



House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia

**DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS**

**Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy**

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**First Session**

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House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2018**

**Sixty-third General Assembly**

**First Session**

**1:00 P.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Kevin Murphy

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

Mr. Chuck Porter, Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we begin the daily routine, as Speaker, I'd like to draw everybody's attention to the gallery where I'd ask Donna Davis to rise. Donna is our new Editor of Hansard so this will be her first day with us and our first day back. (Applause) I'd encourage all members, as the day goes on, if you see Donna, to introduce yourself and welcome her aboard.

We'll now begin the daily routine.

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition whose operative clause says: Therefore, the people of Nova Scotia demand that the Nova Scotia Government and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interest of students and the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

There are 93 signatures and I have affixed mine, as per the Rules of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party.

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause of which reads as follows: The people of Nova Scotia demand that the Nova Scotia Government and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interest of students and the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

The petition that I hold includes 1,938 signatures and I have added my signature as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause being: Therefore, the people of Nova Scotia demand that the Nova Scotia Government and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interests of students and the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

I had a total of 428 signatures. I have affixed my signature according to the Rules of the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition with the operative clause which reads: The people of Nova Scotia demand that the Nova Scotia Government and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interests of students and the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, include 1,281 signatures that were collected by local teachers, engaging with community members. I have affixed my signature as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause being: We, the people of Nova Scotia, hereby demand that the Government of Nova Scotia and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interests of students and the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

Mr. Speaker, the petition contains 493 signatures and I have affixed my signature also.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I also beg leave to table a petition and the operative clause is: Therefore, the people of Nova Scotia demand that the Nova Scotia Government and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interests of students and the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

I have affixed my signature and there are approximately 1,300 signatures from the Truro area.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg.

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to table a petition, the operative clause being: Therefore, the people of Nova Scotia demand that the Nova Scotia Government and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interests of students and the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

Mr. Speaker, there are 1,250-plus names on this petition and I have attached my name as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause of which reads: The people of Nova Scotia demand that the Nova Scotia Government and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interest of students and the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

The petition includes about 638 signatures and, Mr. Speaker, I have affixed my signature as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause: We, the people of Nova Scotia, hereby demand the Government of Nova Scotia refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

This petition contains 672 names and I have attached my signature as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition. The operative clause reads: The people of Nova Scotia demand that the Nova Scotia Government and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interest of students and the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

This petition includes about 578 signatures and, Mr. Speaker, I have affixed my signature as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition. The operative clause reads: The people of Nova Scotia demand the Nova Scotia Government and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interest of students and the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

Mr. Speaker, I have affixed my signature and there are 1,304 signatures on this petition.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.



MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause being: The people of Nova Scotia demand that the Nova Scotia Government and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interest of students from the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

The petition contains 654 names and I have affixed my signature as per the Rules of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to table a petition, the operative clause: The people of Nova Scotia demand that the Nova Scotia Government and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interest of students and the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

My petition has over 1,200 names on it, Mr. Speaker, and I have affixed my signature as per the Rules of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition. The operative clause reads: The people of Nova Scotia demand that the Nova Scotia Government and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interests of students and the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

The petition has been signed by 705 people and I have affixed my name to it as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Cape Breton-Richmond.

MS. ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause being: Therefore, the people of Nova Scotia demand that the Nova Scotia Government and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interest of students and the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

The petition contains 1,321 names, and I have affixed my name as well as per the Rules of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

MR. LARRY HARRISON: I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause being: Therefore, the people of Nova Scotia demand that the Nova Scotia Government and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interests of students and the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

The petition contains 294 names and I have affixed my signature as per the Rules of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause being: The people of Nova Scotia demand that the Nova Scotia Government and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interest of students and the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

The petition contains 293 names and I have affixed my signature as per Rules of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Sackville-Beaver Bank.

MR. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause being: That the people of Nova Scotia demand that the Nova Scotia Government and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interests of students and the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

The petition contains 550 signatures, and I have affixed my signature as well, as per the House Rules.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

[1:15 p.m.]

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. TIM HALMAN: I as well beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause being: That the people of Nova Scotia demand that the Nova Scotia Government and all members of the House of Assembly act in the best interests of students and the public education system and refrain from implementing the recommendations of the Raise the Bar report.

The petition contains 2,801 signatures, and I have affixed my signature as well, as per the Rules of this House.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: I beg leave to table a petition. The operative clause reads:

“More and more government, commercial, and residential services are being provided exclusively on line. In Little River Harbour, Comeau’s Hill and surrounding area we do not have access to the necessary standard of internet service that benefit other communities. We are severely disadvantaged compared to the vast majority of the rest of province. We request that the government address and remedy this inequity.”

There are 82 signatures, and I have affixed mine, as per the Rules of this House.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

## **PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

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

## **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): I rise today to recognize a great loss experienced by our province. On November 30, 2017, Grand Chief Ben Sylliboy passed away peacefully surrounded by his family, community members, and the Mi’kmaq leaders. Grand Chief Sylliboy was a humble, compassionate, and generous man. He was dedicated to his family, community, and the Mi’kmaq people throughout Mi’gma’gi.

Born in Waycobah, Ben Sylliboy grew up as one of five children in a family of modest means. As a young boy, he attended the Indian Residential School in Shubenacadie for four years. Not long after returning to his home community, he contracted tuberculosis, leading to a lengthy battle for him to regain his health.

He went on to become a respected and dedicated member of his community. The dedication to improving his community and constant commitment to serve his church led to him being selected as the Mi'kmaq Grand Council Captain in 1968. In 1970, he was elected and served nine terms as band councillor in Waycobah, and after the passing of then-Grand Chief Donald Marshall in 1991, he became the Grand Chief.

As a survivor of a residential school, he was active as an adult in survivors groups and was involved in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Throughout his life, Ben was a respected leader and statesman for the Mi'kmaq community in Canada and beyond.

One of the highlights for me as Premier was working with Ben to pardon the late Grand Chief Gabriel Sylliboy. It was a great moment for both of us, celebrating in peace and friendship with all Nova Scotians and the Mi'kmaq people.

Grand Chief Sylliboy left his wife of 49 years, Catherine Marie; two daughters, Michelle and Christina; as well as granddaughters Radney and Kendyl, and grandson Karter.

While we continue to mourn his passing, his legacy lives throughout his promotion of Mi'kmaq culture and spirituality. He truly lived the adage, "We Are All Treaty People."

I would ask that all members, after my colleagues get a chance to pass their remarks, give a moment of silence for this great Nova Scotian.

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

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: I want to thank the Premier for providing our caucus with his remarks in advance. I believe I will echo many of the words he said about Grand Chief Sylliboy.

Since his passing and before, many words have been used to describe Grand Chief Ben Sylliboy. Dedicated, caring, humble, respectful, patient, and inspirational - those are all words that describe an effective and cherished leader. There is no doubt that is what Grand Chief Sylliboy was. But what struck me, when I reflected on his life, was how resilient he was. He spent four years in the Indian Residential School in Shubenacadie when he was just six years old. Then he contracted tuberculosis and fought to regain his health, but he persevered and dedicated his life to helping and guiding others - he overcame.

Grand Chief Sylliboy was an active member of a residential school survivor's group and the Truth and Reconciliation Committee. He championed the establishment of a home for people with intellectual disabilities in his home community. He fought for the constitutional recognition of many Mi'kmaq rights. He had a strong faith that grounded him, and was the embodiment of Revelation 21:7: "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son."

Grand Chief Ben Sylliboy will be remembered as a strong and humble leader. The Premier noted that while we mourn his loss, Grand Chief Sylliboy's legacy will be long-lasting. His work advanced Mi'kmaq culture and spirituality and his efforts improved the relationship between all Nova Scotians and all of the Mi'kmaq people. I hope his wife Catherine Marie, his daughters, and all his family will find comfort in that and in the fact that he had a life well-lived; that their husband, father, and grandfather was a good man. He will be missed by many.

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

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Premier and the Leader of the Official Opposition for taking a moment today to honour Grand Chief Ben Sylliboy's life and legacy in this House. His loss is indeed a loss to the entire province and as Morley Googoo, Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, has said, it's really a big loss for the nation as a whole.

Through his leadership, Grand Chief Sylliboy challenged the Nova Scotia Government and the Government of Canada to face the hard truths in our history and in our present, and invited us all to do better. He did that with a humble and generous, but also unflinching spirit. He continued a long tradition of Mi'kmaq leaders, insisting that we honour the treaties and the spirit of peace and friendship between nations in the face of continuous betrayals by provincial and federal governments. His is an honoured legacy and a noble path.

MR. SPEAKER: I now ask that all members of this House please rise to observe a moment of silence for the passing of Grand Chief Ben Sylliboy.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, this past month Nova Scotians celebrated African Heritage Month across the province. Each February, during African Heritage Month, we honour and celebrate our province's African Canadian and Black history, heritage and culture through community events, cultural traditions, youth engagement,

contributions to society, music, theatre, readings, and feasts. It is also a time of reflection and to remind each of us our communities are richer and stronger thanks to the ingenuity, hard work, contributions and leadership of members of the African Nova Scotian community.

The theme of African Heritage Month was to educate, unite, and celebrate communities. It was chosen by the community to ignite the passion in all Nova Scotians to learn about our province's African culture and heritage.

Mr. Speaker, I was privileged to attend and speak at 20 events and activities that took place across the province to celebrate the culture, the history, and longevity of African Nova Scotians. The 2018 African Heritage Month poster was unveiled by Lieutenant Governor Arthur J. LeBlanc and myself during a ceremony here at the Nova Scotia Legislature on January 23, 2018, and the Proclamation declared February as African Heritage Month. I am happy to share with you that 11 municipalities across the province created proclamations for their regions.

As the Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs, these were proud moments. I hope each of my colleagues here in this House were able to attend and enjoy events in their respective communities during the month. African Nova Scotians have a long, deep, and complex history in this province. Despite the history, fraught with injustice and ongoing struggles over the past 400 years, African Nova Scotians continue to overcome these challenges, and to do so with strength of character, dignity, resolve, and resilience.

There is still much work to do to address systemic racism and discrimination in Nova Scotia. However, we are on the right path forward and we're on the journey of healing. Across government, we have made a commitment to address systemic racism and discrimination and we are taking action. When we acknowledge and understand the truths of our shared history in Nova Scotia, then, through co-operation and education, we will be able to facilitate change in our society. We must continue to acknowledge our shared history and learn from it, to be proud of the achievements of our communities, and look to the future with confidence and optimism.

Mr. Speaker, the past five weeks have been a remarkable time for the celebration. It also was a time to reflect more deeply on the history of resilience, faith, and togetherness. I hope all Nova Scotians had the opportunity to experience the events and celebrations during the month and to also take some time to reflect on our shared history and the path forward. While we recognize African Heritage Month in February, it is important that the learning, reflection, and the hard work are not confined to one month a year.

My hope and my goal, as the Minister of African Nova Scotia Affairs, is that we acknowledge, talk about, learn, reflect, and understand the achievements and the contributions of people of African descent in Nova Scotia each and every day of the year. Thank you. (Standing Ovation.)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the minister for providing me with a copy of his remarks this morning. I'm also pleased to say that I was in attendance with the minister in this Legislature when the 2018 African Heritage poster was unveiled on January 23, 2018.

As the minister said, African-Nova Scotians have a long and complex history in Nova Scotia. That's why it is so important that we mark African Heritage Month each February. It gives all Nova Scotians an opportunity to learn about and celebrate African and Black history and their culture, and to find out about the many contributions made by African-Nova Scotians that make Nova Scotia richer and stronger. It's important to learn about the struggles and challenges Black communities have faced over the last 400 years.

It is also important to celebrate the dignity and resilience as well. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the contributions of Lloyd Arthur States. Mr. States was born in New Glasgow, he enlisted in the Canadian Army and served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Service Force during World War II. He was posted to England and became a member of the Special Service Force. He was one of only two Black men to be part of that elite group. Lloyd States earned numerous military honours from various countries including the American Congressional Gold Medal, awarded to him posthumously in 2015.

[1:30 p.m.]

I know very few of us know Mr. States' story, but we should. He was an extraordinary Nova Scotian, and it is because of African Heritage Month that I learned his remarkable story. That is the power of setting aside a month to learn and celebrate African heritage in our province.

To all the individuals, groups, and communities that hosted events, raised awareness, or held a celebration, I thank you. These events matter. They are important in helping us, as a province, move forward to combat discrimination and racism. They help facilitate the change the minister mentioned in his remarks.

I am hopeful that we keep these sentiments in mind as we move forward on important issues like boundary review, school board reform, and land title claims. I agree with the minister that the understanding and education gained each February should not be confined to just 28 days. I hope we all carry the spirit of African Heritage Month every day of the year.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much to the minister for providing a copy of his remarks to us in advance. As African Nova Scotian Affairs

spokesperson for the NDP caucus, it's my pleasure to speak today and it has been an honour to take part in African Heritage Month events.

I joined a very full house for the launch event at the Terry Symonds Auditorium at the Halifax North Memorial Library in Halifax Needham. That celebration had special resonance because it was there, in 1984, that the first celebration of Black History Week, as it was known at that time, occurred.

I was reminded that this month of recognition and celebration is one that African Nova Scotians have had to fight for. After the many joyful and uplifting events of this month, hearing of recent incidents of racist graffiti was a wrenching reminder of the realities of racism in our province, and the hate and injustice that African Nova Scotians struggle against every day.

I would like to take this moment to acknowledge and truly thank the many wonderful African Nova Scotian community organizations and leaders who it has been my pleasure to meet and work with in my role as African Nova Scotian Affairs spokesperson, but also as a resident, and now representative, of Halifax Needham.

These activists and organizers are holding our government and our province to account. They are fighting for justice for Abdoul Abdi. They are pushing for an end to discriminatory street checks. They are organizing to get land titles and to right historic wrongs. They are speaking out against environmental racism. They are fighting for affordable housing, quality public services, and an end to poverty. They are speaking out about public education and the important role of African Nova Scotian school board representatives, and along the way they are creating art, poetry, and philosophy, starting innovative businesses, building community, and so much more.

I hope everyone in this House will join me in thanking these leaders for their work that contributes to a more interesting, more joyful, more art-filled, more just, and more welcoming Nova Scotia for all. Thank you very much.

## **GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 63 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 32 of the Acts of 2014. The Health Authorities Act. (Hon. Christopher d'Entremont)**

**Bill No. 64 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 32 of the Acts of 2014. The Health Authorities Act, Respecting Board Meetings. (Ms. Tammy Martin)**

**Bill No. 65 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 32 of the Acts of 2000. The Psychologists Act. (Hon. Randy Delorey)**



**Bill No. 66 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 497 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Volunteer Services Act. (Mr. Keith Bain)**

**Bill No. 67 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 32 of the Acts of 2014. The Health Authorities Act, to Require Quarterly Reports and an Annual Expenditure Plan. (Ms. Tammy Martin)**

**Bill No. 68 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 18 of the Acts of 1998. The Municipal Government Act, and Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008. The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter. (Ms. Claudia Chender)**

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

#### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

#### **STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

#### **SYLLIBOY, GRAND CHIEF BEN, DEATH OF: FAMILY - CONDOLENCES**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, may we remember Grand Chief Ben Sylliboy of the Mi'kmaq Nation. Few among us can be said to have lived with such a kind heart and devotion to his faith and his people.

Consider the work that he and his sister, Margaret Poulette, did to create the Mawita'mk Society, a home in Waycobah for Mi'kmaq people with disabilities, the example he gave to his community through the many pilgrimages he led to Sainte-Anne-de-Baupré - Sainte Anne being the patron saint of the Mi'kmaq people. Grand Chief Sylliboy was well liked and a friend to all.

Let us extend our condolences to his wife, Catherine Marie Sylliboy, his daughters, Michelle and Christina, his grandchildren and his great grandchildren. May the example of his life and his spirit inspire young people to value and protect Mi'kmaq language, culture, and spirituality. Wela'lin, Ben.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, may I make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. MARTIN: I draw the attention of members to the east gallery, where I would like to introduce my brother and sister members of the Federation of Labour: President Danny Cavanagh, Janet Hazelton, Jason MacLean, Penny Foster, Paul Cormier, Tammy Gillis, and Nan McFadgen. Welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

### **WESTMOUNT ELEM. SCH.: VACCINATION CLINIC – IMPORTANT ROLE**

MR. GARY BURRILL: I want to acknowledge today the positive role that staff of Westmount Elementary in Halifax have had on the health of families of their community. For the last two years, they have held an annual influenza vaccination clinic in partnership with Lawtons Drugs at the Halifax Shopping Centre.

The true success of this clinic has not been the number of vaccinations administered, but rather the fact that many of the families participating in the program are recent immigrants to Nova Scotia. Many of these families do not have access to a family doctor and would not have been made aware of the free influenza vaccine had it not been for the school clinic.

This is yet another testimony to how schools and teachers truly play an important role in their community beyond the call of duty.

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

### **COLOURED HOCKEY LEAGUE: AWARENESS - PROMOTE**

MR. BEN JESSOME: On the last day of African Heritage Month, I would like to recognize the Coloured Hockey League, which existed between 1895 and the 1930s. It played mainly on outdoor rinks, lakes, and even the Halifax Harbour, on parts where it froze.

On February 4<sup>th</sup>, a game was held at the Centennial Arena to promote awareness of this league. The Hammonds Plains Mossbacks and the Charlottetown Rangers, two of the teams that used to play in the CHL, had players from the Halifax area suit up for the game. There were several Nova Scotian teams in the league, such as the Halifax Eureka's, the Dartmouth Jubilees, and the Truro Sheiks. There were also two teams from Africville, the Seaside's and the Brown Bombers. The games drew large crowds and were also great social events.

Proceeds from the game were used to support the Black Youth Ice Hockey Program that Hockey Nova Scotia puts on for Black kids aged four to eight.

I would ask all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating the organizers of the game held to promote awareness of the Coloured Hockey League.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

### **FERGUSON, RALPH D., DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: I rise to pay tribute to Ralph D. Ferguson, who passed away on January 30, 2018.

Ralph's working career was spent as a public servant, both federally with Canada's Public Service and municipally as a councillor, deputy mayor, and acting mayor. Ralph's disabilities never stopped him, and he was always there to bring awareness.

Ralph served on many boards, such as the Central Highlands Association of the Disabled, as chair and executive director of the Let Abilities Work Partnership Society, as commissioner on the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes, and as chair of the Disabled Persons Commission. Over the years, Ralph assisted hundreds in the disabled community with passion and integrity.

Ralph Ferguson will be sadly missed by not only his family and many friends but by everyone he encountered.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

### **ST. JOSEPH'S-ALEXANDER MCKAY ELEM. - CARING LEADERSHIP**

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I want to say something about the educational leadership at one of the elementary schools in my district, St. Joseph's A. McKay, known fondly as SJAM.

Principal Natalie Hagerty was recently named one of Canada's Outstanding Principals for 2018. Since she came to the school in 2015, she has built relationships with community partners and parents in order to respond to the needs of students. Vice-Principal Amy Hunt stepped into the administrative role from the ranks of the teachers, where she had already distinguished herself as a leader in restorative approaches in schools, literacy, and community relationships.

Together with teachers, with administrative staff, with the school social worker, with an active school advisory committee, and with parents, they create a culture of learning and caring and community at SJAM.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

**STEWART, DICK: AWARD OF EXCELLENCE - CONGRATS.**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture Fisheries Ministers' Conference took place in Halifax on February 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>.

One of the recipients of the minister's Awards of Excellence was Yarmouth's Dick Stewart, who served for 39 years as manager of the Atlantic Herring Co-op. Mr. Stewart was honoured for a lifetime of service to Nova Scotia's fishing industry as a harvester and as an organizer representing the interests of the harvesters and groups with which he is affiliated.

[1:45 p.m.]

His award read, "For 39 years, Mr. Stewart served as Manager of the Atlantic Herring Co-op, a position that allowed him to use and share his unequalled knowledge of the fishing industry to effect positive change and growth in the fishery and the communities where he and his members live and work."

Mr. Speaker, I ask this House to join me in congratulating Mr. Dick Stewart of Yarmouth on this prestigious honour, and in thanking him for his significant contributions both to the fishing industry and his community.

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

**BOONDOCKS REST.: ANNIV. (5<sup>TH</sup>) - CONGRATS.**

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to honour and congratulate Jamie and Fran Rouse and their family, who will be celebrating their 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as owners of Boondocks Restaurant. This restaurant has been part of the Fisherman's Cove area of Eastern Passage for the past 20 years. March 2<sup>nd</sup> marks the day of their 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Jamie and Fran give back to our community in so many ways, hosting the annual auction fundraiser for the Eastern Passage Summer Carnival. At the restaurant, they also host a free breakfast on the morning of Dumping Day for the fishermen in our community.

Boondocks has become a big part of the Eastern Passage heritage and I ask this House to congratulate Jamie and Fran and their family, along with all the members of the community who work there. We wish them many more years of success as business owners and proud members of our Eastern Passage and Area Business Association. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**TEACHERS: COMMITMENT - RECOGNIZE**

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, over the last several weeks I've had the good fortune to visit several schools in my community of Dartmouth North. At Harbour View Elementary, I attended a bake sale in support of a student who had to have surgery for a serious illness, and also spoke to Ms. Aucoin's Grade 6 class about life as an MLA. I went to John MacNeil Elementary to read to the Grade 2 class about a mad mouse, and I was honoured to attend the celebration of African Heritage, designed and produced by the students at Dartmouth High. Yesterday I visited Ms. Peters' Grade 8 class at Bicentennial School to talk about democracy.

Reflecting on all these different visits it was clear to me that the thing they had in common was, of course, the teachers and administrators who made them happen. Everywhere in Dartmouth North, and I would suspect in the whole province, educators in our public schools continue to go an extra mile for their students. They know what helps them learn, they know what is needed when learning proves difficult or impossible, and they know how to fight for their students' education.

Lately, I have also met and heard from many teachers in Dartmouth North. They have expressed to me their frustration and worry over changes to our education system that, in their view, will set back the project of students' learning and success. I believe these teachers and as a parent I . . .

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

The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**LANGILLE, RONALD: BRIDGEWATER FIRE DEPART. BAND - RECOGNIZE**

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Ronald Langille of the Bridgewater Fire Department band. For the last 66 years, Ronald has been a member of the band, seeing many others come and go along the way.

Joining the band in 1952, Ronald has been active within the band, playing the trombone as well as having served on the band executive. In addition to being a dedicated member of the band, Ronald is also a decorated volunteer firefighter.

Following band practice on February 7, 2018, members of the community and band wished Ronald well, as he has decided to retire from the band. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ronald on his 66 years with the Bridgewater Fire Department band and wish him a very happy retirement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**KENNY, CST. FABIAN: CERT. OF RECOGNITION - BRAVERY RECOGNIZE**

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today to recognize Constable Fabian Kenny of the RCMP Baddeck detachment. On December 20, 2015, Constable Kenny showed his courage and compassion by rescuing a person in crisis on Seal Island Bridge, Victoria County.

In honour of his bravery, Constable Kenny was presented with a Certificate of Recognition by Victoria County Council on February 5<sup>th</sup> of this year.

I ask that all members of this Legislative Assembly join me in recognizing Constable Fabian Kenny for his heroic effort, and thank him for all he does to protect the citizens he serves. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

**TEACHERS: COMMITMENT - THANK**

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Teachers in our province do more than teach, they care for, mentor, and even provide for students. Some think of teachers as just math and science. When I think of teachers, I think of shopping with my girlfriend, who had to buy a pair of winter boots for one of her students who couldn't come to school on snow days because he didn't have boots. I think of my uncle, who bought sneakers for a basketball player who couldn't play in the upcoming tournament because he didn't have sneakers. I think of a teacher who showed me thousands of dollars in receipts where she had to buy supplies and food for her kids so that they could have the same as everybody else in class.

I also think of the field trips that these teachers go on that they're not getting paid for, for off-hour activities. Imagine what we would do if we lived in a province with teachers who didn't care as much. If they, like so many other professions, went to work and got paid for the hours that they actually worked, we would be paying a lot more money than what we are paying now.

I am proud to stand here in the people's House and say thank you to each and every one of our teachers in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

**PITCHER, RALPH: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to celebrate the life of a lovely man today. Ralph Pitcher was the kind of guy who lit up a room when he walked in. He was a born storyteller with a droll sense of humour. One person at his funeral noted that the word they most associated with him was joy - that's how Ralph lived his life.

Ralph was a 35-year veteran of the Royal Canadian Air Force, and he travelled Canada and Europe through work. In retirement, he was a keen organizer of events at our local Bedford Legion, right up until his health began to fail. He was involved in many organizations and causes throughout the years, but most of all, Ralph was a devoted father and grandpa, who taught his daughters Kathryn and Shannon, and his grandchildren all kinds of life skills. Today, my condolences go out to them, as well as to his wife of 54 years, Joyce Pitcher. Their loss, and ours, is a big one. Ralph Pitcher will be missed.

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

**NEWELL, CAPT. TODD: CHARITY INITIATIVE - CONGRATS.**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, on January 18, 2018, Captain Todd Newell of North East Point, Shelburne County, created a video challenging captains of other fishing vessels to jump in their live wells, and donate \$1,000 to a charity of their choice.

A tragic house fire in Pubnico motivated Todd to take the first plunge. Today, the community, and beyond, has raised almost \$900,000 to various charities by jumping in their live wells, the ocean, or even their swimming pools, in an effort to give to those who need it the most. Donations have been made from as far away as Australia, New York, Florida, and New Brunswick, and throughout Nova Scotia.

Today, I want to congratulate Captain Todd Newell for starting this creative challenge, and the community and beyond for making this such a great success.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

**GLAZE REPT.: RECOMMENDATIONS - OPPONENTS RECOGNIZE**

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the people's House to recognize the hundreds of people across the province who have called, emailed, and reached out over social media to my office, and to me personally, over the last three weeks. Teachers, parents, administrators, and concerned citizens have extended themselves to express their anger and dismay at the actions of this government in adopting the Glaze report with little time, no evidence, and a lack of meaningful consultation.

From Cape Breton to Yarmouth, from Wolfville to Chester, the emails and calls flooding my office have advocated eloquently, and with well-informed research, for intelligent educational reform; one that puts children first by addressing the issues in their classrooms. Many of these advocates engaged in the vigorous consultations hosted by the Commission on Inclusive Education, whose report we will not see for another month. They, and I, are incredulous that we are at the precipice of opening up all of the legislation governing education in this province, without addressing the most pressing needs therein.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here to thank the people of Nova Scotia for engaging with the political process, to acknowledge their voices, and to encourage them to continue.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

**PRING, RACHEL - YOUNG CDNS. FORUM: PARTICIPATION - CONGRATS.**

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, the Forum for Young Canadians is a non-partisan program for youth ages 15 to 19. The program is held three times a year with 100 students selected from across Canada to attend. Rachel Pring, a 17-year-old from East Mountain, Colchester North, and a Grade 12 student at the Colchester Christian Academy in Truro, was chosen as one of those who participated in the week-long forum in Ottawa, January 29, 2018, to February 2, 2018.

The students were involved in simulations related to politics and public affairs. Rachel Pring is known as an excellent student, a member of the Army Reserve in Truro, and one with a keen interest in politics.

On behalf of the Legislative Assembly, I would like to extend our congratulations to her for being selected to represent our province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**AFRICAN HERITAGE MO. - STATES, CRYSTAL:  
BLACK EDUCATORS ASSOC. - KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, the month of February is dedicated as African Heritage Month. Crystal States, Regional Educator of the Black Educators Association, was the keynote speaker at A.G. Baillie Elementary School in New Glasgow. She spoke about her late father, Lloyd Arthur States, who was born in New Glasgow and served with the First Special Service Force during the Second World War.

Crystal's father enlisted in the Canadian Army at a very young age, completing training at the Aldershot facility in the Annapolis Valley. He was shipped to England, where he was introduced to the Special Force. He continued more training in Montana, being one of only two Black men in the Special Service Force. The unit's first of many missions was a parachute landing in Norway that included scaling cliffs to attack German forces that occupied the country.

Lloyd States earned numerous military honours from various countries including the American Congressional Gold Medal awarded to him posthumously in 2015.

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



**GLAZE REPORT: RECOMMENDATIONS - RECONSIDER**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, many constituents have expressed concerns about the Raise the Bar Glaze report and the new Education and Early Childhood Development Minister's lack of knowledge about the system he wants to overhaul. This was shown by his recent statement on CTV that by eliminating school boards, students would receive a more consistent education since individual boards determined school outcomes.

As Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, he should know that teachers already follow one provincial curriculum, so his own department determines student outcomes, not school boards. Meanwhile the Premier has repeatedly claimed he doesn't know what teachers want.

Mr. Speaker, teachers want this government to stop wasting their time and energy with recommendations that are worse than useless. They want them to press pause and reconsider blowing up the existing system, continuing to harass and further demoralize our teachers.

MR. SPEAKER: I would just like to remind the honourable member that personal attacks are not permitted in members' statements, and I'm going to grab a copy of that one just to have a reread of that if you don't mind.

The honourable member for Kings West.

**CAMERON-KELLY, CPTN. MARY: CAREER MILESTONE - CONGRATS.**

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my congratulations to Royal Canadian Air Force Captain Mary Cameron-Kelly, who recently reached a significant career milestone by logging 7,000 flying hours in the CP140 Aurora aircraft, a very rare feat amongst military pilots.

Captain Cameron-Kelly, a member of 404 Squadron at 14 Wing Greenwood and one of the most experienced and respected pilots in the Royal Canadian Air Force, began her military service as an aircraft technician before earning her wings in the 1990s.

I would like to offer my congratulations on behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia to Captain Mary Cameron-Kelly of 404 Squadron for reaching yet another career milestone, thank her for her contributions to the Royal Canadian Air Force, and express my gratitude for her remarkable service to our nation.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**AFFIRMATIVE VENTURES: ANNIV. (25<sup>th</sup>) - CONGRATS.**

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, achieving economic independence can be a daunting task at the best of times, but those that struggle with mental health and disabilities face an additional set of barriers. I rise today to congratulate Affirmative Ventures Association on their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. For 25 years, they have been investing in Nova Scotians with disabilities to help them join the workforce, live independently, or start a business.

Laurie Edgar and her team have bettered so many lives through their work and continue to ensure that Nova Scotians with disabilities are able to live happily and independently. I'm proud to publicly thank everyone at Affirmative Ventures for all they have done and all they have yet to do.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

**BOUDREAU, LINDA: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.**

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, for someone to work for the same company for 50 years is almost never heard of these days. However, Linda Boudreau has done just that. Linda retired from Ron MacGillivray's Chevrolet Buick GMC in Antigonish on November 2, 2017. She had been in their employment for 50 years and four months. I would say that's the definition of dedication.

Over the course of 50 years, Linda has had the privilege of working with customers and their families over multiple generations and, when asked by *The Casket* what she would miss the most, she said the people.

I'd like to offer my congratulations to Linda on her retirement. After 50 years, I believe it is well deserved.

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

**SCH. COUNSELLORS: IMPACT - ACKNOWLEDGE**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, February 5<sup>th</sup> to February 9<sup>th</sup> was Canadian School Counselling Week. This week is a celebration of the positive impact that school counsellors have in supporting student success within our schools. School counsellors contribute to all aspects of the student's development whether it's personal, social, academic, or career development.

Although this week has since passed, I thought it important to raise awareness to the invaluable scope of programs and services provided to our students by school counsellors, including the increasingly needed mental health guidance and assistance. I

would like to take this time to thank our Nova Scotia school counsellors - and counsellors elsewhere - for their commitment, dedication, and support to students.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for Statements by Members has expired.

[2:00 p.m.]

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition. (Applause)

#### **PREM. - GLAZE REPORT: LATE CONSULTATION - CONCERN**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: What a long, strange trip it has been. (Laughter)

Earlier this year, the government received the Glaze report and immediately announced that it would be enacting all of its recommendations. The Premier, without personally consulting with education professionals, went full steam ahead on the changes. Now, on the eve of our return to the Legislature, the Premier finally sits down with teachers and comes away with a new plan.

My question through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: Why does he continue to incite chaos with the education system when the prudent path was to meet with the teachers before announcing his changes?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to congratulate the honourable member in her new role and, if I had my way, I'd make it permanent because as I look across there, Madam Leader, you're the one who should be leading that Party.

But, to her question, I will say this to her. The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development has been travelling across this province as the Glaze report came out, meeting with SACs, meeting with teachers, meeting with administrators. He met with the principals' forum a few days ago. The president of the union asked to have a meeting with me. I met her yesterday. It was a great conversation. I'm looking forward to introducing legislation that will continue to transform the education system that will be focused on students.

MS. MACFARLANE: Parents and students started this week with an understanding of a future this government was forcing upon them. They may not have liked it, they may not have agreed with it, but at least they could begin to prepare for it. This morning, they woke up to no plan and no direction.

The content of the meeting with the teachers is being kept from the public, so no one knows what is to come next. Can the Premier tell us today which of the 22 recommendations from the Glaze report are now under reconsideration and which recommendations Nova Scotians can expect to move ahead with?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. As I said to her, I met with the president of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. As all members of this House, and most Nova Scotians would know, I'm a reasonable person. She laid out a few suggestions and I said I would look at them. But I want to tell the honourable member there will be legislation coming to this House that will continue to transform the education system that is focused on students.

MS. MACFARLANE: Again, more questions than answers. I think all Nova Scotians today are watching very closely, watching with great anticipation as the Premier and the teachers carry out their meetings. Meanwhile, parents are still in the all-too-familiar limbo of not knowing if their children will be going to school tomorrow, Thursday, or Friday. I don't need to tell you, Mr. Speaker, the stress and worry a short-notice strike creates.

So, can the Premier tell Nova Scotia parents if he was able to secure an agreement from the teachers on a strike action before engaging in protracted discussions?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I believe, as I've always believed, that educators across this province will not become involved in an illegal strike, but that is their decision. I would encourage all parents, members of the Opposition, to continue to plead to the teachers' union and teachers not to go into an illegal strike activity.

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

### **PREM.: SCH. BOARD ELIMINATION - DISASTROUS**

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, in 2015 the Premier eliminated the District Health Authorities on a promise of improved efficiencies and care, and what we got instead was a \$2 billion organization that meets behind closed doors. Now, we're being presented with the same pitch relative to the elimination of local voices in all of our school boards.

So I want to ask the Premier, why should the public believe that the hyper-centralist approach that's been so disastrous in health care is going now to be anything other than disastrous in education?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. If the member would actually read the Glaze report, this is focused on site-based activity. Administrators in schools have been looking for more independence. This is a positive

sign. It gives them a chance to be the educational leaders they are at their particular schools. They have a direct reporting line directly to the minister. This is a positive sign, increasing the SACs - give communities a stronger voice in those school communities. We're looking forward to continuing to empower communities and school communities to continue to be all they can be.

MR. BURRILL: At the February 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Halifax Regional School Board, Archy Beals, HRSB African Nova Scotian representative, spoke of the proposed abolition of school boards. He said, we were the last one at the table, and now they're taking away the table.

I ask the Premier, is he actually going to take away the school board system that guarantees African Nova Scotian representation in our province?

THE PREMIER: African Nova Scotians will continue to have guaranteed representation on the board across this province. They will continue to have a voice in school communities across this province.

I want to assure that honourable member and all members of this House that minority rights will be protected under this government. We will continue to make sure that they have a strong government that represents them, not only in the education system but in the justice system and every other system that this government is part of.

MR. BURRILL: The question was about the guaranteed African Nova Scotian seats on the school boards.

Further to that point, dismay has also been expressed across the province that in abolishing school boards, the government is going to be eliminating the one level of democracy in our province where we have a majority of women.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier really want to be the man who ended the one level of electoral democracy we have in our province where women are adequately represented?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member. I'm the Premier who has the most women ever elected under him, Mr. Speaker. I want to tell the honourable member that I have appointed more women to the Executive Council than any other Premier in the history of this province.

I want to remind the honourable member that when he had an opportunity to appoint women to the bench, their government ignored it. I want to tell him we just announced gender parity. When you look at our appointments, they were predominantly female. I challenge the honourable member to look at the deputy ministers across this province - female representation is above 50 per cent.

I will put my record on the line against anyone in this House when it comes to ensuring that our daughters and mothers are represented here.

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

**FISH. & AQUACULTURE - NORTHERN PULP:  
EFFLUENT TREATMENT PROCESS - CONSULTATIONS**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. According to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, his mandate letter states that he is responsible for advocating on behalf of Nova Scotia fishers.

Last week, the minister held a conference that promoted the sustainability of our fishing industry, which I totally believe should be celebrated. When local fishers approached the minister to express their concerns about Northern Pulp's effluent treatment plan and its potential effects on their fishing zones, he said he was listening, but it was not his problem. It's a federal problem.

Will the minister do his job and commit to speaking with his colleagues at the Department of Environment to ensure that all fishing groups affected are properly consulted during the environmental assessment process?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: I was very pleased to meet with some of the people who came from Pictou and other areas to talk about the issues they had around Northern Pulp. Indeed, it's the responsibility of the federal Department of Environment and the DFO in the oceans off Nova Scotia.

MS. MACFARLANE: It's unfortunate that the minister wouldn't let them into the meeting. He had to go outside to meet them. It's also unfortunate that they wouldn't put the subject on their agenda.

Anyway, the lobster industry, as we all know, is a \$3 billion industry in Canada, and over \$900 million of the Nova Scotia economy is lobster industry-related. There is too much at stake here, minister, to idly sit by and say it's a federal issue. Again, fishers are counting on the minister to do more than just listen and say that it's a federal issue.

I expect the minister to relay the concerns of fishers to the federal minister to ensure that every fisher who wants to be heard will be heard. Will the minister commit to Nova Scotia fishers that he will be their advocate on this most important issue?

MR. COLWELL: I stress again to the member opposite, which I did to the group that visited the event on Friday, that it is indeed the responsibility of DFO and the responsibility of the federal Department of Environment when it comes to the ocean.

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

**PREM. - GLAZE REPORT: TEACHER MISTRUST - ACKNOWLEDGE**

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, in her report, Dr. Glaze speaks of the depth of - this is her word - mistrust between teachers and the government that she encountered in the course of her consultations.

I want to ask the Premier, will he acknowledge that by plowing ahead this sitting with the implementation of the Glaze recommendations, he stands to take the already deeply troubled relationship between the government and teachers in Nova Scotia and make it that much worse?

THE PREMIER: No.

AN HON. MEMBER: He just said no. (Laughter) Just let it sink in.

MR. BURRILL: The previous answer, Mr. Speaker, had me softened up.

In her report, Dr. Glaze also writes these three short sentences: "Relationships matter. Trust matters. Mutual respect matters." While we in the NDP have a number of differences with Dr. Glaze, on these three sentences we agree completely.

In the name of this value she speaks about, of mutual respect and of trust, I ask the Premier, will he agree to not proceed further this sitting with the Glaze proposals until they have been given a thorough reappraisal and reconsideration?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As he said, I had an opportunity with the President of the Teachers Union yesterday. We had a great conversation. We went through all the recommendations. I told her that I would get back to her on a few points.

But I reassured her, and I want to reassure all members of this House, that there will be legislation this session to continue to transform the education system in our province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**EECD: GLAZE REPORT: TEACHER DIALOGUE - UNDERMINE**

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. If there is one thing that is abundantly clear with respect to the Glaze report, it is that the relationship between this government and our teachers is broken. I cannot imagine a path for meaningful education reform that does not

include an open and constructive, collegial dialogue between the officials who create education policy and the teachers who are in our classrooms. The threat of job action by our teachers only serves to underscore the depth of the schism in our education system.

Why has the minister allowed the relationship between the government and the teachers to get to a point where there is a threat of children losing time in their classrooms?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, as I said on the record, I do not believe an illegal job action is in the best interests of our students or our communities. I acknowledge that we have a lot of work to do in terms of rebuilding relationships with our teachers.

We have gotten out - myself and department staff - these last couple of weeks to meet with classroom teachers, principals, and community members directly. What has become very clear is that we have a lot of mutual understanding to achieve together, and I think we can do that. But we can do that even during moments of disagreement. That is also key because in order for this to function properly, it needs to be a two-way street.

The way these conversations play out right now online makes it very difficult to have that constructive relationship. I know we can do better, but all of us can do better in terms of fostering a more positive, productive relationship in the education system.

MR. HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, the way the minister describes the situation, it's as if it's all hugs and high-fives between the government and the teachers. The reality is the opposite: 82 per cent of teachers in this province took a dramatic step to authorize a strike. So 82 per cent of teachers believe that facing fines and sanctions are preferable to allowing the Glaze report recommendations to go ahead unopposed.

I cannot overstate how much classroom uncertainty has been created by the rift that dominates the discussions around education reform. Again I ask the minister, what will he do to begin to mend the situation and create an atmosphere of trust between the government and the teachers?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, it starts by understanding that we can work through challenges even during moments of disagreement. That has been a challenge that we have experienced as a government every time there's a disagreement with either the union or segments of the profession. The conversation has quickly gotten very personal and difficult to engage in a productive matter. I think that's something we can all recognize.

We are having conversations with union leadership, which have been helpful and productive, I've had personal conversations with the front lines. I have a better understanding of the complexity of reasons why individuals voted for illegal strike action, which isn't even just related to the Glaze report, if we're being frank with one another. Mr. Speaker, I still recognize we have a lot more work to do and we're committed to doing that.



[2:15 p.m.]

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

**H&W: MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS -  
SR. DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS**

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness.

Recently, the Nova Scotia Health Authority hired a provincial Senior Director of Mental Health and Addictions Services. This is an important position. It is well-established to most of us that the mental health system in Nova Scotia is broken. Too many people wait too long for services. Too many people fall through the cracks, and we know that the wait times in Cape Breton are the longest in the province: 363 days for adults, and 157 days for children and adolescents. Despite these terrible statistics, the new Senior Director of Mental Health and Addictions Services came from the worst-performing mental health team in the province, just as the outgoing Senior Director had been.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, if we want to fix the system and do a better job in mental health, why are the senior managers being hired from the team that has the people waiting the longest?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Of course, I believe all members in this Legislature share concern over access to mental health services, and certainly share government's priority and focus on providing those services to Nova Scotians, and improving our mental health services and access to mental health services across the province.

With respect to the hiring process of that particular position that was referenced, that goes through a hiring process, and any candidate that has any concern as to their availability or consideration through that process, they're certainly welcome to follow up with the Health Authority in that hiring process.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, mental health advocates are losing faith in the system, and in this government. They fear that factors other than ability to improve patient care take priority in the Health Authority's hiring practices. One group, called #howmanynovascotians, is calling on the Minister of Health and Wellness to launch a formal and independent inquiry into the hiring of staff of the Mental Health and Addictions Program of the NSHA. The minister should want to know why these kinds of hires are happening in his system, that he is responsible for.

Will the minister increase transparency and accountability in the Health Authority by looking at these hirings himself?

MR. DELOREY: I guess, just looking for some clarification from the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, I believe the concerns raised by the member opposite with the individual that was hired seem to stem on performance and access in a particular system, I didn't hear any issues or concerns specifically with the qualifications, or the expertise of the individual who received the appointment. So, if the member actually has specific concerns or challenges with the quality and the qualifications of the individual, rather than where they come from, if that's how the member opposite wishes that we choose where people are hired, then he can certainly bring that forward.

There are processes in place to consider the hiring, if there are (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

MR. DELOREY: As I indicated in my first response, there are processes in place for anyone who has concerns with the hiring process in a specific case, and if there are concerns with a specific candidate who received that appointment, he can bring them forward.

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

#### **H&W - C.B. ISLAND: AMBULANCE COVERAGE - INADEQUATE**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Minister of Health and Wellness. On February 12, 2018, the lives of Cape Bretoners were put in jeopardy when no ambulances were available for the whole island. Imagine, from the Northside to the Canso Causeway, down both sides of the island, not a single ambulance was available. An ambulance from Antigonish had to be reassigned to Cape Breton, an ambulance that I'm sure that region was loath to spare. It was a desperate move that left both Cape Breton and Antigonish under-sourced.

Is the minister satisfied that there was adequate ambulance coverage in Cape Breton, with only one ambulance available for the whole island?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, with respect to ambulance service and the way the system operates throughout the province, it's designed to be a dynamic system - to have those ambulances that are available to respond. In addition to the ambulances, we also have our helicopters, which we had the opportunity in the Fall to welcome into service. Two helicopters now, as well as a fixed-wing aircraft, are providing supports and emergency services to Nova Scotians from one end of the province to the other.

MR. ORRELL: The reason those ambulances are tied up is because they are waiting in line at the regional hospital because there's no beds available, and other emergency departments are closed, so they can't go there.

The minister continues to deny that there's a crisis in health care, but under his watch, the dangerous practice of rationing ambulances is taking place. All of us have been taught in an emergency to pick up the phone and dial 911, and emergency services will come to help. We all go about our day under the belief that when help is needed, help is only a phone call away - a belief that Cape Bretoners can no longer enjoy.

This Liberal mismanagement is unfair to both the citizens and the paramedics. My question to the minister is, how can Cape Bretoners be sure there will be an ambulance for them when they need it, when this minister is satisfied that one is enough?

MR. DELOREY: I want to assure the member and all members as well as constituents that the services being provided by the EHS system for the province and the people of Nova Scotia are reviewed and assessed based upon their performance. They have standard service levels they have to meet in responding to emergency situations. We continue to monitor and assess those performance metrics, and we respond accordingly when there are needs for enhanced services throughout the province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

### **EECD – PCAP/PISA - STUDENT PERFORMANCE RESULTS**

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Often in response to my questions in this House, the minister has claimed that he makes his decisions based on evidence.

I have concerns that the administrative review, which he is using to justify sweeping changes to our schools and classrooms, is incorrect in sounding an alarm about Nova Scotian students' performance. As many people have now pointed out, our children achieve at or above the expected levels on both the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program, PCAP, and the Programme for International Student Assessment, PISA.

How can the minister have confidence in his decisions when the evidence they are based on is faulty?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: There are two challenges that we're trying to overcome here. Provincially, our students have only achieved at the national average or below consistently for a long time. Regionally, the achievement levels vary from region to region depending on what board you are working under. These are two challenges, in my opinion, that are important to overcome. They are system-based challenges. The structure of the education system has created challenges to do better.

Since when has this House accepted middle of the road as best for our kids? When will we let our eyes look a little higher to a better horizon, where our kids are competing with the very best in this country and beyond?

MS. CHENDER: With respect, Mr. Speaker, no one is arguing for the status quo. We're simply stating that average performance - as the member next to me has commented about ambulances - does not equal a crisis in the opinion of this government, so far as we've seen.

Caring students, teachers, and school boards have been asking for a willing partner to make the changes needed for a long time. Instead, this government has locked students out, chosen to legislate rather than collaborate, and is now responsible for the second strike vote ever by teachers in as many years. Parents and teachers are experts who want what is best for our children.

Mr. Speaker, if the minister has confidence in his reforms, then why does he feel the need to bulldoze forward in this sitting? Why is he so afraid to listen to the public?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I have gone out and met with the public extensively over the course of the last number of weeks.

Let's not pretend that this is the first report that has told us that there needs to be a change in the administrative model of our education system. This just happened with the Myra Freeman report. She engaged thousands of Nova Scotians over the course of a year.

How many reports giving us recommendations to transform our education system have to sit on a shelf and collect dust before we actually do something in this province? The time is now, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, I want to remind the member opposite that it was the Leader of the Third Party who actually told our government that our education system is in crisis. I will table that quote for the pleasure of the House, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **TIR: MAIN-À-DIEU HWY. - REPAIR**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question is not for the Minister of Health and Wellness but for the Minister of TIR.

This week residents of Main-à-Dieu had enough and started talking to local media about the state of their local road - and I'll table that.

The residents describe the highway as a washboard of ruts, potholes and a paved shoulder that is falling apart. Ken Wadden was pictured in the *Cape Breton Post* just yesterday showing Sharon Montgomery the state of the highway.

Mr. Speaker, this coastal drive is a very important piece of the Cape Breton tourism industry and, more importantly, it is important for the local residents.

My question to the minister is, when will the people of Main-à-Dieu see their highway get the proper repairs so residents and tourist alike can travel this important link without fearing damage to their vehicles?

HON. LLOYD HINES: I thank the member opposite for the question. I have to agree with him about the beauty, the inherent loveliness of Main-à-Dieu, it's a wonderful part of Nova Scotia. I would encourage everybody in the House to at least make a visit there because he is absolutely right.

In terms of the road, like many rural roads in Nova Scotia, our department has a huge commitment to improving the condition. Let it be said that we have that road in our sights and, once we get through this Spring period, we'll be looking at it very closely.

MR. MACLEOD: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that he would like to have a lot of people come to Main-à-Dieu - and I can guarantee him that he is in our sights as well.

Mr. Speaker, they suggest that the road hasn't seen any maintenance in over 20 years and the fact that school buses travel the road every day and they bounce the children all over their seats, that concerns me. Of course, we have the situation of the Mira Gut bridge being removed last November and still no plan for that. The people of the area feel they have been forgotten.

I would ask that the minister commit today, when the House is finished, to come to Main-à-Dieu and drive that road with me to see the shape that it's in and be able to give a map to the rest of his colleagues on how to find Main-à-Dieu.

MR. HINES: I thank the member opposite for the question. We'll certainly undertake to take a look at the Main-à-Dieu road in particular. With regard to the Mira Gut bridge, we're not inactive. We're working with our federal partners; we're looking at a plan there in terms of the access that bridge represents into the area there. We're moving to analyze that situation and make a good determination of what we're going to do for the residents of that area.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

**MUN. AFFS. - PICTOU CO. AMALGAMATION: CARTOON - APOLOGIZE**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. This government is obsessed with amalgamation. First it was the Health Authority, then it was the school boards, and now they're pushing the concept of municipal modernization.

The department participated in a January 31<sup>st</sup> presentation on amalgamation that included an offensive cartoon that depicted Pictou County as backwards and "the problem". Now the presenter saw the error they made and changed the cartoon for subsequent versions of the presentation, but their opinion was made quite clear, Mr. Speaker.

My question today, will the Minister of Municipal Affairs apologize for his department's involvement in this presentation and it's thinly veiled insult to the municipal leaders and residents of Pictou County?

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. The picture he is describing is a picture that was in *The Chronicle Herald* back in 2016. The rationale for it being used in the presentation at the time was to tell the story about the challenges that municipal governments face and that amalgamation isn't always the answer.

Municipal modernization for us is about moving forward and encouraging municipalities to break down those traditional barriers and talk to one another, to plan with one another, to organize with one another.

I made it quite clear at the UNSM conference that we will not force amalgamation. What I told those municipalities is think beyond those traditional boundaries and start talking to your neighbours.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear an apology in there. What I heard was some rationalization of why an offensive cartoon was used.

I'd ask the minister again and, hopefully, he will apologize this time. But beyond the choice or the poor illustration, the heart of the problem is amalgamation itself. In a 2016 plebiscite the people of Pictou County made their feelings very clear, Mr. Speaker - two-thirds of the voters rejected a proposal for municipal amalgamation in the county. Any change to our governance structure should start with the people - what the people want. It shouldn't finish there.

I heard the minister say that he won't force amalgamation, but I'd ask him two things in this. Maybe he'll apologize this time for the use of the cartoon, and just reiterate that he will not dictate terms or force amalgamation on Pictou County or any jurisdiction in this province.

[2:30 p.m.]

MR. MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, in response to the member, correspondence has actually already been sent by my department to UNSM - Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities - and the municipal administrators and the mayors of those towns and the CAOs outlining that they too understood their concerns that came forward with regard to that cartoon.

Again, that was a cartoon in *The Chronicle Herald* back in 2016 that depicted the challenges that municipalities face and that amalgamation isn't always the answer. We are not forcing amalgamation on any community in this province. I was quite clear about that at the UNSM conference.

I toured this province. I met with every municipality. I met with every village. I told them that to be successful we have to think together, we have to organize together, we have to plan together, and we have to think about moving away from those traditional boundaries so that we can all be successful as municipalities in Nova Scotia.

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

#### **FISH. & AQUACULTURE - COOKE AQUA.: SITE DAMAGE - REPORT**

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. On January 5<sup>th</sup>, Cooke Aquaculture sustained damage at their Jordan Bay operation site. There have been conflicting reports of the extent of the damage sustained at the site.

Cooke Aquaculture, along with the honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, says there was minimal damage, that fish mortality was limited, and that no fish had escaped. Locals, on the other hand, paint a far different picture and show debris lying on the coastline. They are concerned that, based on the condition of the cages, fish did indeed escape. They refer to it as the salmon slaughter.

It has now been over a month. To set the record straight, will the minister commit to releasing the latest reports completed by his staff on the damage and cleanup at Cooke Aquaculture?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, it's a very good question. I thank the member for bringing it forward.

Indeed, we did review the site on several occasions. We actually sent our helicopters from the Department of Natural Resources up twice. There were accusations of fish floating all over the place and on the beaches and everything. We photographed it, and

there were absolutely none. Zero. We checked with the company and we verified that no fish escaped.

MS. MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, aquaculture is a vitally important industry to Nova Scotia. It accounts for \$60 million and hundreds of jobs for our rural communities. Consumers expect that the products they're consuming are safe and raised in humane conditions. The site at Jordan Bay has now experienced three incidents that have led to threatening the reputation of the Nova Scotia aquaculture industry and resulted in extremely negative headlines for the province.

My question is, can the minister clearly explain the steps taken by his department to ensure that there is no salmon slaughter part two?

MR. COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that was the case. Typically in a storm, some of the fish would die. That's a normal occurrence on any site. I will ask the member to also look on the beaches around that area and see the number of lobster traps that have washed up on the shore. It was a very severe storm, and according to Nova Scotia Power, some of the winds were higher than Hurricane Juan.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

### **H&W: EMERGENCY ROOM INCREASES - CONCERN**

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, in the last five years the number of patients visiting emergency rooms who don't have a family doctor has doubled. We know the numbers at the Halifax Infirmary, but what about our other hospitals? Surely if there are this many people in Halifax ERs, they must be showing up elsewhere as well.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness, can he tell this House how many patients across Nova Scotia are winding up in emergency rooms because they do not have a family doctor?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. It's no secret that there are many Nova Scotians looking for access to primary care services in their communities. That's why we commit to a number of initiatives to help encourage the recruitment and retention of family physicians, but also other health care professionals to join the teams with the family physicians to provide primary care access, to improve that access within our communities.

It's important to note that the emergency services that are available within the province provide care when needed. But the major priority around primary care, Mr. Speaker, is of course strengthening the teams we have, and expanding our teams across the province.



MS. MARTIN: We know that Halifax isn't the only place where Nova Scotians have no choice but to turn to emergency rooms for primary care.

We should not have a situation where people who need to see a regular family doctor wind up in hospital beds, but we do have that situation, Mr. Speaker. Because of this, we have terrible things happening. We have grown children watching elderly parents take their last breaths in crowded hospital corridors.

I have asked this before, and I'll ask again, does the Minister of Health and Wellness share our outrage at the state of health care in this province?

MR. DELOREY: I have never shied away from recognizing that there are challenges in our health care system, Mr. Speaker. What we have recognized is the need to do more.

That's why we continue to invest in expanding our primary care services. Just last week, a new program to help encourage the recruitment of international physicians to Nova Scotia, something that was done in partnership with my colleague, the Minister of Immigration. Mr. Speaker, we have expanded the tuition relief program and other incentives to (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

MR. DELOREY: Tuition relief and other incentives - we have made them available to physicians across the province, not limited to just some communities. In addition to that, we plan to expand our residency (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

MR. DELOREY: Our residency programs and collaborative care practice all in an effort to improve primary care access in communities across the province for all Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

### **EECD - FRENCH IMMERSION: TEACHER SHORTAGE - STEPS**

MR. TIM HALMAN: My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. He indicated, let's stop being middle of the road. I propose we start focusing where the rubber meets the road. Let's focus on the classrooms.

My question is about the conditions in our classroom. Since the school year has begun, there have been many reports, and my office has received multiple calls about the shortage of French teachers in our schools. In January, my colleague, the member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage, received more calls about the same issue.

The minister displayed leadership to the francophone community when the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial was left out of the closures recommended in the Glaze Report. But the continued shortage of qualified French teachers in our French immersion schools is a direct contrast to that leadership.

My question is, when will steps be taken to ensure French immersion students have qualified and consistent French teachers?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: In fact, the recruitment and retention of French-speaking teachers is a challenge in this province, but it's also a national challenge. That is being experienced right now in every jurisdiction outside of Québec in this country.

It is something that we do need to address. We're working with our B.Ed. program to ensure that we are doing our job recruiting those qualified teachers and making sure they have a clear path into the workforce in Nova Scotia.

MR. HALMAN: Of course, I encourage this government to continue doing that. French immersion students, especially in junior high, do not receive adequate and consistent French-language instruction. We know they're at a significant disadvantage when they reach high school. They are often forced to leave the immersion program or they require additional instruction because they lack the basics needed for success.

Bilingualism is an important skill for any Canadian or Nova Scotian to have. When will the government act to ensure our students have the opportunity to learn in French?

MR. CHURCHILL: That work is ongoing and will continue to be ongoing. This isn't a new challenge that this province is facing. Multiple governments have faced this shortage of French-speaking teachers. Other jurisdictions are experiencing it as well.

There is a critical mass issue in terms of how many people are entering into the workforce with that particular skill set. We do need to keep working together in the Atlantic Provinces to develop strategies. We will continue to work with our B.Ed. programs and our CSAP to ensure that we're doing our very best to meet the needs of our school communities.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**BUSINESS - DSME TRENTON: BUYER SEARCH - CONTINUE**

HON. PAT DUNN: My question is for the Minister of Business. On Thursday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, the minister visited the former DSME Trenton facility. Pictou County is still hoping that a buyer will surface and operate a business on this 116-acre site.

The facility requires approximately \$150,000 per month to maintain its operation. My question to the minister: will there be additional funds in the upcoming budget to continue the pursuit of a perspective buyer for this large facility?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I thank the member for the question. This government shares the concerns and wishes of the people of Pictou County. It has always been our intention to find a buyer, an operator, for that facility.

Having had the chance to see it and understand the magnitude of this place and the equipment that was invested in with the money they received from the previous government, it really is a valuable asset for the right taker. But at 430 thousand square feet, there would have to be the right-sized buyer.

We have been looking at this for a very long time. The point of the visit, for myself and for the staff, was to get another opportunity to spread the message publicly that we are looking for a suitor and that we want to have serious conversations. We're getting to that point.

As the member said, at \$150,000 per month for a few years now, we're going to have to make a decision very soon. We're hoping to get something solidified before the end of the fiscal year.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I hope the minister would agree that the facility still maintains promise and could be a viable operation once again. Pictou County, Nova Scotia, would welcome the jobs and spinoffs its continued operation would create. However, I acknowledge that the minister may not have any alternative going forward but to liquidate the assets.

The question to the minister is, in the event of a liquidation, could the minister provide some detail on the plan to remediate the site and whether he would consider turning the land over to the Town of Trenton?

MR. MACLELLAN: With respect to that question, really there are three options. The best one for our government and for the people of Pictou County and all Nova Scotians is that we find a buyer in totality that would take the entire precinct and use it for private-sector operations. The one that is certainly least favourable, that we have been trying to avoid and will continue to avoid to the extent possible, is that liquidation of assets just to recover the remaining costs that are associated with the remediation.

The middle one is to look at the different aspects of the precinct. Some buildings are very old. Some are new and have had recent retrofits. Again, with the overhead cranes and the significant valued assets that have been invested there, we can look at a sort of mix of remediating some parts of that precinct while selling others and opening up private-sector opportunities. All options are on the table. We just want to do the right thing and avoid any liquidation at all costs.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

### **TOURISM N.S.: VISTOR INFO. CENTRES - CLOSURE**

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, another question for the minister responsible for Tourism Nova Scotia. At last Fall's tourism conference, the minister for Tourism Nova Scotia referred to our provincial Visitor Information Centres as baby seals. Clearly, he would like to get rid of them, but he feels they're untouchable.

These centres provide valuable information to visitors and promotional opportunities for many small businesses. Who in the tourism audience wants him to close these centres and why?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, with the tourism centres, the VICs that we have, what I was referring to is the fact that there was talk about whether or not they were serving their purpose, based on the new formats of sharing information and collecting information for travellers. The data is very clear - they're not utilized as much as they used to be. Having said that, though, community stakeholders from tourism operators to the local workforce to citizens in general want to maintain their importance because they think they are valuable.

For us, when the people speak to us in that sense, we listen. We want to understand what the value is. If there is a transition that we can do in terms of a different model, different offerings inside these VICs, then that's what we're looking for. If you look at all these sites across the province, Mr. Speaker, they really do have a different application, the one at the Causeway, the one in Amherst, the one in Yarmouth. If you look at the different purposes, there is a varied usage for them. We just want to make the best of those, and we're not giving up on those until we find the right model for Tourism Nova Scotia.

MR. MACMASTER: I do take some comfort in the minister's words, because it does sound like he has heard from the industry and from the people who are creating the industry - all the business owners out there in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the government that in Port Hastings, in my constituency, over 75,000 people have stopped at the visitors centre. That is proof that these are the customers, and they want the want the service.

Will the minister confirm that he will keep our provincial Visitor Information Centres open because they are indeed helping to grow our tourism industry, which as I understand, we are all trying to grow and to double?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, every decision we make around tourism is to hit that \$4 billion goal. We're at about \$2.7 billion, which is pretty incredible. (Applause) Thank you. When I come to VICs again, Tourism Nova Scotia has more of a marketing and promotional mandate, not so much with operations as it used to be, but the VICs are important. They are important to the communities in which they serve and to that regional grid as the member has identified.

For us, we are committed to finding a solution. I really believe that there is a hybrid model of private-sector operation there with information services, but also including some of the things that Taste of Nova Scotia would do. For example, that could be a place for demonstration for all that we have in terms of our tourism complement.

I do see a future. It may not look like it did in the past, but we know VICs are important to the communities in which they serve and we'll make sure that we figure it out, take our time to do it right, and figure out the best model for each and every one of the VIC sites.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

### **LAE: WORKPLACE VIOLENCE - GENDER ISSUE**

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, every six days, a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner. We know that many individuals stay in dangerous situations not because they don't want to leave, but because they are financially entangled with their abuser. We also know that of those people who have reported incidents of domestic violence, more than 50 per cent have experienced an abusive incident at or near the workplace.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education is, does he agree that gendered violence is a workplace issue?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for the question. Any violence against women in this province is not only a workplace issue but it's a society issue, and it is one that this government takes very seriously. That's why we are also looking at legislation to help females who are in a work situation to be able to access time off to be able to deal with the situation they're in and to be able to have that support so that they don't feel that their job is in jeopardy.

MS. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister - that's a good segue into my next question. People should not be penalized when they are at work and victimized at

home or in public. In January, New Brunswick updated its Employment Standards Act by introducing paid leave provisions for people experiencing domestic or intimate partner violence. In modernizing the Act, they joined Manitoba, Ontario, Alberta, and Saskatchewan as a province where survivors of gender-based violence are eligible for practical support, not just rhetoric.

Will the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education commit to implementing paid leave for survivors of gender-based violence in Nova Scotia?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to add some clarification there - New Brunswick actually did not put paid leave. They did it through regulation. That is not a commitment that government has made, but what I will say is that I will bring in a minimum standard, and when we went out and did consultation with organizations in this province, what we found is most organizations were already exceeding a minimum standard that we would put in. My hope is that every company in this province would actually give individuals the support that they need, but what we will do in light of that is we will put the minimum standards in place so that anybody who is in this situation will not feel that their job is at risk.

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

**PREM. - N.S. HEALTH AUTHORITY: MEETING MINUTES - PUBLICIZE**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, back in October, the Premier committed to thinking about the possibility of requiring the Nova Scotia Health Authority to make minutes of their board meetings public - and I'll table those quotes actually from the Premier. It's a great idea. After all, the Health Authority gets more than \$2 billion in taxpayer funding. Taxpayers certainly should be able to see how their money is being spent with 100,000 Nova Scotians without a family doctor and some of the longest wait-lists in the country. We can't blame Nova Scotians for being so suspicious.

Will the Premier consider having the Nova Scotia Health Authority accountable to the people who fund it - will he make a decision to open up those minutes?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question again. She knows the Minister of Health and Wellness has been working with the Health Authority on a number of issues - I want to congratulate him. This is an issue that is important to many Nova Scotians, to all Nova Scotians. We will be embarking with the Health Authority in looking at a better way that we can engage Nova Scotians or ensure that Nova Scotians have access to the appropriate information that comes out of those meetings. With some issues that would come up, we would obviously go in camera, but we're looking at the possibility of ensuring that those Nova Scotians who want access to that information can have it.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow, Wednesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

I would now ask the New Democratic Party House Leader to provide the House business for tomorrow.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, we'll be calling three bills tomorrow: Bill No. 64, an Act to Amend Chapter 32 of the Acts of 2014, the Health Authorities Act, Respecting Board Meetings; Bill No. 67, an Act to Amend Chapter 32 of the Acts of 2014, the Health Authorities Act, to Require Quarterly Reports and an Annual Expenditure Plan; and Bill No. 68, an Act to Amend Chapter 18 of the Acts of 1998, the Municipal Government Act, and Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008, the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for adjournment, for the House to rise to sit again tomorrow, Wednesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

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

[The House rose at 2:51 p.m.]