementation a decade ago of IB and O2 programs where timing was built in, capacity was built in, and even then, in the first few years of those programs, there were bumps in the road.

The factors of making sure proper planning is in place, making sure consultation takes place simply has not been the case in the rollout of pre-Primary. Those factors have been lacking from the very beginning with the rushed rollout of pre-Primary. Therefore, we cannot support a piece of legislation that places politics ahead of good education policy. We cannot support a piece of legislation that fails to take into account the impact on our daycare system, the impact on community groups, and fails to address the shortage of early childhood educators. Many of those issues could have been avoided if planning had been put in place. We cannot support putting more students into a system that is already in crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I am not opposed to pre-Primary in principle, but I am opposed to the implementation, the timing and messy rollout of this program which, some have noted, is simply a tactic by this government to distract Nova Scotians from the real issues that must be addressed now in order to create stability in the education system.

As I stated during second reading on Bill No. 8, is it right to add a new program to our public school program, when the system is already de-stabilized and requires the immediate attention and leadership of the government? Let's be specific, let's discuss education policy for a few moments. Rather than implementing pre-Primary at this time, the government should be devoting its energy and resources to addressing the gaps in our inclusion model, making that a priority.

Just the other day, I fielded a telephone call from a very concerned parent. This parent has two children with autism. The youngest has been identified, along with autism, with ADHD and phonetic challenges. It took two years for an evaluation through the school board. The parent had to pay for a private evaluation. That's not my Nova Scotia. The education system needs to reinforce the principle of equality of opportunity.

With all these challenges, there is also no program assistant assigned to these students. What is offered instead is release time from the class, to go to the learning centre. In my 13-year career as a classroom teacher, I saw time and time again inclusion simply being a theory, and not something that was emphasized in practice.

We need to get serious about that; we need to begin now; we need to make that a priority. We must emphasize it. So, therefore, what should this government be doing? They should be focusing on the inclusion model; they should be expanding and strengthening

EIBI. They should be working with school boards to improve communication with parents, so that parents understand clearly the expectations and outcomes on IPPs.

Teachers in our province support the principle of inclusion. What they need are more programming supports. They need better resources to implement the outcomes of IPPs. The money that has been invested, our priority would have been to invest that money into programming, in teaching assistants. There's so much potential for that role to assist our diverse learners.

At the moment, many of our program assistants, teaching assistants, what they receive for training before they go into the classroom is first aid, WHMIS, non-violent crisis intervention. Which is all very good, but we could be making strategic investments for them, so that they can deliver better programming for our students.

The list of identified issues in our education system can go on and on. I encourage this government to begin rolling up their sleeves and getting to work on those identified problems. If you take a look, and talk to teachers and parents, they'll tell you we need more mental health supports in all our schools, not just in the family of schools.

We need curriculum reform. I believe we need to strengthen our O2 Program by expanding more vocational options within that program. This I believe, would help address attendance issues that we are seeing specifically in our high schools.

I'm a firm believer, we need to strengthen the principle of equality of opportunity in our schools. In the span of my career, it was always very unfortunate to see students who were subjected to obstacles, who through no fault of their own, didn't have the necessary supplies or resources in order to achieve the outcomes.

The government's attention needs to be on the teacher shortage. In metro, we do not have enough substitute teachers. I will commend the government for the class caps. But again, they fail on implementation, not factoring in the operational impact of a policy - this goes along, as well, with the shortage of core and emergent teachers,

The emphasis of this government needs to be on repairing the severed and damaged relationships with its teachers, programs, and program assistants.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, only a few months ago, teachers and parents and program assistants were very vocal and they took to the streets in protest over the learning conditions in our classrooms. They were expecting action. They were expecting this government to get to work on addressing those issues.

I'm proud to say that I was a part of that educational unrest and I speak to the House not from the perspective of theory or any abstract notion of education, but I speak to the House from a place of experience that has allowed me to arrive at some fundamental



conclusions. One of those conclusions is that the people of Nova Scotia want profound education reform of our P-12 system. They do not want an implementation of a new program, at a time when our system is destabilized and in crisis.

I've learned also as a former classroom teacher, that leadership is about listening. It is about finding common ground and solving problems in order to maximize the common good. I suggest this government heed that advice, listen to Nova Scotians as to what they want you to emphasize in our education system.

I have great concern that this government has failed to listen to the 9,300 experts in the province, our teachers, and they have set out on a course that ignores problems in our systems that require leadership and action now. I cannot support a bill that introduces new programming when the timing is improper, when it has been poorly planned and executed and is being implemented at a time when Nova Scotian parents with students with diverse needs require our help and assistance now. Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four hours sharpening the axe. Planning and preparation is critical. I suggest this government reflect long and hard on the meaning of that statement and its significance to education policy in our province and, as a former teacher, I am more than happy to provide some extra help if you require understanding the quote. With those comments, I take my leave and hope this government rethinks its priorities as it pertains to education in our province. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the pre-Primary bill on third reading. There are a number of things that I'd like to say although I'll also point out that a number of things have already been said. I think we're all fairly clear on our rather universal disappointment, as the member for Dartmouth East pointed out, in a number of aspects of the way that this has come before this House: consultation, implementation, the impact on the overall child-care landscape, and a number of other areas. I'll go through those briefly.

In terms of consultation, the only thing we've heard about the pre-Primary bill is that there is consultation planned and, for a program that by the government's own admission is world changing for the four-year-olds of this province, it strikes me as odd that there would not have been any meaningful consultation undertaken before this bill.

Now, I don't have an analogy around sharpening an axe, but I do have an experience working in many, many, many settings as a facilitator of consultation processes and, you know what, they're hard. Consultation is challenging and it is of no surprise to me nor to anyone else in this House - many of you have been here a lot longer than I have - that a government might decide that it was expedient to remove that process when bringing a bill forward. It's the longest, it's the messiest, and it's the one that's most likely to challenge

the assumptions of the author of any project, because it necessitates that you hear dissenting views.

[3:45 p.m.]

As has been said in many different ways in this House at many different points of this debate, this is about education. That's what we do in education. We teach children how to listen. We teach children about how to have respectful debate and how to be open-minded. When we look around in the world today at the divisiveness and challenges that we face as a society, I would submit that the core skill that we need - especially in this House, but in our society - is the skill, the ability, the appetite for consultation.

Frankly, it's deeply disappointing that there was no consultation on this bill before it came before us - and leave the bill aside, there was no consultation on this program itself.

I'll move from there to implementation. I can't say a lot about implementation, because the implementation process was shrouded in secrecy. We were told nothing about the implementation or the start date of this program until it had already begun. Every single one of us in this House, I suspect, had phone calls from constituents asking us what was going on - many of whom were excited at the prospect of pre-Primary. They wanted their children to have access to education, but they had no idea.

You can imagine, and I can certainly imagine, as a parent, how unsettling that would be. To be told that there was a promise of this great hope for the future of our children - sign on the dotted line, but we can't tell you when it's going to start, we can't tell you what it's going to be like. Will there be washrooms? We don't know. Will there be furniture? We don't know. How many teachers? We're not sure. Just send your kids to us.

I submit this is a very sloppy way to go about instituting a program, particularly a universal program. Further to that point, I'd like to raise what clearly is a bit of a sensitive topic for the minister. That's the topic of inclusion, which my colleague touched on briefly. When I rose in this House to ask my very first question, I asked the minister how he could guarantee us that this program was inclusive when we know that we don't know how to do inclusion. This government has appointed a commission - by all means knowledgeable and expert - to spend a year figuring out how we do inclusion. We don't know how. This government created a report not a year ago that specifically said that the early childhood education program in this province does not do inclusion well.

Taking those two things into account, it's very difficult to understand how I could be accused of misleading this House and misleading the public by suggesting that this program may not be inclusive. Subsequently we've heard a lot of anecdotal evidence to say that it is, in fact, not inclusive.

I'll move from there to the impact on the child care landscape as a whole. As I just mentioned, we have a report that's very recent that tells us about all the gaps in early childhood education in this province. We have a number of challenges. The minister has repeatedly told us that there are only spaces for 25 per cent of children in this province to be in regulated child care. What the minister doesn't tell us is that by introducing this program at this time, in this way, those 25 per cent of spaces are threatened. We may have fewer than those in a month or in two months. We've heard this from early childhood educators around the province.

I'm not suggesting that we should inexorably delay a new program so that we can protect a particular child care provider's right to hang up a shingle and keep their space open. As a firm adherent to the notion of universal child care, I, unlike my colleagues, will reluctantly support this bill because I think at least it's a first step. (Interruption) I'm sorry to disappoint my colleague over here.

However, I'll say that we have grave concerns about the impact on the child care landscape. It's not just the number of spaces that are available but the ability for those few remaining spaces to stay open. That's about poaching staff; we don't have enough ECEs in the province. That's about children - because of the shroud of secrecy around which this program was launched, many of these child care providers were given less than a month's notice before whole cohorts of children were pulled from their programs. With more notice, they could have adapted their programming model. They could have provided wraparound care. They could have added more spots for infants, which I think is something that's very important. They weren't given the time.

Notwithstanding all of that, the early childhood educators and the daycare operators in this province are waiting for a new funding model. They have been waiting. They have been promised. Right now, as I've said on the floor this House before, they have a wage floor, and they have a fee ceiling. They have a specific amount of money that they are able to use to operate. In many, many cases around this province, those facilities are operating at a deficit. It's a deficit that has been imposed by this government because they have not introduced a new funding formula.

I would hope that this government would take the opportunity at the very earliest convenience to address the number of outstanding issues with the remainder of the early childhood education system.

I read over this bill again about 10 minutes ago in anticipation of this conversation, and something really popped out at me. I'm not sure if this has come to the attention of the members of this House, but as we all know, there's an administrative review going on of the entire education system. One of the rumblings we have been hearing, given this government's appetite for amalgamation, is that the results of this review may in fact be an amalgamation of the school boards.

I reread with interest the parts of this bill that give a great deal of authority to the minister to enter into agreements to run pre-Primary. I wonder if the minister might speak to this, and I suspect he will, when we close debate on this topic. I find it strange after we have heard so many times on the floor of this House about how the minister can't really answer certain questions because that's up to the school boards. It's up to the school boards to set wages. It's up to the school boards to decide a number of details in rolling out this program. Yet, will there be school boards there to administer it? It's kind of a brilliant strategy when you think about it. Give all the dirty work to the school boards, and then put them out of a job. Is that what's going to happen? Time will tell.

In closing, like the member for Dartmouth East, I would like to say that I also don't come at this issue from an abstract position. This isn't an academic exercise for me. I have three children of my own. One is in a regulated daycare, and two are in a public school in this province. I speak to teachers, early childhood educators, parents, and children every single day. This is my other job, as I like to say when I go home from here. For those of you in this House without children, I envy that you have one job, as big as it might be. But the reality is, this very much impacts my daily life and those of a lot of people around me.

Further, I have a nephew who lives with autism. He is so often at the front of my mind in these conversations, partly because he's related to me, and partly because we all know that it's through proximity that we often become sensitized or ought to become sensitized to the issues that are most important to us.

I will close by saying that as a mother, as a person, and as a member of the NDP, I support universal child care. To that end, I very much hope that this is a first step, but as first steps go, it's pretty flawed.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: It's a pleasure to rise today and continue this discussion. We started off talking about things that are sharp, sharp items, and what they might be used for. I was thinking about last night when the member for Halifax Chebucto referred to a colleague opposite's speech as being absent wisdom in that instance. It struck me as an expression that could be used quite frequently in this Chamber.

But in terms of sharp items and sharp, witty comebacks and things like that, everyone in this Chamber is trying to do that. There is something flattering about a clever, witty put-down. Nova Scotians have a great sense of humour and they appreciate sharp wit, but it was not lost on me that even with a stable of highly paid lawyers - paid for by the taxpayers - this government on this bill could only accuse me of saying something and then attach a clip to prove that I didn't say what they accused me of saying.

If this government can't even do a clever sharp cut at somebody without any degree of competence, how can we expect them to pass legislation that is competent? I look forward to educating our government on how to do these issues with some style and grace.

I do want to share something with the minister that I'm sure the minister probably doesn't know, and that is that back in 2010, the Kids First Association completed a study involving 16 communities across Canada. One community that took part in the study was the Pictou-Antigonish-Guysborough catchment area. In that catchment area, there were 14 schools at that time, the Celtic family of the CCRSB. There were also nine schools within the Strait Regional School Board.

The focus of this study was Primary students in the 2007-2008 school year. The study is an excellent one and the results of the study suggest, as we have been saying many times in this Chamber, that there are a number of problems that need addressing in the P-12 system and those issues should take precedence over the rollout of pre-Primary. That's basically what we're talking about here - prioritizing and looking at things that should take precedence.

Now here are a few of the findings of the study, Mr. Speaker, and they may interest the minister, if he is interested in a fact-based approach: 88 per cent of the kids in that Pictou-Antigonish-Guysborough area were deemed on track for language and cognitive development when they arrived in Primary classes - 88 per cent of them were on track when they arrived at school. The kids had above average scores on receptive vocabulary, number knowledge, and pre-literacy skills. The kids in this particular catchment area, the students in this area - there were fewer children with low scores on these three measures: receptive vocabulary, number knowledge, and pre-literacy skills. Those kids were above the average nationwide.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, in the area of language and cognitive development, 36 per cent of the kids were very ready for school, 52 per cent were ready, and only 7 per cent - I say "only", it's not the right use of the word only because 7 per cent were at risk and 5 per cent were vulnerable. Now of course nobody wants to see that in any children, but the vast majority were ready to enter school.

Now why do I share this, Mr. Speaker? Because once they are in the school system the numbers showed that by Grade 4, 2 in 10 - a full 20 per cent - required significant adaptations, required an IPP, required boosts to bring them closer to expected levels of academic performance.

Mr. Speaker, the problems grow as the kids grow through the education system. We need to address the issues that are in the system so that when they are in school they are getting the proper education that they deserve. We don't need to do it earlier - we need to fix what's there. That's kind of the main thrust of the argument I've been trying to make to the government and the government has not been receptive to that argument because

they have their own political agenda that they are putting in front of the education of children - and that's what this is all about. It's the typical bait and switch I referred to, or don't look here, look over there. Don't look at all the issues in the P-12 system. Look over here at pre-Primary.

[4:00 p.m.]

That is not good government, and it's not good for the education system. I would urge the minister to read this report. It's only 31 pages, and it will certainly give him some recent local statistics. It will probably open his eyes a little bit to the issues that we're talking about here.

Mr. Speaker, you may remember the Freeman report. It's another in the long line of reports that haven't gotten much airtime with the government. At the time of the Freeman report, if you look at the administration group, 72 per cent or 73 per cent of the people in the administration group thought that the programs being offered students in the school system were appropriate for preparing students for the next year or for life - 72 per cent of administrators thought the programs were appropriate for preparing students. If you go outside of the administration group and go to the teacher group, it's 52 per cent. Imagine that - 52 per cent of teachers thought that the programs being delivered in the school system are appropriate for preparing students for the next year. If you go one step further, I think you know what the results would tell you when you ask the general community. The Freeman panel found that 33 per cent of community members thought that the school system was properly preparing students for the next level. Those are pretty disturbing numbers.

The more disturbing part is that the government is ignoring those numbers. The government has an opportunity to look at the P-12 system, make the investments, make the changes, and improve those numbers. But instead, we haven't seen that. Instead, we have seen that discussion put off and another discussion initiated with pre-Primary.

I know that we're seeing that now even with the Commission on Inclusive Education. I do want to talk about the Commission on Inclusive Education a little bit. But we're now even seeing that the work of the commission, the topic of inclusion in general, is being pushed aside as school boards and administrators start to turn their minds to the review of the administration and governance.

There's a lot going on in education, and it's all just a big cover design for the fact that this government is not prepared to address any of the issues that exist in the system as we know it today. There's always something new being added just to confuse and distract. That's the real shame of it because things continue to get kicked further down the road.

I'm worried that the issue of inclusions and the work of that commission will get kicked further down the road as well. There's no word yet on the consultation process for

that Commission on Inclusive Education - no word on public consultations, no word on how you provide feedback to that commission, nothing. The minister is more interested in a headline than results. That is the real issue. It's hard to say that this commission will be able to do very robust work.

I hope they can, but there's a number of studies out there. Wayne MacKay's 2006 study on inclusion - I think he did that for New Brunswick - is a very powerful study as well.

We can talk about the Commission on Inclusive Education. I hope they do good work. Their final report is due in March, I believe it is. There's supposed to be an interim report maybe in January. But there's nothing on consultations yet. Where is that going to go? Now we have boards and administrators preoccupied with another study.

When I look at what's happening in the education file, I think about all the talk about the federal tax changes and the term that is now very common in the vocabulary of Canadians, income sprinkling. There's a lot of chat about income sprinkling. I look at this government and I see this government as in the business of effort sprinkling. They're effort sprinklers. They don't really want to roll up their sleeves and put the effort in on the major issues. They just sprinkle the effort around a little bit - a little bit here and a little bit there - without any progress, really.

The sad thing about that is that you have a little bit of effort sprinkling, a little bit of headline, and then you see everyone, the whole flock, come in behind. Sometimes it strikes me as a group of hypnotized chickens, Mr. Speaker, the way they operate.

The minister has said . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'm going to ask the honourable member for Pictou East to retract the phrase "hypnotized chickens." We'll add that to our list of unparliamentary references.

The honourable member for Pictou East has the floor.

MR. HOUSTON: So retracted, Mr. Speaker, so retracted.

The minister has often said how proud he is of his government for being the first to tackle the issue of inclusion. I will say that with the establishment of the commission, the minister is making an effort to tackle that issue, but the minister may also know that there's a bit of an art to the science of tackling. A tackle is not complete until the opponent is on the ground. I would suggest that the best way to tackle an issue is low and around the knees to really bring the opponent down and bring the issue down.

What we're seeing here with this is what we would call a high tackle. It would probably be penalized in a lot of sports activities because it's not appearing to be a nice, clean tackle. It's appearing to be a high tackle.

In closing, I would say that I'm happy for 818 families whose children are in this program - terrible rollout of the program, but it's good for a percentage of the population, and I'm happy for them.

I take serious issue with the minister's comments about who is ultimately being benefited. I actually think that this program and the way it's rolled out, especially on the transportation issues, further marginalizes low-income Nova Scotians. It's just really hard for people. In the rural areas, just getting the kids getting to and from - just imagine if you're fortunate to have a job and trying to leave your job to pick the child up and get them home and get back. There are way too many issues. It's just not fair to enough families.

I just wish, if this really was what this government determined as the real solution, the most urgent, pressing need in education, that they'd done it properly. They haven't done it properly, and that's gone all the way through their communications efforts to some of their slanderous activities. They take everything as half . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We remind the honourable member for Pictou East that inferring the government is undertaking slanderous activities is indeed unparliamentary. I will once again ask him to retract that statement.

The honourable member for Pictou East has the floor.

MR. HOUSTON: I apologize, Mr. Speaker. I will retract that statement.

There are a lot of issues with the rollout of this program. There are a lot of issues that come out of the lack of planning for this program. There are other things that should have been prioritized - and I would have prioritized - and worked on, and I wish the government had done that too.

The issues in education won't be tackled by this bill today. They will exist. They will exist long after today, unless this government changes tack and gets down to the real nitty-gritty and brings the issues in education to the ground. We're not seeing it today. Maybe tomorrow we'll see it.

MR. SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I appreciate the comments of the members opposite. I am happy that the Conservative caucus has stated very clearly that they will be opposing



pre-Primary in Nova Scotia, as the member for Dartmouth East has said. That is consistent with the comments of the member for Pictou East, which we have talked about in this House. They are a Party that is opposed to this sort of program and early learning in the province.

I will note that I have listened to the arguments opposing this bill with interest. I would suggest that they are not sufficient, from a government perspective, to change course in this regard. I do want to address those arguments, one by one. I believe there were four primary arguments that were made opposing this bill.

Number one was an assertion made by both Parties that there has somehow been a rushed, messy rollout of this program that has not been to the benefit of the children and families who are currently accessing that. They have suggested that we have not consulted or thought about pre-Primary or early learning in advance of this. In fact, that's not true. I'll remind the House and all members that we have actually had a pilot running on early learning in this province for over four years now. We had inclusive, early learning classrooms in eight locations in every board across this province.

That was the pilot, four years of running these programs, using play-based curriculum and ensuring that they were inclusive places for children to play and learn. The feedback that we received from those four years of consultation, that pilot project, was very conclusive in terms of the impact that this program is having on the lives of our kids and how helpful it was for our families - four years of studying early learning initiatives.

This has not been rushed. This has not been an unthought-out process. In fact, it has been deliberate. You're actually seeing the rollout run pretty smoothly.

No matter what the members here say in the House, they provided no evidence to suggest that this is messy. They haven't pointed to one single incident where there has been a problem with our children or families' ability to access this. In fact, if the member for Pictou East would actually chat with the superintendents and with the ECEs on the ground, working on behalf of our government to execute on this program, he would know - and I'll quote one of our supers: ". . . the opening has gone very well - families seem to be very pleased with the program, and staff report that the children are responding well and settling in." That is a superintendent on the ground.

The member for Pictou East is right. I am much more interested in what these people on the ground are saying than his vacuous rhetoric in this House, which is not supported by any evidence or any examples that he has presented. I think that's important to note. In terms of suggesting that this is rushed or messy, I actually believe that the evidence and the timeline of the execution of this program defy both of those arguments very easily.

The impact on the sector is the primary concern for the New Democratic Party. It's a legitimate concern, one that we have approached with sympathy and deliberate action. The member for Dartmouth South has argued that this has created an existential crisis for our child care sector. That is absolutely not what we want to happen. In fact, we need our child care sector to grow along with pre-Primary to ensure that we have a holistic approach to child care and early learning in our province.

We need this sector to succeed. We have a vested interest in that sector. We have increased investments in that sector year after year, our government, to assist them in growing. In fact, we're in negotiations right now with the federal government that will see major, major investments in the very near future on top of what we have put in provincially for the child care sector to help it with strategically growing in our province and to help it address concerns around their ability to handle students with special needs.

[4:15 p.m.]

These things are actually happening in tandem. For any member to argue that this government is not concerned about the future of the child care sector, there's the fact that we've increased investments every year. The fact that we are actually negotiating a major deal with the federal government to see further investment to grow that sector and increase its capacity demonstrates that that is not the case either.

Yes, there could be potential concerns around staffing. So far, because of the way we've approached this and the thoughtful way for phase one, we have only actually had, I think, two or three private providers out of 398 in the province, who have said that they have had a staffing issue. I think that's less than 1 per cent.

We appreciate that that has created a concern for them, so we're working with our partners at Labour and Advanced Education and our department to help them address those recruitment issues. But to suggest that we shouldn't be proceeding with this because there is some existential threat because the labour force for ECEs is not accurate, when you actually look at the facts of the matter - in fact I'm hearing from ECEs and those who are studying to become early childhood educators, that they're actually excited about having a brand new opportunity and much more opportunity to actually pursue that field, that career, which is so critical to our kids here in the province. I'm actually hearing excitement from that sector.

As a direct result of pre-Primary, we are actually seeing an increase in the uptake in our post-secondary education institutions who provide early childhood learning opportunities. The number of our young people who are getting into this field, who are studying to become early childhood educators, is increasing. In fact, if you look at the labour market numbers, we have, I believe, close to 2,500 early childhood educators who are registered in this province. The private sector and not-for-profit sector take up about

1,300 of those folks, so there's a big gap in terms of what we actually have available for skilled people in this field and the opportunities that are available for them.

We are helping bridge that gap between the actual labour market supply of early childhood educators and demand, so that these people actually will be able to find jobs in these fields in the province, Mr. Speaker. I think that creates a really positive future for that sector.

The member for Pictou East has suggested that having a free, universally accessible pre-Primary program actually further marginalizes low income families. That is an argument I think we can simply defy, based on logic, Mr. Speaker. Right now, families actually are having a financial barrier put in front of them to access child care, despite the fact that we're subsidizing the rates. They are still having a hard time, because it's not available geographically or they just simply can't afford it.

Providing a free program for families that everybody will be able to access, that will be available in every single community, actually helps increase access to these critical learning initiatives for our low-income families in particular, Mr. Speaker, whom we also know might have children who need these supports a little more than others. That is something I am very proud of as well.

The final argument that has been put forth, suggested that this House should reconsider its course of action in pre-Primary as in relation to the P-12 system. I think members have very well articulated the concerns that exist in the P-12 system. There are issues there that we all recognize are problems for teachers, for kids, for families. There are students with special needs who aren't getting what they need out of the system. There are kids who are high achievers who aren't getting what they need out of the system. So, we do need transformative changes to happen in our P-12 system to help all those folks, to make life better for teachers, to help them focus on what's important, which is teaching, and to make sure that kids are getting what they need.

We are endeavouring to tackle those major challenges. So as the members even mentioned in their own statements, we brought together a group of experts to help us tackle the system of inclusion, to bring forward recommendations and a blueprint to help us transform that system so it is working better for everybody.

We are working with teachers directly through the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions so they, for the first time in the province's history, are writing policies and setting direction and allocating resources in the areas that they believe are important. We've already seen the establishment of a first provincial, province-wide attendance policy, which we're already hearing from principals has had an impact on student attendance - already, in less than a month. That's because teachers are doing this. They are tackling the issue of reporting, of assessments, of evaluation, figuring out how to get rid of

all the erroneous paperwork that they've been asked to do over the year, so that they can focus on teaching, Mr. Speaker.

These things are happening to improve outcomes for our kids, to make sure the system is better geared towards them.

We are also looking at the administrative model. We're taking on a lot because we do have a lot of challenges. We're looking at the way we govern ourselves in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, how we make our decisions, our relationship with the boards and how they operate. Are all the resources we're using from an administrative perspective having the impact that we want on the system and on our kids? Is the money getting to where it needs to be? So yes, we're looking at that.

We're looking at all these things with one intent - to make sure our kids do better so that our education system can better prepare them to lead successful lives. Early learning is an essential part of that. While the members argue that we should disregard early learning until we figure out the P-12 system, that does not take into consideration the evidence that points to the fact that early learning is part of the solution to our P-12 system.

Children who attend pre-Primary, and there's a plethora of evidence on this. I'm happy to read the report the member for Pictou East has tabled. I will take up that challenge and I will look through that report and I'm sure it will be very informative. But I will also ask that member to read the plethora of conclusive evidence and research that has been done in the U.K. and other countries in Europe, in Canada, Ontario, in the U.S.A. which all point to the fact that kids that enter into a pre-Primary system do better cognitively, socially, and emotionally. They have less behavioural problems. Challenges that we're hearing from teachers are creating issues in the classroom. This helps ensure that our kids get a better start, to have better outcomes there.

We have to see early learning as part of the solution here. The fact that we're investing \$50 million when this is at its full capacity will actually have dividends within the system and outside the system - and I will read some of the findings there, just to remind the House.

Early Childhood Education - children perform on average better than other children by age 15. That's from a study in the U.K. which also concluded that in a universal early learning program, play-based environment guided by a well-defined curriculum and trained educators is a major game-changer for the kids. Extensive longitudinal research in the U.K. points to significant academic and social, emotional benefits for every year of preschool. The list goes on - in fact, in the Nordic countries that offer full daycare programs to most younger children with play-based learning, they lead the world in literacy, numeracy, and science outcomes in later school years.

The facts are absolutely incredible on this. While a universal approach costs more than a targeted approach, it is likely to produce benefits that exceed the additional costs. The evidence is conclusive on this. If you consider the evidence you know that this is part of the solution to the broader challenges that we're having in our education system. That is why this government will proudly forge ahead and not waste a single day because we know a brighter start for our kids means a brighter future for us all.

Thank you, and with that I move third reading of Bill No. 8.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 8. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, that concludes government business for today. The House will meet tomorrow, Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup> between the hours of 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Following the daily routine and Question Period we will move to Public Bills for Third Reading, Bill Nos. 12, 17, 19, 29, and 33. With time permitting we will call the Committee of the Whole House on Bills to consider Bill Nos. 7, 15, and 16.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise to meet tomorrow, Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup> between the hours of 9 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The House stands adjourned.

[The House rose at 4:25 p.m.]

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**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 427**

By: Mr. Keith Bain (Victoria-The Lakes)

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

Whereas the Port of Sydney director of cruise and marketing, Bernadette MacNeil, has turned Sydney into a “port of choice” for many of the cruise ship lines that visit the area; and

Whereas on Tuesday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, she was named CBRM Ambassador of the Year at the annual Sydney and Area Chamber of Commerce Excellence in Business Awards Ceremony, an award voted on by the public; and

Whereas, in typical Bernadette style, she dedicated her award to her late mother, who died as the result of a motor vehicle accident, and thanked her for giving her the voice in her ear and in her heart to fight the challenges that she herself faced as a result of that same accident;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Bernadette on her award and thank her for the wonderful service she provides.