



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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First Session

TUESDAY, MARCH 20, 2018

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, MARCH 20, 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 with the tradition on Budget Day in this House, with the consent of the House we will commence with the motion for Resolution No. 1004, respecting the estimates under Orders of the Day. This means that the daily routine will be delayed until after the response to the Budget Speech is adjourned, and Question Period will begin one hour after the start of the daily routine.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

[ORDERS OF THE DAY]

[GOVERNMENT BUSINESS]

[GOVERNMENT MOTIONS]

[Res. No. 1004, re Estimates - CW on Supply: Referred - notice given Mar. 7/18 - (Hon. Karen Casey)]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the notice of motion given by me on March 7, 2018, and the Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly, I have the honour, by command, to present a message from His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Nova Scotia, relating to the Estimates of Sums required for the service of the province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019, which is:

“I hereby transmit Estimates of Sums required for the Public Service of the Province for the year ending March 31, 2019, and in accordance with the Constitution Act of 1867, recommend them, together with the Budget Address by the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board and any resolutions or bills necessary or advisable to approve the Estimates and implement the budget measures to the House of Assembly.

Signed,

Arthur LeBlanc
Lieutenant Governor”

Mr. Speaker, at this time I wish to:

(1) table the message from His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor of the province transmitting the Estimates for the consideration of this House;

(2) table the Estimate Books;

(3) table the Government Business Plan;

(4) table the Crown Corporation Business Plans;

(5) table the Estimate and Crown Corporation Business Plans resolutions;

(6) deliver my Budget Speech; and

(7) move that the Estimates of Sums required for the Province of Nova Scotia for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019, being Supply, to be granted to Her Majesty and the Crown Corporation Business Plans be referred to the Committee of the Whole on Supply.

MR. SPEAKER: The Estimates are tabled.

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. KAREN CASEY Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are in Mi’kma’ki, the traditional territory of the Mi’kmaq people.

Introduction

One of the first steps in preparation for budget building is to establish a set of basic economic assumptions. Those assumptions become the foundation upon which the budget is built. It is critical that they be solid and reflect the economic conditions, not only of the province, but also at the national and international levels.

A true test of those assumptions is when they are presented to an economic panel, consisting of representation of the major banks, academics, and private sector economists. This provides me, as minister, with an independent assessment of the Department of Finance and Treasury Board's economic projections.

On January 9th, we joined the panel in Toronto by video conference and listened intently as each economist spoke specifically about the assumptions we had submitted for them to review. I am extremely gratified to know that their unanimous support for our assumptions were there and they described those assumptions as “prudent” and “reasonable.”

The economic assumptions are also central to the Office of the Auditor General's review of, and opinion on, the revenue estimates. No matters came up through the course of this work that caused any concerns regarding the reasonableness of these assumptions.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank staff at the Department of Finance and Treasury Board for their excellent work in determining those assumptions as they have formed the firm foundation on which this, the 2018-19 budget, has been built.

Our fiscal health in Nova Scotia is critical to our growth and success. When we formed government in 2013, the province was borrowing money to pay the bills. That path is not fiscally sustainable and it does not lead to good fiscal health for the province. That fiscal health is critical for us as we need to attract new business and new immigrants that will drive our economy.

I thank Nova Scotians for giving our government the opportunity to table the budget for 2018-19 - our third consecutive balanced budget. This budget is projecting a surplus of \$29.4 million and we are projecting a balanced budget over each of the next four fiscal years.

This improved financial health is being recognized.

The Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer has identified Nova Scotia as one of only two provinces in Canada that are on a fiscally sustainable path over the long term. Achieving that fiscal sustainability is so important, as it gives us the ability to make further investments in health care and education while we continue to live within our means. The

investments we make today will be affordable tomorrow, and will protect our children and grandchildren from the burden of a growing debt that they would carry.

Our government embraced stronger budgetary and financial management, and I am pleased to report that three credit rating agencies have acknowledged our improved fiscal health and have recognized that in their ratings for Nova Scotia. Credit rating agencies have been downgrading some provinces, but Nova Scotia is seen as a province with a stable credit outlook.

In fact, Nova Scotia is the only province whose credit rating currently has a positive outlook. These agencies are independent, and their analysis and ratings reflect their views on our province's credit worthiness.

Dominion Bond Rating Services, Standard and Poor's, and Moody's have all cited the province's long-term commitment to fiscal prudence and strong financial management practices as being positive.

With this solid financial foundation, the positive and improving credit ratings, strong financial management practices, and controlled departmental spending, we are in an excellent position to invest in programs and services that Nova Scotians need and deserve.

We can see that the investments and strategic decisions we made over the last four years are producing real results for Nova Scotia.

[1:15 p.m.]

Our wine industry is growing and receiving international recognition. Our fisheries exports are soaring, with exports for 2017 at an all-time high of \$2 billion. Our start-up ecosystem is considered one of the best in the country. Our ocean tech sector is a shining example on the international stage. Our world-class artists, musicians, book publishers, and crafts producers are exporting their works around the world. Our tourism industry shows the highest number of tourists in our history. Year after year, we continue to set new tourism records.

Our population is the highest ever. Since April 1, 2015, Nova Scotia's population has increased by 16,555, for a total population of 957,600 Nova Scotians. Mr. Speaker, that is the result of three important factors.

First, more young people are staying in or returning to Nova Scotia than are leaving. It is the first time in three decades that we have seen this trend.

Second, more immigration, including inter-provincial migration, means more people are choosing Nova Scotia for their home.

Third, our investments in sectors where Nova Scotia has a competitive advantage have created more jobs and more opportunities for more people in Nova Scotia.

In fact, the latest job numbers show there are more full-time jobs in Nova Scotia now than at any point in our history. Since coming to office in October 2013, there have been 16,000 new full-time jobs added to our province's economy.

We saw growth in both Nova Scotia's employment and its labour force for the first time since 2012. That strength is reflected in retail spending, which is up 6.2 per cent in 2017, over the previous year.

Working with our post-secondary institutions, businesses, and social enterprise communities has reversed the trend of youth out-migration.

One measure of how a province is performing is the ratio of net debt to GDP. When we formed government, the net debt-to-GDP ratio was 38.2 per cent. The One Nova Scotia Commission challenged the province to reduce that ratio to 30 per cent by 2024.

I am proud to say that each year since 2014 that ratio has decreased, from 38.2 per cent in 2014 to 35.8 per cent in 2017, and we are on track to achieve the 30 per cent target by 2024. We are trending in the right direction.

These successes take time, they take a plan, and they take determination. And they together make our province stronger. Continued strategic investment by our government will continue to move our province forward. We are a stronger province and we are in a positive financial position.

Healthier People and Communities

Mr. Speaker, since coming to office we acted to strengthen our health care system. Through our investments, we were able to hire more doctors, reduce the wait-list for home care, and perform more orthopaedic surgeries. There has been progress, but I want to clearly acknowledge on behalf of our government that we know there is more work to be done.

The Health and Wellness Minister spent time meeting with doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and other health professionals. We listened to Nova Scotians and this budget reflects what we heard.

Our top health care priority is improving access to primary health care, including access to family doctors. In the last year, more than 100 new doctors were hired to help the people of this province. However, we continue to look for new ways to bring more doctors here to practise.

We are making investments to advance several initiatives to help train, retain, and recruit more doctors.

We recently announced \$39.6 million as part of a multi-year plan to recognize the dedication of family doctors to their profession and to their patients. Our doctors are essential to the health care system, and we value their commitment.

We want to thank Doctors Nova Scotia for working with us to develop a suite of incentives to support our family doctors, to attract new ones, and to address the 811 Need a Family Practice list. This year, we are providing \$19.6 million toward that multi-year plan.

We will be offering doctors with an established family practice, or who are establishing a family practice, an increase in their compensation. Mr. Speaker, family doctors will get a raise.

We know there are Nova Scotians waiting for a family doctor, and it is a priority for this government to help increase access to primary care. We want to reduce the wait-list, and we cannot do it without help from family doctors.

As part of our plan, funding is available for incentives that are specifically structured to encourage doctors to take on more patients.

Our Patient Attachment Incentive will pay doctors who accept new patients from the 811 list, patients referred from an emergency department, and patients from a practice where a doctor is retiring or relocating.

Our Technology Incentive is a pilot project that pays doctors to communicate with their patients through telephone and e-health services. This will improve a patient's access to care and help doctors work more efficiently, which we hope will also allow them to take on more patients.

Our Enrolment Incentive encourages doctors to develop an up-to-date patient list. This will help us work with doctors to establish a new primary care payment model that supports collaborative practice and helps them, again, see more patients.

We will also compensate doctors who use electronic medical records. This will help improve overall quality of care in their practice.

Our health care system needs to reflect how new doctors want to practise. When health professionals work together, they can take on more patients, and people get healthier, and will see their quality of life improve.

We are investing an additional \$8 million to increase the number of collaborative care teams across the province and enhance existing teams. This brings our total annual investment to \$17.6 million.

In addition, we are funding more residency spaces at Dalhousie medical school. We know if people train here, they are more likely to stay here.

This budget contains funding for up to 10 new doctors to come here through the practice ready assessment program. In addition to this, our government recently announced a new immigration stream that will make it easier for internationally trained doctors to move and work here. We are only the second province in the country to offer a dedicated immigration stream for doctors - and we already have three recruits.

If doctors want to access our tuition support program, it will forgive up to \$120,000 of a doctor's tuition if they are willing to practise in an underserved community for five years. This will bring more doctors to rural and urban communities that are in need.

We have also provided more flexibility for doctors to determine where they want to practise in Nova Scotia.

The way we look at delivering primary health care is changing, so too are expectations and social awareness of mental health issues.

With this budget, we are taking steps to provide better access to mental health services, provide more mental health supports in our schools, and combat the problem of opioid addiction in Nova Scotia.

This budget contains \$2.9 million more for mental health services through the Department of Health and Wellness, for a total of \$287 million.

Those Nova Scotians facing a mental health crisis need more support. Our investments are providing funds to reduce wait-lists that are already too long.

Providing better access to these crucial services is necessary in communities throughout the province. This budget funds an expansion of community-based mental health supports to help those areas without quick access to outpatient clinics.

We recognize the importance of combating opioid addiction. Over the last year, we reduced wait-lists for treatment and provided more specialist support. To keep building on this success, the budget provides \$3 million for the second year of the Opioid Action Plan, bringing the two-year total to \$5.7 million.

Mr. Speaker, we will focus on further reducing wait lists, providing better access to naloxone kits, funding more education for the public and training for health care

providers, helping those seeking treatment, and supporting important harm reduction work in our communities.

This work was led by Dr. Robert Strang, Chief Medical Officer of Health; and Roger Merrick, Director of the Public Safety Division at the Department of Justice. Because of their efforts, even more families will get the help they so desperately need.

Many of our young people are struggling with mental health problems, and post-secondary students may be at particular risk due to the changes and pressures in their lives. This year, government will provide funding to pilot new technology-based interventions designed to provide essential support for their mental health.

Student groups have asked for this support, and the Mental Health Commission of Canada has endorsed the use of online therapy tools as a way to address wait times, create additional access to care, and promote a higher quality of care.

We also want to continue providing support to students in our schools. The SchoolsPlus program puts mental health resources into our schools. To date, it has been available to support 87,000 students, which is 74 per cent of the student population. We will continue to expand this program each year until it is available to every student in the province.

Youth health centres are school-based initiatives that also support student health. They offer our young people a range of services, including health education, health information and referrals, follow up and support, and some clinical services. There are youth health centres in 70 schools, staffed by part-time or full-time youth health coordinators. Government will provide an additional \$1 million to support these centres.

Mr. Speaker, this budget will increase the Take Home Therapies program by \$1.2 million, for a total of \$2 million - that is, take-home cancer therapy program. This will help Nova Scotians who are facing exceptionally high costs for take-home cancer drugs, and it will allow them to focus on their health rather than their medical expenses.

Nova Scotians want to live at home for as long as possible. That is why, since coming to office, we have continued to increase funding for home care services each year. Our efforts to fund and improve home care have produced results for Nova Scotians. The home support services wait list has been reduced by 72 per cent, and this budget provides even more funding - \$5.5 million to address the ongoing demand. This brings the total budget for home care services to \$266 million.

We want to support families whose loved ones can no longer care for themselves at home. The Caregiver Benefit program is there for them. Four hundred dollars a month is available to those who provide unpaid care for 20 or more hours per week to an adult

with high to very high care needs. This year's expansion will support 600 more caregivers, bringing the total who can benefit from this program to more than 2,500 Nova Scotians.

[1:30 p.m.]

Successfully receiving a hip or knee replacement dramatically changes a person's quality of life. In this year's budget, there is an additional \$8.8 million to strengthen the province's orthopaedic surgical services that will allow the orthopaedic teams to better respond to more of their patients' needs and reduce wait times.

Since 2013, government has added \$24.3 million to the budget for hip and knee surgeries, bringing the total number of surgeries performed in the last four years to 14,000 surgeries - that's 14,000 Nova Scotians who have a better quality of life. Our multi-year plan for orthopaedic surgery means we can dramatically reduce those wait times for even more.

With this year's additional funding, we will increase the number of surgeries performed by 350, for a total of 4,200 surgeries this year alone. As well, this funding supports creating a central booking process, making better use of operating rooms across the province, hiring more surgeons, and offering pre-habilitation services that help patients prepare for a successful surgery.

Dr. Marcy Saxe-Braithwaite and Dr. Eric Howatt are the co-chairs of the provincial orthopaedic working group. Their work, and our continued investment, will bring us closer to the six-month national standard for wait times. The working group and Nova Scotian surgeons developed this multi-year plan. Their opinions and expertise were a critical part of that process.

Mr. Speaker, this budget reflects our focus on reducing wait times - for family doctors, for mental health supports, for home care, and for surgeries. That is how we build a healthier, stronger Nova Scotia.

Investing in Early Years and Education

Beginning with our first budget, we invested in supports for our students and to improve their classrooms.

With the support of our federal partners, this budget includes \$15.5 million to support early childhood education programs that are accessible, affordable, and inclusive. In February, we changed the Nova Scotia Child Care Subsidy program so that more families across the province could receive more funding toward the cost of regulated child care.

We will ensure the long-term sustainability of a professional team of early childhood educators through the implementation of workforce development initiatives, in cooperation with our post-secondary institutions.

Last year marked a historic moment in our province's history as we launched a free, all-day pre-Primary program. This play-based program provides children with learning experiences, helps develop their social and emotional skills, and supports a successful transition to public school.

The pre-Primary program is about helping the province's four-year-olds be the best four-year-olds they can be. The research is clear, Mr. Speaker - giving children access to a high quality early learning program in the year before they start school, puts them in a better state of readiness when they arrive. It is a game changer for children, for families, and for the education system in this province.

The 2018-19 budget includes a further \$17.6 million investment. That will add about 130 more classes, for a total of about 184 classes in communities from Glace Bay to Yarmouth. The pre-primary program will continue to expand until every four-year-old in the province has access.

Investments like these help families access a free program for four-year-olds. They help many women get back into the workforce, and, of greatest importance, they give our children - regardless of their socio-economic status - the best possible start along their learning path. It provides an affordable option for parents.

This year's Education and Early Childhood Development budget remains focused on improving classroom conditions by working with teachers. We continue to fund the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions. The council consists mainly of classroom teachers. It provides direction on how to spend new funding earmarked for improving classrooms and helping students.

Last year, with a budget of \$10 million, the council recommended hiring 139 new teachers to cap class sizes from Grades 7 to 12, and to address junior high math and literacy supports. It brought in the first provincial attendance policy and invested in projects designed to help those students who are frequently absent from class. These improvements will continue to be funded in the 2018-19 budget.

Our government looks forward to the council's recommendations on how best to invest the additional \$10 million, which we have added also to this budget, for a total of \$20 million.

We have been clear - improving the model of inclusion in our schools in the province is a priority. We launched the Commission on Inclusive Education to help us

develop a plan that will support our children in our system who need it most. This budget has \$15 million to begin implementing recommendations from the commission. (Applause)

Improving this system will help students and will ensure that teachers can focus on what they do best - that is teaching. This means active involvement from other departments as well like Health and Wellness and Community Services, to provide a variety of supports based on student need.

We know there are communities, Mr. Speaker, in need of new schools. As recommended by Dr. Avis Glaze in her report and by the Auditor General, we are developing a plan for new school construction. By June 1, 2018, we will release our plan that will outline our road map for new school projects. This plan will reflect priorities that were identified by school boards.

Inclusive Economic Growth

Our population is growing, young people are starting to see Nova Scotia as a place of opportunity, and our key economic sectors are prospering. Momentum is with us, but we need to keep moving, keep growing, and keep finding new opportunities for growth.

We want to build on our tremendous immigration success by providing more funds to help market our province abroad and by providing more support to immigrants who choose to call Nova Scotia home. Immigration strengthens our economy, grows our population, revitalizes our communities, and adds to our province's diversity. (Applause)

Inter-provincial migration is also helping to realize that increase in youth population.

Lauren Hodgins works as an Aquaculture research technician at Nova Eel, a company owned by Nova Scotia glass eel fishermen who are investing in eel farming technology. Lauren came to study at Dalhousie University from her home province of Ontario, but says she fell in love with it here and wants to make this her home.

Lauren MacEachern is a staff scientist with Solid State Pharma here in Halifax. She hails from Coldbrook, Nova Scotia and studied at Memorial University in St. John's for her bachelor's degree and then at Dalhousie University for her master's. Lauren knew she wanted to stay here after graduation to lay down her own roots, and she says she is pleased to have found a career path that is aligned with her skills and education.

It is great to see our Nova Scotian youth choosing to stay home and building a life here, because they have fulfilling work and a connection to this province. It is also great to hear stories about young people who grew up in other places, yet they see opportunity here. I would like to thank both Lauren Hodgins and Lauren MacEachern for sharing their stories with me, and for joining us in the House today.

Mr. Speaker, we need to keep building on this success by continuing to invest in programs that help young Nova Scotians get their first job and build a career here. We are investing more than \$18 million in a suite of programs to achieve that goal.

Our government will continue to place a high priority on co-op placements, on mentorship programs, and on other opportunities to connect more young people to their career path and to employers.

The Graduate to Opportunity program helps businesses hire recent graduates so they can get their first job after university. This budget contains \$1.7 million more for this program, bringing it to a total of \$6.5 million this year.

The program was launched in 2015 and provides salary contributions to eligible businesses that hire recent graduates. The offset is 25 per cent in the first year and 12.5 per cent in the second. Employers will now receive an additional 10 per cent subsidy in the first year for diverse and international hires.

Since launching this program, we have helped more than 500 graduates get their first job.

This year, we are continuing to fund the Innovate to Opportunity program. With a \$1.7 million investment, this program helps businesses hire those with a master's degree or a PhD.

If a business is willing to hire a young person with these qualifications and pay them at least \$60,000 per year, government will subsidize a portion of those wages - between 35 and 50 per cent in the first year, 20 and 25 per cent in the second year, and 12 and a half per cent in their third year.

These graduates enter businesses and companies to help them conduct research and find new ideas to grow the business. Mr. Speaker, this program is a win-win. A young person gets a job and valuable experience, and a business gets help with their research and development. The government shows support for both through these investments.

One of the first companies on board with the Innovate to Opportunity program was Rimot, a local information technology and communications company. Its Chief Technology Officer, James Craig, says he has enjoyed working with university researchers in the past, and through this new program, he has hired Walter Adbe who has the skills that align well with the company's work and will help them compete globally.

I would like to thank James and Walter for coming to the House today along with their CEO, Andrew Boswell. I wish them the best of luck, and I expect Rimot's example will be followed by many others because of the Innovate to Opportunity program.

This year, we will also continue funding the Apprenticeship START program, which supports small and medium-sized businesses in hiring apprentices from under-represented groups or in rural Nova Scotia. This program currently supports 700 positions across the province.

These are the kinds of programs that will provide employment opportunities for young Nova Scotians entering the workforce.

Our fisheries exports are soaring. The sector's exports have grown for seven consecutive years and are now valued at \$2 billion.

This year's budget adds \$5.8 million to the Atlantic Fisheries Fund for a total provincial contribution of \$8.3 million this year. This program is delivered in partnership with the federal government and other Atlantic Provinces, and it will be used to help Nova Scotian companies create new products to sustain their export growth.

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The need to find long-term growth opportunities is why we also continue investing in the Aquaculture Development program. It funds important research to help the industry increase productivity, support the independent review board, and engage the public.

This work will be complemented by the Building Tomorrow Fund. The concept for this fund is based on the very successful Honeycrisp Orchard Renewal program. The \$3 million fund will help fisheries, aquaculture, and agriculture companies as they innovate, develop, and sell new products, explore new markets, and become more efficient in their operations. We will work with the industry as we develop this program.

[1:45 p.m.]

The Building Tomorrow Fund will also help to sustain sector growth, as will our Wine Development program. Last year, sales of Nova Scotia wines topped \$17 million. It is a growth category for sales at the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation. This program has already helped to increase the number of acres of grapes planted in Nova Scotia by 40 per cent, and that supports the goal of the Grape Growers Association to double their acreage by 2020.

Some of our agri-food businesses already see the value in exporting and are being recognized for their efforts.

From Lunenburg County, Terra Beata Farms grows cranberries, but is more significantly a processor, making products destined for local and international markets. Owner David Ernst says exporting is essential to his company, with 90 per cent of his sales outside the region and outside the country.

Terra Beata Farms employs 25 people directly and injects an even greater amount into the Nova Scotia economy indirectly via purchases of fruit, packaging, trucking, and other services necessary for a world-class operation. The company continues to win awards, including a Nova Scotia Export Achievement Award last year for their export success.

I am pleased to welcome David and Evelyn Ernst to the House today and wish them continued success bringing Nova Scotia cranberries to the world.

We continue to work to develop our natural resources, improving regulations to make them more responsive, and keeping our environment and our communities safe.

The Offshore Growth Strategy will be extended for an additional four years. We are pioneering new geoscience research techniques for offshore exploration. This will advance our understanding of our geology and our resources. This strategy will ensure Nova Scotia is positioned to take advantage of this economic opportunity, modernize our regulations, and market investment opportunities in Nova Scotia to global investors.

Over the coming year, we will also transfer the geoscience and mining division within the Department of Natural Resources to the Department of Energy. This will allow the merger of two teams with expertise in subsurface development and it will enhance development opportunities. Additionally, the move will also ensure that the forest industry continues to have a dedicated departmental focus. It will be structured to ensure government best achieves the necessary balance between protection and preservation, and sustainable development. Professor Bill Lahey is expected to conclude his review of forest practices in Nova Scotia by the end of April. That review will provide recommendations to government on ways to help achieve that delicate balance.

The Atlantic Gold Mine near Middle Musquodoboit was the only new gold mine to open in Canada in 2017. To build on this success, the government will launch the Mineral Resources Development Fund to support private-sector-led mineral exploration, the development of new mines, university research, and training. The new fund will help spur investment and development. It will also help create jobs and innovation in this primarily rural-based industry.

As much of our economic success depends on sending more of our products and services to other countries, we do remain focused on helping to bring more tourists to our province. Many small businesses - whether they are restaurants, bed and breakfasts, tour operators, shops, and cafés - rely on tourists for their success.

Our tourism sector already has had back-to-back record-setting years. We are making investments in our tourism sites and providing supports to help keep the sector growing.

As part of our tourism strategy, we need to make it easier for people to get to our province. That includes more direct flights coming to Nova Scotia from key markets in Asia, Europe, and the United States.

Improving tourists' experiences once they arrive in Nova Scotia is also critical. We will continue to work with other levels of government and the private sector to grow this industry.

We are improving the business climate in the province by reducing the tax burden on small businesses and by cutting \$25 million in red tape.

That work is getting national recognition. In January, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business granted Nova Scotia an A-minus grade on reducing red tape. Our grade has steadily increased from a D-minus in 2015. CFIB also praised our Business Navigator service as part of its national award program. We launched the navigator service as a pilot in 2017 to guide business owners through rules and regulations, and allow them to focus on opening, operating, and growing their businesses. The positive response from the small business community is why government will continue to fund the service on an ongoing basis.

To further improve the business climate in the province, we will introduce a new Innovation Equity Tax Credit. Beginning in 2019, it will be more narrowly focused and have a threshold similar to our neighbours. The existing Equity Tax Credit will be phased out over time. This change will create more investment in high-growth Nova Scotian businesses that are well positioned for a rapid scaling-up, for more employment, and for export growth.

Sustainable development of high-potential land and infrastructure to attract people and investment to Nova Scotia are both important. Waterfront Development has the experience and expertise in this area. This year, its mandate will expand to become the province's strategic property development corporation. Its mandate will focus on creating opportunities for entrepreneurs in both rural and urban communities.

Recently government announced the creation of a new rural Internet trust with an initial investment of an estimated \$120 million. Starting this year, funds from the trust will be used to support projects that will help bring better Internet services to under-served communities and businesses in this province. This trust is intended to leverage funding from the private sector, and from both municipal and federal governments.

The benefit of economic growth also lies in the other investments made possible by it. With a growing economy, we are able to provide more help to those who need it the most by making our province more accessible and inclusive, by helping women who are at risk, and by making investments that will help move people out of the cycle of poverty.

This budget includes \$18.3 million more to help people with disabilities. This funding will help more people transition from larger residential facilities into smaller community-based options. This, in turn, will enable those with disabilities to lead more independent lives.

We will also provide \$2 million to businesses and community groups to make their facilities more accessible to people with disabilities - whether it's their employees or their customers.

At-risk women will see more supports in this budget as we continue to dedicate annual funding across government departments to support survivors of sexual assault. Work with stakeholders to develop a provincial action plan to combat domestic violence is also an important part of this commitment. This year, \$2 million will fund grants for community projects, research, and other initiatives focused on preventing domestic violence and supporting their victims.

To help parents who receive both income assistance and child support payments, this budget provides \$3.4 million. It will fully exempt child support payments from income assistance calculations. This will help about 1,500 families who will no longer have their child support payments deducted from their income.

Our budget includes investments that will help break the cycle of poverty that is holding too many of our families back. We are making changes to income assistance. Our budget provides \$1.5 million to fund a program that will help income assistance clients earn more money without seeing a reduction in their payments.

This year, we are investing \$4 million for initiatives under the Blueprint to End Poverty, as part of our four-year, \$20 million commitment. This will bring the total two-year commitment to \$6 million. These funds provide grants to community organizations to test innovative ways to help address the poverty question.

When we first took office in 2013, we clearly stated that cutting the wait-list for affordable housing was a top priority. Over the first term, we reduced the wait-list by 20 per cent. Over the next three years, we want to reduce that by a further 30 per cent.

We are also investing in the current stock of public housing - \$12.4 million is dedicated to improving our buildings.

Finally, we are spending \$3 million to double the tax-free poverty reduction credit, from \$250 to \$500. The credit is provided quarterly to income assistance clients without children, who have an annual income of \$12,000 or less. Increasing their credit will provide added assistance to some of the most financially vulnerable people in Nova Scotia.

These commitments will move us closer to our goal of an inclusive Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia is a national leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and we will continue to address climate change. The province is investing \$3 million a year for four years to support the federal government's new Low Carbon Economy Fund. Our investment will leverage \$56 million in federal funding to create new programs and expand existing ones that help Nova Scotia homeowners and businesses become more energy efficient. This results in lower energy costs for the consumer and reduced emissions for the province.

A New Confidence

Whether we look at the growing technology sector in Cape Breton or the flourishing tourism sector on the South Shore, we are seeing people prospering in a stronger Nova Scotia. We are witnessing numerous success stories across the province, because Nova Scotians stepped up and worked together shoulder to shoulder with one another and with us.

Our success is not just limited to our borders. Recently, a collection of organizations from Atlantic Canada promoting an Ocean Supercluster was awarded its share of federal innovation funding. Fifty applicants competed for funding and this Atlantic Canadian project was selected as one of the winners. The federal funding of more than \$150 million will be matched dollar for dollar by the private sector.

Also, a team from the Sobey School of Business had an exciting weekend recently at the Venture Capital Investment Competition in the U.S. They took home a silver medal. This team of Nova Scotian students defeated teams from prestigious schools like Yale,

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Dartmouth College. Congratulations to all team members and their coaches.

[2:00 p.m.]

On the other side of the Atlantic, Nova Scotia wine is gracing the menu of one of the top restaurants in Europe. Benjamin Bridge's Brut Reserve 2008 was placed on the menu of Gordon Ramsay's three-star Michelin restaurant in London.

In New York, *Old Stock: A Refugee Love Story* by Halifax-based 2B theatre, is now playing Off Broadway. This is a true example of how we can create art here, and export it around the world.

We are competing and winning on the international stage. We are showing what a small province filled with passionate, creative, and innovative people can do.

We are able to achieve this while holding onto the traditional warmth and hospitality for which we are known. In this moment, we are showing what a new Nova Scotian confidence looks like.

This new confidence gives your government pride as we sell our province to the world. This new confidence is why we, as a people and a province, will be able to capitalize on the opportunities that lie ahead. It is why we will succeed when we work together.

On behalf of our government and in the best interest of Nova Scotians, I present, with both pride and optimism, the 2018-19 budget. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for highlighting some of the wonderful accomplishments of some Nova Scotians. I, for one, was not surprised that a team from Saint Mary's University defeated teams from Yale and MIT, and what have you. It did not surprise me at all.

Mr. Speaker, I ask permission to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. HOUSTON: Thank you. Seated in the west gallery, we have Mr. Geoff Stewart. He's a councillor from Colchester. He's the president of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities. I'm sure he's watching with interest. Thank you for joining us, Geoff. Maybe you could rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, politics are like statistics: they are what the government wants them to be at that particular time. I think that's what we see a bit into this budget today. I do want to thank the minister for tabling this budget and I want to thank the staff. We know how many staff work so diligently behind the scenes to put a document like this together. This is actually my sixth budget reply. When I started giving these replies, my hair was black and I'm still giving these replies, so I know what is involved. I've gotten to know a number of the staff that are involved in this, and they're all good people that care about this province. They put a lot into this, and I do thank them for that. (Applause)

When looking at the budget, it's important to be mindful of exactly what it is we're looking at. What we are looking at when we look at the budget is what the government thinks might happen this year. It's what the government wants to happen this year.

I know in last year's Budget Address, I talked about the big spike in personal income tax revenue that the province was anticipating and, at the time, I raised some questions around that. I said I wasn't feeling it. Being out around the province, talking to Nova Scotians, I wasn't feeling that optimism that they were all going to make more money and pay more taxes. I didn't feel it at that time and I highlighted that as part of the budget and, lo and behold, in this budget today, we do see a pretty significant downward revision in last year's personal income tax estimates. Almost \$145 million was overestimated at that time.

That is to bring home the point that this is only what the government hopes will happen. It is what the government wants to happen. Today I will say we're looking at the third balanced budget in a row, and I do tip my hat to the government for tabling a balanced budget.

I want to thank the national securities commission and cannabis users for producing this balanced budget, because what we've seen in this budget today is \$20 million of revenue estimates for cannabis. The government expects to receive \$20 million of cannabis revenue. Now, that will happen if cannabis becomes legal on July 1st, which it may - it may not - but it is based on the Liquor Corporation's estimates that they will sell 12 million grams of cannabis this year.

I am mindful of the times I've heard the government say that cannabis will either cost the province money or be revenue neutral. That's what I remember the government saying. I do see some nodding in agreement over there. Yet in today's budget, where we see a surplus of \$29 million tabled - would you believe, Mr. Speaker, that there is \$20 million of revenue in those numbers and zero expenses?

The government has not booked this to be neutral. The government has not booked this to be a money loser. It has booked it to be a \$20 million good guy, a cash cow. Now, that number might be a little high. I'm not sure. Time will tell. But if you take that out (Interruption) There's something in the air around that number, as my colleague says.

The other amount I found very interesting when you look at this budget - and remember, we went into budget lockup at 8:30 a.m. and we received hundreds and hundreds of pages of documents. We've gone through that in four or five hours and tried to identify what's happening.

This year, the province may sign on to the national securities regulator. It may happen. If they do, if they are able to negotiate going on to that, the province will receive a one-time payment, a little bonus of sorts, if you would, Mr. Speaker. Would you believe that that amount is \$77 million? For this year, in these numbers that we're looking at, we see \$17 million, give or take, that the province profits every year from running our own securities regulation system, plus \$77 million of a one-time windfall.

When you look at the \$20 million of cannabis revenue that is going directly to the bottom line and the \$77 million one-time windfall from the national securities commission, those are pretty big numbers. You can see how timing is everything. Politics is like statistics, because if not for those numbers, we would not be looking at a surplus today. We are looking at a balanced budget, but we need to be mindful of the numbers that make up that number.

I will say that this government has done a decent job of bringing the actual results in line with the budget numbers. We can talk about whether that has been good or not, and we will talk about that. But if we look at the budget that was tabled in September, there was a budgeted \$21 million surplus, and the actual number we're looking at today is about \$23 million, so I will acknowledge that what they budgeted to happen has pretty much actually happened. That is a good thing.

We need to think about value for money. I sometimes use the example of, if you have \$100 and you are going to go to the grocery store with your \$100 and you want to spend \$100 on groceries and you walk out and you've spent \$200, well, you've kind of blown the budget. But if you walk out with \$100, then you've stayed within your budget.

What we might be looking at here is that the government has stayed within their budget, but what if that \$100 worth of groceries you walk out with is \$100 worth of candy bars when you needed vegetables and meat? Well, in that case, staying within your budget doesn't actually deliver what you need delivered.

We need to be mindful that when we think about three balanced budgets in a row - one before us and two behind us - we ask, have those two balanced budgets that are behind us been good? Have the taxpayers gotten value for money? Have they delivered what the taxpayers need, or is this government's track record one of \$100 worth of candy bars?

Time will tell, but what I would say is that the last two balanced budgets have not been good for those Nova Scotians who need a doctor, for those Nova Scotians who have children in school, for those Nova Scotians who live on a road. These balanced budgets

haven't been good for them - or those looking for a job, because leadership goes beyond allocating money. You can budget money, you can allocate money, but what you really need is the leadership to properly manage the investment - that's what's important. In this province, we're spending \$10.8 billion - it should be enough to run the affairs of the province and deliver the services to the people. We're spending \$10.8 billion, and leadership means making sure that we get value for that \$10.8 billion - and that is the question that Nova Scotians have to ask themselves, are they getting bang for the buck under this government?

I think, when you start to look at health care - and in health care we're spending over \$4 billion - we have less than a million people and I think \$4 billion-plus should be enough. Mr. Speaker, I ask you, does it feel like enough? Does it feel like it's being spent properly when we have 100,000 Nova Scotians without a doctor, when we have Nova Scotians dying on stretchers in hallways of hospitals, when we have places like Pictou County, today no psychiatrists, not one, no ambulances available, \$4 billion should be enough - why isn't it enough?

Mr. Speaker, I would submit to you that it's because of a lack of leadership; it is because of the lack of good management. When we think about what's happening in health care, it always feels like we're playing catch-up; it always feels like there's a crisis. It doesn't feel like anyone has control over what is happening, there's always a panic situation, and that is what many Nova Scotians feel.

Last year - when we talk about the surplus and the numbers that are delivered, and I mentioned the surplus, \$23 million today they're reporting, is higher than what was budgeted in September. You ask, how does that happen? It happens by a variety of things. One, right in health care, which we talk a lot about in this House, this government under-spent the budget that they had available to them for health care clinicians, mental health clinicians, by \$4 million. The money was there in the budget, but it wasn't spent.

That is not providing service to Nova Scotians. That \$4 million wasn't spent, but this year in the budget we see before us today - let's all hail good news - \$2.9 million for mental health. Four million dollars was available last year; they didn't spend it. This year, they do a little bait-and-switch with \$2.9 million - it's actually less than what they had last year. Do they not understand the need to deliver services? We need to scrape past the bottom line of a balanced budget - the money is there, and the money needs to be spent properly to the benefit of Nova Scotians.

When I look at the budget this year - often in this House we hear I feel health care is in crisis, my colleagues feel health care is in crisis, and often the government says no, that's not true. We do see in the budget today, \$30 million in health care for "rising demands" - \$30 million for rising demands. We see things like \$6.8 million allocated for ambulance services for increased call volume.

[2:15 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, these things need to tie together. We have to start looking at the issue as a whole instead of throwing little band-aids on, because there's nothing in this budget. There are no new long-term care beds in this budget - zero, not one - and there are no structural changes to the way long-term care is delivered.

We know that ambulances are backed up out front of emergency rooms. They can't get into the bays because they can't get people into the hospital, because of the chaos that's happening inside. So what is the point of allocating \$6.8 million for increased call volumes, which by the way - the call volumes are increasing because people don't have access to primary care, so they're calling ambulances. What is the point of allocating \$6.8 million to increase call volumes when you haven't addressed the structural issues in the system?

It's a fool's game, Mr. Speaker. It's managing to the podium. It's managing until you get the microphone in your face and you get to hail the good news of \$2.9 million for mental health or the good news of \$6.8 million for ambulatory services, but you haven't addressed the structural problems.

To me, the worst part about it is that doctors are problem solvers. If we would work with doctors, they could help solve some of these problems. Instead, our government is at war with doctors and in the courts with doctors. Why don't we tap into some of the problem-solving abilities of doctors to address some of the structural issues that lie before us in the system?

It is not enough to throw money at something. It's not enough to move all the numbers around a spreadsheet and say, look, we've balanced the budget. You must deliver the services to Nova Scotians. When the services are delivered and the budget is properly balanced, then we can hail victory, but not until then.

Today we have a health care system where doctors - the very people who are supposed to keep people healthy - are being made unhealthy by their jobs. A young doctor told me that taking care of people's health is impacting his health. I will never forget Andy making that statement to me, the power it had over me. We shouldn't be in a situation like that.

It's time government backed up the investment with proper leadership and proper management. That is what needs to happen. Until then, how can people trust the government to spend money wisely?

Look at education. Is \$1.4 billion enough money to educate 20,000 students? That's the question that should be asked. Has the government looked at that? Has the government actually done an analysis, or have they filled in the numbers on the spreadsheet to make the budget balance?

When we look at money being spent, it's like many times what the government is doing is renovating the house while the roof is on fire. We need to understand that the roof is on fire and put that out, and then build the house. That's what we should be doing with our spending decisions.

The education system needs to be modernized. It's time to modernize the education system, and I have some advice for the government on how they could do that: ask teachers. They understand where the investment is required.

Today we see \$15 million to begin to address the recommendations of the Commission on Inclusive Education - \$15 million. I, too, am happy to see the government taking that report seriously. That report will be released on Monday, I believe. My question is, where does the number come from? Is it enough? Is it for additional staffing? Is it for physical changes to classes? What is it for? Is it yet again a number from the air? These are the questions that Nova Scotians are asking.

Who is quantifying what is required? Who has the vision for education? Who can tell this House where education is going in this province and why the investments are being made? (Interruption) I see the minister raised his hand and I will welcome when he uses an opportunity to share that vision with this House, because before the March break, we had hours and hours of debate. It is hard for Nova Scotians to understand where this is going, is it just a few little pieces here and there?

Teachers are problem solvers. They need to be involved in the process, and yet they feel devalued and disrespected by this government. What a shame that is, Mr. Speaker. Despite it all, teachers like Melissa from Antigonish, who spent her Friday night of March break grading papers. Teachers like John who is not a manager but a vice-principal, and a good one - he had quite an impact on many people that I know - and like my friend Kelly in the classroom.

Teachers like those three, and the other thousands of them in this province, feel devalued and disrespected. Yet, they get up and they go to their classroom every day with enthusiasm and commitment, and focus on the students. It's time the government supported them and backed them up. We need a government that recognizes the value of value for money. In a \$10 billion budget, there are many good things and there are many disappointments.

I have been asked a lot leading into the budget, would I look for one thing. The question I got asked the most was: Will you look and see if there's any money to fix my water; I live in Harrietsfield. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, there's not a penny in here for that. Despite quite a serious election promise that said it was coming, a year later there's bad news for the people of that area - nothing in this budget for their water. There's some interesting news around other items that I get asked about. (Interruptions) It's interesting that the member for the area finds it funny that there's nothing in this budget for his people.

There's some interesting news in this budget as well. We know that the debt servicing costs have gone up \$60 million. The debt of the province continues to inch up, the servicing costs continue to inch up - \$60 million in increased service costs, four times as much as allocated to inclusive education, just for perspective. There are all kinds of different types of news in this budget.

One of the things that was most disappointing to me was the failure to recognize seniors in this budget. The Department of Seniors' budget is \$3 million. Nine people, \$3 million. The Department of Seniors budget is .025 per cent of all spending. Mr. Speaker, seniors make up 20 per cent of the province. Seniors spending makes up .025 per cent.

Now, the government might say that department is responsible for making sure other departments invest in seniors. But when you ask the number across the government, how much is allocated to seniors, there is no answer. Nobody knows. You ask the Department of Health and Wellness, how much is allocated to health care, they'll tell you. You know what's allocated to mental health care from the health budget - 6.6 per cent of \$4-plus billion is allocated to mental health care. They'll tell you the number just like that. If you ask the government how much of our spending goes to seniors? It's a shrug of the shoulders. Should we be surprised?

Last year in September, when the minister gave the budget commentary in the Red Room there was a beautiful little poster beside the minister, and it was there again today - key priorities of government. I remember that poster from September, five key priorities of government: Healthier People and Communities; Investing in Early Years in Education; Safe and Connected Communities; Inclusive Economic Growth - that's four.

Also in September, there was one more: Caring for Seniors. Would you believe, Mr. Speaker, that's gone right now. Over there today, when you walk in the Red Room, that key priority of this government is gone, as evidenced by the budget allocation to seniors. What a shame. It is a serious disappointment for me to see that.

People want politicians to be problem solvers just like doctors are problem solvers, and teachers are problem solvers. They expect their politicians to be problem solvers as well, not masters of statistics. What we did see today in the minister's response, the minister talked about all the new jobs that had been created since this government has taken "the helm", I guess, for lack of a better word.

I checked it out during the speech and it's right here in black and white for everyone to see in the budget - Stronger Services and Supports, at the back. In 2013 the labour force of this province is 497,000. Listening to the commentary today from the government I expected that number to be much higher than 497,000. Well, imagine my surprise when I looked and saw that as of 2017, the labour force is smaller.

People don't want their politicians to be statisticians; they want them to be brokers of the truth in what's happening in this province. When I look at the number of people working in this province in 2013, 452,000 people working in this province. Well, maybe that number went up over all the wonderful economic growth we've had over these three balanced budgets. (Applause) Oh, oh, it didn't go up - a little premature on the applause. Neither does a shrinking workforce deserve an applause because there are only 449,000 people working.

Mr. Speaker, we can table balanced budgets from here until the sun goes down but the issue is fewer people are working, and we can estimate higher personal income tax revenue again this year, which we did. I will say it again that when I travel this province - and I have been travelling this province on a small project I have on the go - when I travel this province, I don't feel it. I don't feel it. I don't feel that people are excited about their economic prospects. I don't feel like they feel they're going to pay more tax next year. The reality is that when I said that last year, I hope I'm not right again. It gets tiring. (Laughter) I hope I'm not right again and we have to adjust the estimates downward.

I jest, Mr. Speaker. The bottom line, the bottom line is throwing money at things without managing, without showing leadership is not problem solving; throwing money at things without managing them is problem stretching. We need to be done with problem stretching in this province. We need problem solvers because it is time to raise the standard in this province where people can expect access to health care, where people can expect the very best of education by working with the teachers who know the changes that need to be made.

It's time we improve Nova Scotia because when governments listen to people and do what the people on the front lines and on the ground know needs to be done, that is when we will all win. This budget does not evidence a lot of winning for many people, except the government who can go to a podium and say our third balanced budget in a row. But the rest of Nova Scotians need to dig a bit deeper.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to adjourn debate on this process for today.

[2:30 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn debate on the Budget Address.

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

The motion is carried.

We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES****TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS****STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS****GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 1032

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas today I stand in the House of Assembly wearing a tie with the official tartan of the County of Colchester; and

Whereas this tartan, made of hunting tartan's colours, reflects the red soil along the Bay of Fundy, cross-woven with green from the forest, and the blue of the rivers and the bay, with gold from the flowers of the Colchester flag, which represents the Acadians, and the black stitching together from the medicine wheel that represents the Mi'kmaq; and

Whereas today the member for Colchester North, Minister of Finance and Treasury Board and Deputy Premier, presented her second consecutive balanced budget in this House to all Nova Scotians, as a proud daughter of Colchester County;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Colchester County on honouring their history with this new tartan.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried. (Standing Ovation)

The honourable Minister of Acadian Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 1033

HON. LENA DIAB: Monsieur le Président, à une date je demanderais l'adoption de la résolution suivante:

Attendu que cette année marque le 30^{ème} anniversaire de la Journée internationale de la Francophonie; et

Attendu que aujourd'hui le 20 mars 274, 000, 000 des francophones sur cinq continents célébreront la langue française, et la merveilleuse diversité de la francophonie mondiale; et

Attendu que la Nouvelle-Écosse avec l'établissement de L'Acadie, il y a plus de 400 ans, et devenue le berceau de la francophonie Canadienne, et qui l'abrite aujourd'hui encore une communauté Acadienne et francophone dynamique;

Par conséquent il est résolu que les députés de l'Assemblée législative se joignent à moi pour souhaiter à tous les acadiens et francophones de la Nouvelle-Écosse, du Canada et d'ailleurs dans le monde une excellente 30^{ème} Journée internationale de la Francophonie.

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

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

Whereas this year marks the 30th Anniversary of International Francophonie Day; and

Whereas today, March 20th, 274,000,000 francophones on five continents will be celebrating the French language, and the wonderful diversity of the world's Francophonie; and

Whereas Nova Scotia, with the establishment of L'Acadie over 400 years ago, became the birthplace of the Canadian Francophonie and to this day, is home to a dynamic and vibrant Acadian and francophone community;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in wishing all Acadians and francophones in Nova Scotia, in Canada, and elsewhere in the world, an excellent 30th International Francophonie Day.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services on an introduction.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I would draw the members' attention to the east gallery, where we are joined today by a friend of Nova Scotia: Dan MacKenzie, originally from Cape Breton. His military career took him out of province, but I'm here to tell you that he has bought some property in Nova Scotia, and he is looking forward to coming back. Dan, please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 88 - Entitled an Act to Develop a Computer Application for Mental Health Resources. (Ms. Karla MacFarlane)

Bill No. 89 - Entitled an Act Respecting Gender-neutral Identification. (Ms. Claudia Chender)

Bill No. 90 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1995-96. The Education Act. (Hon. Pat Dunn)

Bill No. 91 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 44 of the Acts of 2005. The Pre-primary Education Act. (Mr. Tim Halman)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**SCOTSBURN RECREATION:
WINTER CARNIVAL (2-4 FEB. 2018) - RECOGNIZE**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge and congratulate Scotsburn Recreation on another successful winter carnival, which took place over the weekend of February 2nd to 4th.

The weekend included a dance at the fire hall, a pancake breakfast, coasting, sleigh rides, 4-H bean supper, snowshoeing, dodgeball and a bring-a-friend-to-church service. It was an entertaining and joyous weekend filled with many exciting events.

I believe it is important to recognize the organizers, volunteers, community groups, local businesses, and participants who all made this winter carnival a resounding success.

Scotsburn Recreation demonstrates what a hard-working group of dedicated community members can truly accomplish in a small, rural community. We look forward to many more winter carnivals and the community spirit they inspire throughout Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

**DARTMOUTH COM. HEALTH BD.:
RECREATION ASSET MAP - RECOGNIZE**

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work of the Dartmouth Community Health Board. When residents of Dartmouth expressed a wish for accessible and affordable ways to become more active or participate in physical activity, the Dartmouth Community Health Board jumped into action and created the Dartmouth Recreation and Open Space Asset Map.

This is a free, interactive, online resource created by nursing student Brianna Swinimer that outlines extensive free and low-cost recreation assets within Dartmouth. Trails, parks, playgrounds, fields, and other recreational spaces are identified by colour-coded icons. This truly is an ongoing, community-based project created out of the local knowledge of recreation experts and community members alike.

While more resources are undoubtedly needed to promote health and wellness within our community, the Dartmouth Community Health Board's Asset Map is an innovative grassroots approach to improving health for everyone. Please join me in recognizing the forward-thinking work of this dedicated board of volunteers.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

GLOOSCAP FIRST NATION: COM. ECO. DEV. AWARD - CONGRATS.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with the House that Glooscap First Nation was recently named Community Economic Developer of the Year at the 2017 Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers Conference in Fredericton.

Economic development in this Kings South First Nation community over the past several years has been incredible and is highlighted by significant growth in their commercial fishery operation and an impressive new commercial development that will open this Spring. This small young First Nation is certainly punching above its weight in terms of economic development, and they are very deserving recipients of this prestigious national award.

I invite all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Chief Sid Peters and the Glooscap First Nation on this well-earned recognition and on their tremendously successful economic development efforts.

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

BENIN MISSION: HUMANITARIANISM - THANKS

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and thank all the members of the Benin Mission to Africa. Thirteen Nova Scotians went to Benin in January joined by three medical students, a doctor, and a nun from Brazil. Dr. Louis Bourget and his sister Dr. Monique Bourget started the foundation eight years ago.

This year I was privileged to travel with Dr. Bourget, his daughter Renee, nurse Judy Boucher, anesthesiologists Dr. Anne Aylmer and Dr. Vanessa Sweet, surgeons Dr. Kevin Johnson and Dr. Todd Stoddart, dental hygienist Beverly MacNeil, electrician Doug Macdonald, manager Dave Clark, and Sarah Daily, our chief cook and manager. Together, we completed 51 surgeries and provided medical care to over 800 patients.

This was an unforgettable 10-day trip, where living in a thatched hut was the norm and where one in five babies died after birth. I ask everyone in the Legislature to join me in thanking this amazing Benin team for their wonderful humanitarian work.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

**DORRIAN, TONY (YARMOUTH):
VOLUNTEER OF THE YR. - CONGRATS.**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, National Volunteer Week will be observed this year from April 15th to 21st. Volunteers from across Nova Scotia will be

honoured here in Halifax when the province holds its annual Volunteer Awards Ceremony on Monday, April 9th.

Among those being honoured will be Yarmouth's Tony Dorrian, who was selected by the Municipality of Yarmouth as its Volunteer of the Year for 2018. Tony Dorrian is co-chair of the Yarmouth County Community Health Board and is also involved with Yarmouth's annual Ten Thousand Villages event and with the St. Ambrose refugee committee.

I am proud to recognize Tony Dorrian today, and I ask this House of Assembly to join me in congratulating him on being named Municipality of Yarmouth's Volunteer of the Year for 2018 and in thanking him for giving his time and effort for those in need in our community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

MURRAY, DONNIE GAVIN: ALL-AROUND ATHLETE - TRIBUTE

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, Donnie Gavin Murray of New Glasgow may be in his 80s but he still loves to talk sports with anyone willing to listen.

Murray played softball in the Steeltown and junior hockey in the county, and was considered one of the best bowlers in the area. His most enjoyable outing was always arriving at the Abercrombie Golf Club with his friends before the break of dawn, anxiously waiting for enough daylight to see balls soaring into the sky.

Donnie was very quick to say that the two best professional teams in the world were the Maple Leafs for hockey and the Red Sox for baseball. Over the decades, he made numerous trips to Maple Leaf Gardens and Fenway Park.

Although he's not on the golf course seven mornings a week, he's still willing to share numerous stories from his years involved around sports.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**BRIDGEWATER GOW'S HOME HARDWARE:
BEST HARDWARE STORE AWARD - CONGRATS.**

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, the 2017 Outstanding Retailers Awards were handed out this past November. This national awards ceremony recognized Bridgewater's Gow's Home Hardware with the Best Hardware Store Award, the third time this store has received the honour.

Owner Amanda Fancy is the 6th generation of the family-owned-and-operated business. The staff at Bridgewater's Gow's Home Hardware are a close-knit group whose focus on our community is evident in their support of local non-profits and charities throughout the area. Always friendly, Bridgewater's Gow's is the first stop for many from contractors to do-it-yourselfers - people like me. Staff is there to help you find what you're looking for and make helpful suggestions along the way.

Congratulations to owner Amanda Fancy and the staff of Bridgewater's Gow's Home Hardware for this outstanding and well-deserved national recognition.

[2:45 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**YUNG, JASON - PHYSICIAN/CARDIOLOGIST:
COM. CARE - THANKS**

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, at a time when health care is in the news every day, it is vital that we continue to remind the health care workers in our province they are appreciated, they are respected, and they are valued.

Dartmouth East resident Dr. Jason Yung is a cardiologist at Dartmouth General Hospital. We know in Dartmouth East how lucky we are to have him. He has a reputation as being professional and direct, while being empathetic and comforting to his patients. Caring staff members can be the difference makers at a very trying time, Mr. Speaker. I'm so proud to have Dr. Yung both living and working in my community. I know those who have been his patients feel the same way.

I ask all members of this House to join me in thanking Dr. Yung and all our health care professionals for everything that they do.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**WEST KINGS WOLVERINES:
GIRLS HOCKEY REG. CHAMPS - CONGRATS.**

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I'm pleased to rise today to congratulate the West Kings Wolverines on winning the Western Region Division 2 Girls Hockey Championship on February 28th in Yarmouth.

The West Kings team went undefeated in the tournament, winning five games and capping off their perfect performance by shutting out the previously undefeated hosts, Yarmouth, 2-0 in the championship game, with Brooklyn Bishop and Leah Alders scoring

for the Wolverines. West Kings will now move on to the provincial championships, which will be held at the Mariners Centre in Yarmouth from March 23rd to March 25th.

As the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Kings West, I congratulate the West Kings girls' hockey team on their regional championship, and wish them all the best for another successful performance in the upcoming provincial championships in Yarmouth.

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

RCAF ASSOC. COLCHESTER WING 102: AWARD WINNERS - CONGRATS.

MR. LARRY HARRISON: I wish to commend the RCAF Association, Colchester Wing 102, and two of its members, all recipients of awards from the RCAF Association national branch, in appreciation of service, hard work, and efforts within the association.

On March 20th, Colchester Wing 102, chartered on June 25, 1949, will receive the Best Annual Report Award. Ralph Murphy will receive the association's third-highest honour, the Meritorious Service Award, presented to six individuals annually for their involvement, activities, and dedication. Kris Henderson, the Wing's public relations manager, will receive the Wing Bulletin Award.

The support that Colchester Wing 102 gives to Air Force veterans, Air Cadets, and Colchester communities is important and deserving of this recognition. I offer congratulations to the Wing, Ralph Murphy, and Kris Henderson.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

SMITH, OLIVER: OLIEBOTS, CANCER AWARENESS - CONGRATS.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Oliver Smith is a constituent of mine. He is 10 years old and has a rare form of bone cancer, Ewing sarcoma.

One day, Oliver's dad, Bryan, made him a wooden robot. They posted a picture of it on Facebook, and within that first night, they received 50 requests for what are now called Olliebots.

Olliebots are essentially robots made out of wooden blocks and tied together with hockey laces. They come with googly eyes and a decal over the heart. Oliver's first Olliebot came with a Toronto Maple Leafs sticker, his favourite team. Olliebots now come with decals for just about any hockey team. Madam Speaker, Olliebots now come with a small heart inside a capital "O." It appears on each robot over the area where a person's left hip would be, because this is the spot where Oliver's doctors found his cancer.

Olliebots sell for \$20, with proceeds going to the Ewings Cancer Foundation of Canada and to help other Nova Scotia families with travel costs if they need to travel to Halifax or farther for medical treatments.

Madam Speaker, I would like to take this moment to congratulate Oliver and his family for bringing awareness to Ewing sarcoma through their Olliebots and . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. Time has elapsed.

The honourable member for Sackville-Beaver Bank.

N.S. DIETITIANS: DIETITIANS DAY (14 MAR. 2018) - THANKS

MR. BRAD JOHNS: March, of course, is Nutrition Month. Nutrition Month is a public campaign with the theme: Unlock the Potential of Food. The goal of the campaign is to provide information and guidance to assist Nova Scotians and Canadians to discover the potential of food, and to improve their health and well-being.

Dietitians help Nova Scotians and Canadians to realize the potential of food to fuel, discover, prevent, and heal, as well as to bring us together.

Madam Speaker, dietitians believe in the power of food to enhance lives and improve health. March 14th was Dietitians Day, and I rise today to acknowledge and thank all those from this profession.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

DESMOND, VIOLA: MEMORIALIZED ON CDN. CURRENCY - RECOGNIZE

HON. KEITH COLWELL: I would like to recognize Viola Desmond as an African Nova Scotian woman who took a courageous stand against racism in 1946 and went to jail for it. Her crime was to sit in the “whites only” section, and she was charged with defrauding the province of 1 cent tax.

As this injustice continues to be recognized, Ms. Desmond has been honoured most recently with her image appearing on the new Canadian \$10 bill. This latest honour makes her the first Black person and the first non-royal woman to be memorialized on Canadian currency in circulation.

At a recent ceremony at the Halifax Central Library attended by the federal Finance Minister and Bank of Canada governor, Ms. Desmond’s sister Wanda Robson revealed the design of the new \$10 bill. Ms. Robson stated, “Our family will go down in history - in history, imagine that.”

I call on all members of this House to recognize the achievements of Viola Desmond in this ongoing struggle to eliminate racism in our province.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

WOHLMUTH, STEVE: CDN. GEO. TEACHER OF THE MONTH - CONGRATS.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Madam Speaker, *Canadian Geographic* has chosen Steve Wohlmuth from Central Kings Rural High School as their Geography Teacher of the Month.

Mr. Wohlmuth fell in love with geography at a young age and decided to become a teacher when he realized the subject came naturally to him. Five years ago, he expanded from teaching typical geography to Advanced Placement Human Geography and geology. These classes are offered online after school so that students from different schools can participate.

In 2012-13, he received the first-ever provincial award for Teachers Make a Difference, which was based on nominations from students and their parents.

Madam Speaker, I wish to congratulate Mr. Wohlmuth on his dedication to his students.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

BOND, SHELLEY: OWNER, EARTH AND BONES GALLERY - CONGRATS.

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Madam Speaker, a devastating accident can either destroy or rally your spirit. A woman from Lantz is an example of the latter. Shelley Bond suffered a tremendous injury in a baseball game in 2009. She moved back to Cape Breton to heal and recover from the trauma, returning to Lantz in 2016.

Still suffering mentally from the injury, which prevented her from returning to work in her health care field, she decided to follow her artistic passion and open a small gallery in Lantz. The Earth and Bones gallery speaks to her love of nature and to the healing of her shattered facial bones.

Through the sale of her art, painting lessons, parties, art camps, and interaction at her studio, she provides therapy not only for herself but for anyone suffering from mental illness.

I'd like to applaud and congratulate Shelley Bond for her initiative and resourcefulness in opening her gallery, Earth and Bones, which contributes to the well-being of all who visit.

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

MUISE, VINCE (SYDNEY RIVER), DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the late Vince Muise from Sydney River, who recently passed away at the age of 87. Vince Muise was a pure gentleman and a great community leader in sport and recreation, and his death is a sad loss to our community.

The Cape Breton Sport Heritage Hall of Fame twice recognized Vince's commitment to sport, as a builder in 2007 and again in 2016 as a member of the 1972 national championship team. While most knew Vince for his commitment to local baseball, he also served his community in many other aspects throughout the years. All told, he coached Little League baseball for 52 years.

As recognition of his dedication, the home field of the Sydney River Cardinals became the Vince Muise Field in 1999. I am very proud, Madam Speaker, to have had the pleasure to have known Vince Muise. He will be sadly missed by many.

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

**PARK, FLORENCE - ENGINEERING STUDENT (DALHOUSIE):
AWARD WINNER - CONGRATS.**

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize a student from Dalhousie University who attended a skills competition in Windsor, Ontario, for industrial and systems engineers.

Florence Park, president of the Dalhousie chapter of the Institute of Industrial and Systems Engineers, won the national championship of the theoretical paper competition. Florence will now be heading to Orlando, Florida, where she will be moving forward with her paper and presenting it to an international panel from May 19th to May 22nd. She will be representing Irving Shipbuilding, Dalhousie, and her Province of Nova Scotia.

Please join me in congratulating this spectacular student.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

MITTON, SARAH: #1 CDN. SHOT PUT - CONGRATS.

MS. KIM MASLAND: Last September, I stood to congratulate Queens County's Sarah Mitton on her Canada Games gold medal in shot put. Well, it seems that this young

woman is not yet done achieving excellence in her athletic career - on March 8th Sarah was named U Sport's outstanding female field performer.

Sarah is a University of Windsor Lancer and is currently ranked number one in Canada in the shot put, and she recently set another new personal best and a new Lancer record. Sarah's coach says that Sarah has been a key member in the success of her team this year. Her ability to be successful as a student athlete reflects her ability to be organized and her strong work ethic.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Sarah. Sarah, you make Queens County proud.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**COM. FOOD CTR. AND FAMILY CTR. (DARTMOUTH NORTH):
POLAR BEAR PLUNGE - CONGRATS.**

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: I rise today to honour the brave and dedicated supporters of the Dartmouth North Community Food Centre and Family Centre, who, on this past Saint Patrick's Day, shed their green outerwear and took a dip in frigid Lake Banook to raise money for the Good Food Crusaders Bluenose Marathon team.

About 40 people in total, in two groups, rushed into the water and back out to their waiting towels and blankets, and then warmed up with some delicious chili inside the Banook Canoe Club. From the perspective of this less brave but no less dedicated supporter of the food centre and family centre, it truly looked like a lot of fun and I will do my level best to be there next year for a dip - and that is in Hansard.

The Good Food Crusaders will run or walk the five-kilometre race at this year's Bluenose Marathon and their goal is to raise \$10,000 for the centre.

I ask all members to congratulate the brave dippers and the good work being done for our community by everyone involved in the Dartmouth North Community Food Centre and the Dartmouth Family Centre.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

**WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOC. (BARTON):
HISTORICAL TEA - RECOGNIZE**

MR. GORDON WILSON: During last year, there were many activities planned in our communities to celebrate Canada 150 - from the big fireworks display to smaller activities like the Canada Through the Ages tea hosted by the Women's Missionary Society of Saint Mary's Baptist Church in Barton.

The group decided that members serving tea would be dressed from the different eras of our first 150 years. People dropping in for a cup of tea may have been served by a woman dressed in a floor-length dress from the time of Confederation or a flower power outfit from the 1960s. The group also displayed photographs from the area, needlework, and jewellery. Some of these pieces have been passed down over several generations and are now treasured by their present owners.

I would like to recognize the Women's Missionary Society and all the community groups that organized their unique Canada 150 celebrations. We tend to focus on the big events in Canada 150, but there is something quintessentially Canadian about going out for a cup of tea and learning about your community's history.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

**CORMIER, ALEX (SYDNEY MINES):
BOOK/PARENTING, AUTISM - THANKS**

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: I rise today to commend Alex Cormier of Sydney Mines, author of the book, *Jump with Both Feet: The Encouraging Autism Journey of a Little Boy Named Em*.

Her five-year-old son Emmett has autism and the book is designed about her personal journey as the parent of an autistic child. Alex believes that parents must always have hope and do not let go. The book offers tips, successes, and challenges of the autism spectrum.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Alex for her insights and for sharing how Emmett has taught her to live outside the box and colour outside the lines. I feel there will be other books as Emmett goes through life.

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

YOUNG N.S. FARMERS: COM. CONTRIBUTIONS - GRATITUDE

HON. LLOYD HINES: Madam Speaker, there are some young farmers from the Manchester area of my riding whom I would like to acknowledge today. Brothers Luke and Dylan Grant have recently taken over the McGirr family beef farm, and newlyweds Melissa and Andrew Grace have begun farming chickens, pigs, and vegetables on the Sullivan family land.

Both are strong examples of the successful millennial business model of combining the valued knowledge of the past with the sustainable food movement of the future, and

both are doing commendable jobs of creating quality products that are quickly filling a need in this growing market.

The framework of this province was built on family farms just like the Sullivan's and McGirr's, and it is very encouraging to see our youth taking this initiative to "turn over the soil," if you will, and continue the long-held traditions of rural Nova Scotia.

Madam Speaker, farm life is not for the meek. It requires vigorous schedules, physical and mental resiliency, and a strong will to thrive even when the weather isn't playing fair. At the best of times it is still an immense undertaking.

I want these farmers, and all young farmers, to know that they are deeply appreciated for their strong contributions to our local community and to the farming community province-wide.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order. Time has really elapsed.

[3:00 p.m.]

The honourable member for Cape Breton-Richmond.

INTL. DAY OF LA FRANCOPHONIE: 20 MAR. 2018 - PRIDE

MS. ALANA PAON: Madam Speaker, the 20th edition of the Rendez-vous de la Francophonie offers a variety of activities, contests, and blogs interesting young and old from across the country. Celebrations began on March 1st and end on March 21st. Today, March 20th, is International Francophonie Day.

More than 3,000 activities are taking place across the country. In Cape Breton-Richmond, there are three activities in particular where the French language and culture are promoted, Alpha communautaire, je parle français avec mon enfant, et littératie numérique.

I am proud of my community as well as all communities across this province who have protected the French language and culture, especially Centre La Picasse and École Beau-Port. There is nothing more beautiful and magical than living in a community where I can still hear the language spoken by my ancestors.

I wish you a wonderful International Francophonie Day.

Madame la Présidente, pour leur 20^{ème} édition, les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie propose une panoplie d'activités, de concours, et de blogs intéressant les jeunes et moins jeunes de partout au pays. Les événements sont commencés le premier mars et finissent demain, le 21 mars. Aujourd'hui, c'est la Journée internationale de la Francophonie.

Pendant cette période, plus de 3,000 activités ont lieu autour du pays. Dans ma communauté, il y a trois activités en particulier où la langue et la culture françaises sont connues, Alpha communautaire, je parle français avec mon enfant, et littératie numérique.

Je suis fière de ma communauté et qui a travaillé pour protéger notre langue et culture françaises. Je félicite les organisations et les communautés de la province qui continuent de promouvoir notre langue et notre culture comme La Picasse, centre communautaire culturel, et École Beau-Port. Il n'y a rien de plus beau que de vivre dans une communauté où je peux encore entendre ma langue parlée par mes ancêtres.

Je vous souhaite une bonne Journée internationale de la Francophonie.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

BOUTILIER, MELVIN: HONORARY DOCTORATE, SMU - CONGRATS.

HON. LENA DIAB: Madam Speaker, today I stand to recognize an outstanding individual and a resident of Halifax Armdale, Melvin Boutilier. It was with great pride that in January I attended Saint Mary's University winter convocation where Mel was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Civil Law and joined the community of Saint Marians.

Mel rose from poverty in his childhood to a long and successful career. After retirement, he founded the Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank and, more recently, the Metro Care & Share Society. Mel's contributions to our city and to people's lives are simply impossible to measure. In his remarks, he joked with the graduates that it took him only 34 years to receive his honorary degree but that it felt like it was only yesterday that he retired and began his work in philanthropy and social enterprise.

Please join me in congratulating Mel on this well-deserved recognition and wishing him a happy 90th birthday.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

PUGWASH FARMERS MARKET: IMPROVED FACILITIES - COMMEND

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize Norene Smiley and her volunteers from the Pugwash Farmers' Market. They are receiving funding to help improve their facilities with new kiosks that will attract new vendors and new commerce.

Farmers' markets attract local, seasonal, and many tourists to the village. With the updated facilities, the farmers' market will be able to draw in more business and is an important part of Pugwash's business community. Norene and her volunteers see the

importance of this farmers' market and have worked hard to make it an important part of Pugwash's culture and economy.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

**ZINCK-GORDON, LORNA (UPPER TANTALLON):
FREE GRIEF SUPPORT GRP. - THANKS**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize Lorna Zinck-Gordon of Upper Tantallon. Lorna is a warm and giving lady who volunteers for many good causes in the community.

In the Spring of 2017, Lorna tragically lost her husband Ken, leaving the family devastated. A year later, as her family tries to heal from her sad loss, Lorna is once again thinking of others. After losing Ken, Lorna realized that her community did not have the benefit of a grief support group for families in similar situations, so she started one. She reached out to recruit people with expertise in counselling and spread the word in a local area to form a free grief support group that meets every Friday at the Estabrooks Community Hall.

I would like the members of this Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in thanking Lorna for her generosity of spirit and her ability to step up, even in the face of adversity, to lead by example.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

MALCOLM, COURTNEY (PICTOU CO.): HOCKEY TALENT - TRIBUTE

HON. PAT DUNN: Courtney Malcolm, an excellent local hockey star from Pictou County, was at a New York Rangers Training Camp when his promising hockey career came to a sudden end at the age of 21.

During one of the drills, his skate blade caught something and he slid into the goal posts, injuring his right leg.

Unfortunately, what appeared to be the beginning of a great career ended during that drill.

Malcolm entered the coaching ranks. He quickly became a big success, taking teams to provincial championships, often arriving home with a gold medal.

He often thinks about his junior hockey career in Québec, playing with future stars like Jean Beliveau, Boom Boom Geoffrion and Dickie Moore. One can only imagine the

career this very talented athlete could have had if not for a freak accident during an NHL training camp.

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

**ARMDALE FAIRVIEW ROCKINGHAM LIONS CLUB:
CHARITY FUNDRAISING - THANKS**

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: I would like to recognize the Armdale Fairview Rockingham Lions Club for their efforts in raising monies this year for the Terry Fox Foundation. This past September the club hosted their Road Toll, collecting donations from community members to support an amazing cause. This initiative was spearheaded by Vice President Larry Kennedy who presented Provincial Director of the foundation, Barbara Pate, with a cheque the following month.

In over 15 years, the Armdale Fairview Rockingham Lions Club has raised nearly \$24,000 for the Terry Fox Foundation. We are proud to have such a dedicated group of individuals in our community to help those in need.

Madam Speaker, I ask the members of this House to join me in thanking the Armdale Fairview Rockingham Lions Club for their tremendous dedication to such a wonderful cause.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MOORE, RICK: PHOTOGRAPHER - THANKS

MR. TIM HALMAN: As MLAs, we know the importance of photographs. A photograph can be used as a weapon, it can be used to make a point and, more importantly, it can be used to hold the memory.

With the amount of advertising that we put our faces on, I know all MLAs are grateful for the photographers who have helped us. That is why today I honour Dartmouth East resident Rick Moore. Rick is using his camera and his art to bring joy to the lives of those around him. Rick is a portrait, landscape, and lifestyle photographer whose approach is to capture stories through his photography. It is an honour to thank Rick for his beautiful photographs, and I ask all members of this House to thank Rick for sharing his talent with our community.

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

**LOCKVIEW HS BASKETBALL:
KIDNEY CANCER FUNDRAISER - THANKS**

MR. BILL HORNE: Congratulations to Dartmouth High girls and the Moncton High boys basketball teams on their recent win at the 8th annual Bill Dompierre Memorial Tournament. This annual tournament takes place at Lockview High School and features 12 high schools' boys and girls teams from across Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Lockview High hosts the tournament to honour an incredible man, Bill Dompierre, and to help raise money for the Kidney Cancer Canada. Bill started coaching basketball with Bedford Minor Basketball, and then moved on to coach at C.P. Allen, Lockview High, and finally Dartmouth High. Monies raised support Kidney Cancer Canada.

Please join me in thanking Lockview High basketball volunteers for their continued support on this great cause.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MOBILE FOOD MARKET: LEADERSHIP AWARD - CONGRATS.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Madam Speaker, on February 5th The Mobile Food Market received a silver medal in the IPAC/Deloitte Public Sector Leadership Awards. The market received this national recognition for their innovative and collaborative approach to addressing food insecurity.

The Mobile Food Market began a couple of years ago and provides fresh fruit and vegetables to communities at a reasonable price. A converted Metro Transit bus is used to bring the market to several communities in HRM biweekly. This project was made possible through the collaboration of the municipality, the provincial government, and many non-profit organizations.

Initially the market stopped at the Spryfield Lions rink but this service has been expanded to include a stop in Harrietsfield and two additional stops in Spryfield. During the winter months, the bus does not run, but product packs are available biweekly throughout the surrounding Spryfield area.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to congratulate The Mobile Food Market on receiving this prestigious recognition. Their unique approach to providing fresh fruit and vegetables to underserved communities has been a huge success. I'd also like to extend a special thank you . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, time has elapsed.

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

**MACMILLAN, LUKE: RECIPIENT, PENGROWTH
- N.S. ENERGY SCHOLARSHIP - CONGRATS.**

MR. LARRY HARRISON: I wish to congratulate 16 post-secondary students who have received the Pengrowth-Nova Scotia Energy Scholarship. These energy scholarships are awarded to candidates who pursue post-secondary studies in an energy-related field.

One of these recipients is South Colchester Academy graduate Luke Macmillan, who is pursuing a Bachelor of Engineering degree at Dalhousie University. Luke had said that the scholarship of \$2,500 per year for four years has raised his academic confidence and reduced the stress associated with being a student.

This is a wonderful example of investing in our youth and our future, and I again would like to congratulate and commend the efforts of Luke Macmillan and the other Pengrowth-Nova Scotia scholarship recipients.

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

**ST. MARGARET'S BAY STEWARDSHIP ASSOC.:
COM. DEVELOPMENT - CONGRATS.**

MR. HUGH MACKAY: In 2003 the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association was established to safeguard the natural beauty and enhance the quality of life in the St. Margaret's Bay area.

The association acts as a spokesperson and facilitator for bay area residents on a wide range of environmental challenges. They're involved in coastal stewardship as well as celebrating the bay's history, culture, and festivals. The volunteer organization's members are drawn from communities all around beautiful St. Margaret's Bay, from East Dover to the Aspotogan Peninsula.

The association supports development that is sustainable, environmentally sensitive, and respectful of community values. The association approaches each development as unique and is committed to working with government and developers to ensure the acknowledgement of a resident's concerns and reach consensus.

I ask the members of the House to join me in congratulating the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association in their important work to date and to wish them well in their future endeavours.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

CURL FOR CANCER (PICTOU): COM. FUNDRAISING - THANKS

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Madam Speaker, everybody wants to beat cancer, but not everybody knows how to do it.

Well, you hurry hard to participate in Pictou's Curl for Cancer, which was held on February 23, 2018 to show support. A total of \$19,115 was raised by dedicated, compassionate and determined community-minded folks. With the addition of \$16,000 raised in Westville, the total now stands at more than \$35,000. Wes Surrett and his Pictou Lodge Beach Resort were the top fundraising team, coming in at over \$1,300 at this year's bonspiel, which is an impressive total for one team and a great incentive to challenge for fundraising for next year.

We owe a big thank you to all the volunteers and donors who made this year's event a huge success. This is a true testament to the unity of the people from Pictou County.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

WHYATT, MIKE - DIR., SOCCER DEV.: CONGRATS.

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate Mike Whyatt on his recent appointment as director of soccer development for Soccer Nova Scotia. Mike will be responsible for overseeing the technical department of Soccer Nova Scotia, including support for the grassroots development officer, high performance manager, and the regional technical directors located across the province.

He will also represent Nova Scotia at the national level, sitting on the Canada Soccer Association's technical committee. Most interestingly, Mike will teach coach educators about child development theories as they relate to their coaching duties. Mike will be located at the BMO Soccer Centre in Clayton Park West.

I would like to congratulate Mike on this opportunity. There is no doubt that the sport will benefit from his expertise and experience.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member Kings North.

**SCHROEDER, MIKE:
COMPETITOR, MASTERCHEF CANADA - GOOD LUCK**

MR. JOHN LOHR: Madam Speaker, Kentville resident Mike Schroeder will be representing our town in the upcoming season of MasterChef Canada.

Mr. Schroeder says he's inspired by places he has visited and showcases that in his food. His father was a cook for the Army, and he says his grandmother's house was always

full of fresh food. This, combined with living coast to coast, has influenced his unique cooking style. He chose smoked wild boar with rosemary butter and Tuscan salad with citrus dressing for his audition meal.

I would like to wish Mike Schroeder the best of luck as he represents not only Nova Scotia but Kentville on the television show MasterChef Canada.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

FRAZEE, DAPHNE GERTRIDGE: AUTHOR/PUBLISHER - CONGRATS.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Kings South writer Daphne Gertride Frazee. Daphne is the author of three books. The first two capture the vibrant past of the Gaspereau Valley area, and the third details the impressive career of her grandfather, Charles Wright, who partnered with R. A Jodrey in establishing Minas Basin Pulp and Power Company, and pioneered the building of power plants in the area.

Daphne also created a monthly magazine, the Gaspereau Valley Gazette, to help enhance the sense of community in the Gaspereau Valley area. This important publication celebrated its 10th Anniversary in 2017.

I invite all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Daphne Gertride Frazee on her successful writing career thus far, and thanking her for her deep commitment to the history and culture of our community.

[3:15 p.m.]

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

**DUPUY, JESSICA:
CELEBRATING STUDENTS' ABORIGINAL HERITAGE - RECOGNIZE**

MR. BRAD JOHNS: I rise to recognize Ms. Jessica Dupuy, a teacher and Aboriginal Support Worker at Millwood High School in Middle Sackville, Nova Scotia, as well as the Aboriginal graduating students of the class of 2017.

Madam Speaker, 10 per cent of Millwood High School's student population is Indigenous, and Ms. Dupuy wanted to mark the achievement of the Indigenous members of the last year's graduating class.

Ms. Dupuy decided to make medicine bags for students, as a way to make them feel recognized, and encourage them to further explore their Aboriginal heritage. The medicine bags she crafted are made of deer hide, and contain sacred medicines such as

sweet grass and sage. The medicine bag, of course, is a long-standing Aboriginal tradition that represents wisdom, spirituality, and connection to the Creator.

Madam Speaker, in a nation where more than 50 per cent of First Nations young adults aged 20 to 24 have not completed high school, Ms. Dupuy's acknowledgement of her students' accomplishments is well-placed, and I ask that we recognize both Ms. Dupuy, as well as those hard working and dedicated students at Millwood High.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**KENNEDY, JUSTIN (AYLESFORD):
CRANBERRY CUP SKI CROSS - CONGRATS.**

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Madam Speaker, I rise today to offer congratulations to Justin Kennedy of Aylesford for placing First in the U12 male category at the Cranberry Cup Ski Cross event, held at Martock on February 18th.

The 2018 Cranberry Cup, hosted by the Martock Ski Club, brought approximately 135 competitors from the Atlantic region together for the annual racing event. The athletes who competed during the race weekend range from the ages of five to 11.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia, I would like to congratulate Justin Kennedy, a race competitor and member of the Martock Ski Race Club, on his victory at the Cranberry Cup, and wish him all the best in his sporting career. Furthermore, I would like to thank the event sponsors and volunteers for their efforts and their support to facilitate a successful race each season.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

SPECIAL OLYMPIANS: 2018 CAN. SUMMER GAMES - BEST WISHES

MS. KIM MASLAND: Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a group of Special Olympians from Queens County, who will represent Nova Scotia at the 2018 Canada Summer Games, being held this July and August.

These five athletes will each compete in three events: Rebecca Maule in the Shot Put, plus the 100 and 200 metres; Rebecca Delaney in the Standing Long Jump and the 100 and 200 metres; Colby Oickle in the Shot Put 100 and 200 metres; and Ben Theriau and Jamie Belong will both compete in the 100, 200, and 400 metres.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate all five for their dedication to sport, and for being chosen to represent Nova Scotia at this national event. We send them wishes for enjoyment and success in Antigonish.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

**BERTHIAUME, BEN:
AUS WOMEN'S HOCKEY COACH OF THE YEAR - CONGRATS.**

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Madam Speaker, Ben Berthiaume is an Antigonish native who, like most Antigonishers, has a love for hockey. His love and commitment to the sport has earned him the title of the 2018 Atlantic University Sport Women's Hockey Coach of the Year.

Ben is the head coach of the St. Francis Xavier X-Women's Hockey Team. He's been with the team for 14 years, first as an assistant coach, and stepping into the role of interim head coach in 2014. That year, he led the team to an AUS Championship. It's worth noting that at the time, Ben was also a full-time student at St. Francis Xavier finishing his Master of Education Degree in Leadership and Administration.

Madam Speaker, Ben was named Head Coach of the X-Women Hockey Team in 2017, a title I would say is well-earned, having been with the program for so many years. I'd like to offer my congratulations to Mr. Berthiaume for being named the AUS Women's Hockey Coach of the Year.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Madam Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction before my statement.

MADAM SPEAKER: Granted.

MR. ORRELL: I want to draw attention to the gallery opposite today where I have my son who arrived today in search of some employment opportunities but wanted to take in Question Period, so he decided to drop down and watch the proceedings today. I'd like to have everybody give him a warm welcome. (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

ROBSON, WANDA: AUTHOR/VIOLA DESMOND BIO. - CONGRATS.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Wanda Robson on the success of her book, *Sister to Courage: Stories from the World of Viola Desmond*. Ron Caplan assisted Wanda with her book about her sister, the civil rights leader who was arrested in 1946 for sitting in the "whites only" section of the Roseland Theatre in New Glasgow.

Wanda's book and Viola's life have brought many honours to Viola - a stamp with her likeness, a Halifax-Dartmouth ferry named after her, and now she will appear on the new Canadian \$10 bill.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Viola and her courage to generate change, and also Wanda Robson who let us know about her sister through her book.

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

**PRE-PRIMARY CLASSES:
ROSS ROAD/HUMBER PARK SCH. - CONGRATS.**

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the new pre-Primary classes announced for Humber Park and Ross Road Elementary schools in my area. These programs will assist the children in transitioning into the school system and provide them with a child-centred experience that will enable them the best start possible and success as they begin their education.

The pre-Primary program is an important step in a child's education and will serve all children and will provide an enriched experience for children and families who may not have been able to attend other early learning and childhood care programs. I am excited for these children and families as a pre-Primary program will prepare these children to go to school.

I applaud and congratulate the families at Humber Park and Ross Road Elementary schools on achieving and welcoming the new pre-Primary program to their schools and their communities.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**DALEY, VICKI (AMHERST):
ROTARY COM. FELLOWSHIP AWARD - RECOGNIZE**

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to recognize Vicki Daley of Amherst.

She is the recent recipient of the Amherst Rotary Club's Community Fellowship Award. This is presented to a non-Rotarian for their work in the community. Vicki is the driving force behind the Cumberland Health Auxiliary, the Highland Fling, and many other organizations in our community. She is simply an amazing woman.

Volunteers are an important part of our communities, and having people like Vicki Daley who are so involved keep our community growing and strong.

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

**MURDOCK, KRIS/DIBBLE, CAROL: BEAR RIVER COM. GREENHOUSE
AND WATERFRONT GARDENS - RECOGNIZE**

MR. GORDON WILSON: I want to recognize the efforts of Kris Murdock and Carol Dibble of the Bear River Community Greenhouse and Waterfront Gardens.

The greenhouse, part of the Solar Aquatic Treatment Plant was decommissioned in 2012 and was slated to be torn down. Kris and Carol proposed an alternative project to the municipality - to renovate the greenhouse and design a waterfront garden instead.

In addition to getting the support of the municipality, the project captured the imagination of the people of their community. The group also reserved one plot for people who did not have finances to buy fresh products or the physical ability or mobility to work in the greenhouse or the gardens, and another for the Bear River First Nation.

This is such a great project that opened a novel community meeting place as well and revitalized the waterfront of Bear River. For the people of Bear River, it quickly became a meeting place where they can get a bit of exercise, tend their crops, and grow their own fresh produce over the summer and Fall months.

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

**HENLEY HOUSE PUB (SHEET HBR.):
EAST COAST EXPERIENCE - COMMEND**

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of The Henley House Pub and Restaurant in Sheet Harbour. Built in 1916 by Roy (R.B.) and Loretta Henley, it served as an inn, a general store, an insurance office and family home for three generations of Henleys. Dr. Brad Atkinson and his wife Meryl purchased the home in 2008 and with love and respect have fully renovated it, lining the halls with authentic family photos and many artifacts from the original R.B.'s General Store and The East Inn.

Mr. Speaker, Brad and Meryl built a wonderful small business around the history of this beloved local treasure. The Henley House Pub and Restaurant showcases local music, offers a delicious menu, and provides a cultural experience rich with East Coast traditions and heritage. For that, I commend them.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

HS TEACHERS: CHAPERONE STUDENTS' EUROPE TRIP - THANKS

HON. LENA DIAB: I rise today to express a sincere thank you to the three teachers who chaperoned 27 high school students last week on the 2018 European trip - Mr. Andrew McIntosh, Ms. Jennifer Smith, and Ms. Victoria Best - for creating an everlasting, memorable experience for the 27 students, as well as their parents, putting their minds at ease throughout the whole eight days.

The children very much enjoyed all the sightseeing events in Paris. With the guided tours, they saw the Arc de Triomphe, Champs-Élysées, Eiffel Tower, and so many places. They also visited the famous Vimy Ridge and paid tribute to the veterans there, and Barcelona, Spain.

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

**ELLE DANCE ACADEMY (BEECHVILLE):
COMPETITIVE/RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS - CONGRATS.**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: I would like to recognize Elle Dance Academy in Beechville, owned by Lindsay Fraser. Elle Dance Academy offers a variety of classes and programs to suit dancers at any age and level.

Through the recreational dance program, students learn the basics of dance technique and perform at a year-end recital. The Recreational Dance program is often where dancers begin their training and eventually move on to dance competitively. The competitive dancers at Elle Dance Academy train a minimum of five hours a week. These dancers are required to take a weekly ballet class, on top of their choreographed classes, where they learn and rehearse routines for competition.

In the competitive dance program, the dancers compete at several competitions in the Spring and also perform in the year-end recital.

I'd like the members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Lindsay Fraser and Elle Dance Academy on their successful business and for encouraging so many young people to live an active lifestyle.

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

CHEDRAWE, SID: HFX. W. SESQUICENTENNIAL AWARD - CONGRATS.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: I would like to recognize Sid Chedrawe, a recipient of the Halifax West Sesquicentennial Award. In honour of Canada 150, Sid was honoured along with several others with the distinction of this award.

Mr. Chedrawe has accomplished many things, including founding the Atlantic Convenience Stores Association, and is also a founding member of the Canadian-Lebanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He is an active member of the Freemasons, Shriners, the Canadian Lebanon Society, and Diman Association Canada.

I ask the members of this House to join me in congratulating Sid in being awarded this esteemed award.

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

LIONS CHRISTMAS EXPRESS: COM. FOOD DRIVE - THANKS

MR. BILL HORNE: I am proud of my community and the continued support of the Lions Christmas Express. The Lions Club, local businesses, schools, churches, and volunteers work together to ensure that members of the community are cared for.

The local food drive is supported by our schools, as well as those attending the Lions Christmas Express parade. Many local businesses organized food, toys, clothes, and donation drives. Community groups collected warm hats and mittens, raffled off baskets, and volunteered their time. They sorted, packed, and delivered the food and gifts. In total, 105 local families were able to enjoy Christmas with the donations from the community.

Please join me in thanking everyone who supported the Christmas Express. It definitely is a team effort.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

**SPRYFIELD BUS. COMM'N. FESTIVE DINNER:
RECOGNIZING VOLUNTEERS - CONGRATS.**

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: The annual Spryfield Business Commission festival dinner not only brought local businesses together to celebrate, but it also honoured four outstanding volunteers from the Spryfield area. This year's recipients were Donna Flemming, Gina Gray, Eric Caines, and Darlene Burbridge. Donna Flemming was recognized for her role as the chair of the Long Lake Provincial Park Association. Gina Gray was recognized for her involvement with the Spryfield Santa Claus Parade, acting as co-chair and parade marshal. Eric Caines is a tireless volunteer in the community, acting as treasurer for the Spryfield Business Commission and the Long Lake Provincial Park Association. Eric also coaches Chebucto Minor Hockey. Darlene Burbridge was recognized for her role as Co-Chair of the Spryfield Harvest Festival.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate Donna, Gina, Eric, and Darlene for their outstanding community services. They all have made huge contributions to Spryfield and the surrounding communities.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's with 30 seconds.

DALHOUSIE UNIV.: 200th ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

MR. HUGH MACKAY: I rise today to salute my alma mater Dalhousie University on the dawn of its third century. We, the alumni, are proud to be part of one of Canada's first and finest universities, and to mark 200 years of contribution to our province, to our country, and to our world. 2018 is the year for us to reflect on all that has made Dalhousie a Canadian educator leader, and a research powerhouse. It is also a time for us to deliberate on what lies ahead - a new and unprecedented era for Dalhousie to chart new paths and to extend the boundaries of knowledge and intellectual . . .

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

[3:30 p.m.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

PREM. - MENTAL HEALTH CARE: OUTPATIENT CLINICS - ACCESS

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, for years, budget after budget from this government, we have been trying to make the government understand that we are in a mental health crisis. It's systemic, and it's an onslaught of tragic personal stories of struggle and loss.

This year's budget allocates \$2.9 million to mental health services, and for what? I quote from the release today - it's for ". . . community-based mental health supports to help those areas without quick access to outpatient clinics." This government's own website shows that wait times range between 45 days and a shameful 363 days.

I ask the Premier, can he please indicate which part of Nova Scotia currently does have quick access to outpatient clinics for mental health care?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to clarify some of her comments. There's actually an increase in the overall budget around mental health. I want to tell her that the overall mental health budget in the Department of Health and Wellness has gone from \$281 million to \$287 million. The youth centres across our province, where we have seen great results, have gone from \$2 million

to \$3 million. We've seen the SchoolsPlus programs increase from \$8.2 million to \$9.8 million, where we're seeing very positive stuff.

I would probably envision there will be stuff coming in when we're dealing with the whole issue of the inclusion report that we'll hear. Of course, we will announce the first project dealing with those issues at universities, which is \$500,000. That is a total of \$8.6 million. That brings our grand total on issues of mental health to over \$300 million.

MS. MACFARLANE: I thank the Premier for that answer. It was a question that was directly asked by those from the Finance and Treasury Board Department today.

In the past fiscal year, this government underspent its budget to pay clinicians by \$4 million, and this wasn't just for doctors. It's difficult to celebrate the \$2.9 million, or whatever number that the government is throwing out, when we don't have a plan. In fact, I believe that the number they're investing in mental health might be even less than what they invested in the rink in Windsor.

My question is, with communities losing psychiatrists, with people in crisis being sent home from emergency rooms to wait out the weekend, will the Premier please explain why the mental health of Nova Scotians is such a low priority in this budget?

THE PREMIER: I completely disagree with the honourable member's premise on the whole issue. As you can tell, through a number of departments, we have worked to continue to increase - in excess of \$8 million in addition to almost \$300 million to address the issue.

She's very right when she talks about hiring clinicians. It has been a challenge to hire psychiatrists. I'm very proud of the work we're doing with Doctors Nova Scotia. That was part of the announcement a few days ago, and I look forward to continuing to monitor and hear from the Minister of Health and Wellness about the great work he's doing with psychiatrists across this province so we can continue to make sure we have health care providers.

Let me be clear: there's not one simple answer. That's why we have built a wraparound approach and will continue to do so with all our partners to deliver mental health services to citizens.

MS. MACFARLANE: It seems like this government is downloading its responsibility for mental health services to community support groups. We're seeing it in Pictou County - we don't have a psychiatrist. I guess this way, perhaps they will have someone else to blame for this broken system.

I'm going to ask a straightforward, simple question. Is the Premier intending to put any more of the work of the Department of Health and Wellness or the Health Authority

on the backs of community supports and 1-800 numbers without the system of support they need?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of the work we have been able to do with departments across the province to continue to improve services to the citizens of this great province. We know there's more work to do.

We believe that we do that by including all Nova Scotians and those who have specialties to help us deliver that service. We're going to continue to work with those in communities.

The Progressive Conservatives may not think that partners in the community have any role to play. We believe in partnering with them and will continue to work with that. This investment makes a continued increase.

Again, as I said, the Minister of Health and Wellness is working with our partners to ensure we continue to hire more clinicians across this province to continue to provide those services in the communities where Nova Scotians need them.

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

PREM. - BUDGET: LONG-TERM CARE BEDS - OMISSION

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, the government today has brought in a budget which does not provide for the opening of a single new nursing home bed anywhere in our province. This has come at a time when we know that there are hundreds of thousands of patient bed days in our province's hospitals, where the bed is being occupied by people who are not hospital patients at all but nursing home candidates who are waiting for placement when there is no placement there for them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier, what possible account can he offer for himself as an explanation for this decision?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As he would know, under the first mandate of our government we continued to reduce that wait-list by over 50 per cent. We've heard from seniors in the province who wanted to make sure they can stay home and receive that service at home. That's why we've invested again, in this particular budget, in providing home care services. The investment we're making to broaden the caregiver allowance is providing for family members to care for people at home, where their loved ones want to be.

We're going to continue to work with our partners, and if it requires long-term care beds, we'll continue to build that into the capital plan as we move forward. We will

continue to work with hospitals to ensure that the very issue that the honourable member is talking about gets addressed.

The list he refers to takes in a lot of Nova Scotians - not just those, quite frankly, who are looking for long-term care. The list he is referring to is palliative care, people who can't transition home immediately today. They're not looking for nursing home beds. They are looking for loved ones to be able to look after them at home.

Those are all of the numbers that he has built around this. Unfortunately, it clouds the debate on the reality of what we really need in the system. It's not helping to find the common solution that we all believe we deserve.

MR. BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, the preponderant majority of the people in the category of whom I am speaking are people who are living in a hospital in the province while they're waiting for nursing home placement and who are in possession of a professional care assessment that says that they are at a point in life when they cannot return to their homes. To refer to this problem and to these people from the perspective of home care is a quadruple red herring and a ridiculous irrelevancy.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier, what does he say to the hundreds of people who are in our province waiting every day for the call to come from a nursing home so that they can make that transition that they're looking forward to - a call which is going to be that much delayed by the decision not to open any new nursing home beds in this budget?

THE PREMIER: Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. The reality of it is that we've continued to reduce the wait-list that grew under his Party. We've continued to reduce it by 50 per cent.

The list that he is referring to has on it people who are looking for palliative care. We're investing in hospice across the province. We're continuing to make sure we have those palliative care positions. We also know, in some cases, people on that list who want to transition to home need those supports in and around them. We're helping to transition them back to home with the investments we're making, and we'll continue to look with partners at whether or not we require more long-term care beds into the future. But the reality of it is, we're responding to the needs that we hear from Nova Scotians in the way that Nova Scotians want us to respond to them.

MR. BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, not only has the government failed to open a single new nursing home bed in this budget, they've also actively failed to replace the funds that they have taken away from the operating finances of nursing homes in the province over the last two years, which amount to around \$4 million.

I want to ask the Premier, what possible justification can he have for not only failing to open any new nursing home beds but also failing to put back the money that he has taken away from the nursing home beds we've got?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again, I want to thank the honourable member for the question.

We had this debate last year. What we did was rationalize the administration part of delivering long-term care. We replaced funding back into those nursing homes across the province to continue to make sure that we provide those services. (Interruptions)

Maybe one of his own colleagues wants to answer the question for him, Mr. Speaker. I think if they want to know (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, they couldn't answer it when they were in government. Now, all of a sudden, they get smart.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the reality of it is, we had this debate last year. When it came to the administration costs of long-term care facilities, we reduced that. Some of that money has gone back into the food budget and occupational health and safety to respond to the needs of the patients, for our loved ones who are in long-term care facilities.

We're continuing to work with our partners to ensure that those Nova Scotians who require long-term care get it and that those Nova Scotians who want to live the remaining years of their life at home - to make sure that we have resources and programs in place to allow them to do so.

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

PREM. - BUDGET: CANNABIS SALES - PROGRAMMING LACK

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier.

Ready or not, sometime this year we are going to be selling recreational cannabis. This budget anticipates gaining more than \$20 million in new taxes from cannabis, but warns that it will cost at least that much to sell it. It's a guesstimate, with a flexibility in the model.

Since this government has chosen to ignore the recommendations for keeping cannabis out of the hands of those under 25, or the strong recommendation not to sell it along with alcohol, it begs a very important question: why is there no money or programming in this budget to educate or reduce harm to Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, there are in budgets across that we have invested in - not only the issues she's talking about but in education, there's funding around policing and community safety. The reality of it is we had to identify, through the best information we had, to put a number item around the revenue. We built those budgets in our departments that were responsible. The Minister of Justice will be dealing with the issues around policing, the issues around safer communities. The Minister of Health and Wellness will be dealing with some of those issues.

We will also, as a broader government, be looking at how we communicate to make sure that we build on stuff that is happening at the national level. We built into our assumptions that we will be able to address the issues that will be part of this. I want to be clear: we have said all along that all the costs borne associated with this will fall back upon every provincial government across the country. We're still negotiating with the national government to ensure they cover their share of these expenses.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to see that tabled, because a week or two ago we asked the question about how much money would be coming for this such a thing and there was none at that point in time. On this side of the House, we have been asking for a plan, we've been asking for something beyond a possible list of locations to sell cannabis, and this budget has nothing beyond a sales plan. The budget certainly doesn't factor in the human costs associated with the use of cannabis.

Given the connection between cannabis and mental health crises, such as anxiety and panic attacks and schizophrenia, how can this government even consider working out the sales and then dealing with the fallout later?

THE PREMIER: Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. She is right, that's why we have a budget, we lay out the budget in this process. She'll get a chance to look at the entire budget as it goes forward, not only the revenue that's coming in from the sale of marijuana but the other stuff associated.

The fact of the matter is we had to put a line item in when it came to revenue, what were the best assumptions we had that were presented to us. We looked at it, that's the number we came up with and we built into our departments as we continue to look forward about how we build the costs associated with delivering this product to our citizens.

We're working with our partners, whether it's municipal or federal police forces, on the costs associated with ensuring they get the right devices in the system. Training requirements that are going to be there, we're building into our assumptions in the

Department of Justice. We're looking at the social costs that come into our system. We're working with the Minister of Health and Wellness as to how we address those across the departmental issues.

Let me assure the honourable member that like everything else in this budget, Mr. Speaker, we've covered the assumptions associated and we'll continue to deliver good, positive, forward-thinking government to the citizens of this great province.

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

PREM. - BUDGET: LONG-TERM CARE BEDS - OMISSION IMPACT

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, by not opening a single new nursing home bed through this budget anywhere across the province, the government is having a severely negative impact on patient flow in the hospitals of the province. Across Nova Scotia we have paramedics waiting 8, 10, 12, 14 hours to be able to offload patients because there is no room in the hospitals. We have patients who are being cared for on stretchers in hallways and corridors, in the alcove by the ice machine, and Lord knows where, because there is no room in the hospital.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier, does he not see the negative impact on the efficiency and the quality of care in our hospitals that is going to flow from this negative decision not to open a single nursing home bed with this budget?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, in that long, drawn-out preamble coming into the question, the reality of one of the issues he brought into that is the whole EHS being stopped at health care facilities is a real issue, it's one that we need to address.

The issue that he speaks about, long-term care patients, he is equating that to the reason that ambulances are there. We don't necessarily agree with his vision of that or his rationale for that. What we do know is there is a challenge associated with EHS in ambulances being too long in hospitals. We're going to work with our partner to ensure that that transition, that hand-off, from highly qualified paramedics and the rigs that they operate in, that happens to our health care providers so that we can transition back into ensuring that our highly qualified paramedics are out being able to respond to calls in the community.

MR. BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, here's a short preamble. The decision to not open a single new nursing home bed in our province is a disappointment, a letdown, and a sadness to the people of Nova Scotia.

Therefore I want to ask the Premier, what else are the people of our province to think but that he and his government, at some level, are failing to see or understand or grasp the depth of the health care crisis as we see it and experience it in the number of people in

our province who are living in hospitals because there's no place for them in a nursing home?

[3:45 p.m.]

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question coming from the honourable member. I disagree with the entire premise as he's laying it out.

We continue to invest where Nova Scotians have told us they wanted us to. Nova Scotians have told us they want to remain in their home as long as possible. We continue on that. We have reduced the wait-list for long-term care by over 50 per cent. We're going to continue to work with families who are caring for loved ones whose loved one wants to be at home for as long as possible. We have done that by broadening the caregivers allowance. We're continuing to work with them and our partners.

As I said to the honourable member in my first question, we'll continue to watch what's happening around long-term care facilities. But the issue that he's using to analyze and equate why we need more long-term care beds, it's just not accurate.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

H&W: DEFINED LICENCE PHYSICIANS - ACADEMIC SUPPORT

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ. This government is not putting the money where the people of Nova Scotia want it. Psychiatry is a perfect example. Pictou has no psychiatrist. Cape Breton has very few. People can't get access to care.

One of the reasons is that the college changed the licensing laws. I brought this up last Fall to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Can he please tell us today, where in the budget is money to help find licensed physicians and provide academic support for them so they can pass their exams and stay and practise here in this province?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, there is work within the Department of Health and Wellness as well as the partners, the Nova Scotia Health Authority, and work with our physicians through a variety of programs to support their needs and professional developments, as well as funding within their own professional body, Doctors Nova Scotia. There are a variety of opportunities. The funding is available for programs that we have, and we invest heavily in a number of other programs and expanding in this year's budget.

MS. SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, there is actually no funding for defined-licence physicians in this province. While our government is bragging that they're over in the U.K. recruiting new physicians, they're leaving faster than they can be recruited

because these defined-licence doctors are coming here with no academic support. They're expected to pass Royal College exams with no academic support while working full time.

Can the Minister of Health and Wellness please tell us again, where in the budget is there money to help bring in psychiatrists and support them to practise here in Nova Scotia to reduce the risk of suicide in people with mental health crises in our province?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Obviously, as we have discussed several times, the efforts to recruit and expand access to mental health clinicians, including psychiatrists, throughout the province is ongoing. The budget money is there to fund these positions. I want to assure all Nova Scotians that is the case.

The efforts that we have highlighted with respect to recruiting and in partnership with my colleague in the Department of Immigration are targeted preliminarily in areas that don't require defined licence but those individuals who can come into Nova Scotia and practise with a full licence. That's why we have targeted those areas like the U.K. and the U.S., which already received full licence recognition.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

**FIN. & TREASURY BD. - PERSONAL INCOME TAX REV.:
REDUCTION - EXPLAIN**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. We had two budgets tabled last year, one in the Spring and one in the Fall.

When the Fall budget was tabled, we noted that the estimate for personal income tax revenue had reduced by \$30 million between the Spring and the Fall budgets. Today we learned that even that reduced number was still too high. There was a further reduction of over \$140 million. This is a key indicator of personal income generation, and a slowdown in personal income generation, the taxes they're paying, is not a good sign for the economy.

I would like to ask the minister, can the minister explain why the province has seen what has amounted to \$175 million reduction in personal income tax revenues over the past year? Why has that happened, and what does that say about our economy?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, the member refers, I believe, to the December forecast - the September budget and the December forecast. The same with our final forecast, which we tabled today. All those numbers are based on assumptions. When you look at the best information you have at the time, you base your budget on that assumption.

A budget is a plan, it is a long-range plan. We recognize there are times when the revenue is up and times when the expenses are up, so a balance between those two is what gives you a balanced budget.

MR. HOUSTON: Declining personal income tax revenue is an indicator of a declining economy, and that slowdown will eventually come. We'll see that in higher unemployment, and we'll see it in greater out-migration. It's the economic canary in the coal mine.

Yet today, in the budget tabled today, we see this government is quick to estimate an increase again in personal income tax revenue, despite the reality of what has happened over the past year. How can this government project continued economic growth in the face of the recent trend, which is downward revisions?

MS. CASEY: I would remind the member and others to go back to the Budget Speech that was presented today where we talked about 16,000 new, full-time jobs in the province. Mr. Speaker, those new jobs - the consumer spending is up by 6 per cent over last year. Those are all indicators that the economy is growing, based on employment and spending.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

FIN. & TREASURY BD. - BUDGET: JOB INCREASE NUMBERS - EXPLAIN

MR. TIM HOUSTON: The minister has referred to increasing employment and increasing jobs in the province. I don't see that from the budget. I'd like to refer the minister to the budget documents today, Pages 70 and 71, where the indication is that the labour force in 2013 was 497,000. It is, for 2017, down to 490,000. That's a reduction.

How can the minister claim that jobs are increasing, and things are great, when the reality is that personal income tax revenue is decreasing, and being revised downward, and their own numbers of this government refute the claim that there are more jobs?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I will go back to the 16,000 that I mentioned in the speech and I will table the document that supports that. I said that since we took office in 2013 and until now, there had been an increase of 16,000 in the workforce. In 2013 that number was 359,500. In February 2018, it was 375,500. My math gives 16,000. I'll table that.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister to table that document so we can understand the discrepancy. Maybe it's a discrepancy between full-time and people working part-time being added into it. It's an important distinction because it's an indication of economic health, it's an indication of where our economy is going.

I would ask the minister, despite all the numbers about who is working and who might not be, we'll sort that out. The reality is that the personal income tax revenue projections are going down. They were revised downward between the Spring budget and the Fall budget, and the adjustments today show that even that downward revision wasn't high enough, they keep going down.

Is the minister concerned that the numbers for personal income tax revenue in this budget aren't a true indication of what's happening in the economy?

MS. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I did table that document. I'm sure you can get it and have a look at that. As I said before, whenever you are building a budget, whenever you are making a plan, you have to look at revenue and expenses. You have to judge those based on assumptions, based on projections, and build a budget based on that. We did that.

Yes, we are concerned when any revenue is going down, but we also have to make sure that we adjust our spending to accommodate that decrease.

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

H&W - MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS STRAT.: CONTINUATION - FAILURE

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. This budget acknowledges that Nova Scotians are facing a mental health crisis and that they need more support. Unfortunately, what we've seen here is a drop in the bucket compared to what is needed.

I was proud to be a part of a government that established the province's first Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. Mr. Speaker, given the urgent need, why has this government failed to continue to update the work of this important strategy?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for both his question and his work around mental health during his time in office and - I'm sure, as his question addresses - his continued interest in this important area.

The work that's ongoing - Nova Scotians would know that there have been a number of initiatives that we've taken since forming government to receive feedback and recommendations from experts. There's a minister's panel that made a number of recommendations. We had Dr. Stan Kutcher respond to an emerging situation last June. We received recommendations from the Auditor General.

All of this work supports our efforts to update the strategy to move forward and continued investments in mental health priorities.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, no mention in the Budget Speech today about the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. They did mention a \$2.9 million increase to the budget for mental health, which is about 1 per cent. That's less than the rate of inflation, and amounts to status quo in real terms.

The budget for addictions services last year was underspent by \$2.5 million. The budget for the IWK mental health services, underspent by \$1 million. The Nova Scotia Health Authority mental health services, underspent by \$750 million.

If the minister knows that Nova Scotians need more mental health support, why don't we see that reflected in this year's budget?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as I'd mentioned, we continue to recognize the needs of Nova Scotians. We've also acknowledged that the recruitment efforts are ongoing to secure the mental health clinicians we need in our communities across Nova Scotia - the full range of clinicians, from psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurse practitioners, and physicians - all of the health care professionals who provide supports to our Nova Scotians.

I'd like to let the member know that we are having successes. Just recently, as part of our collaborative care practices, we've recognized the role that social workers play. We had the opportunity to announce new social workers joining collaborative practices in Nova Scotia.

This is growth, this is progress, and this is the work that we continue to be committed to moving forward on.

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

TOURISM N.S.: FISHERMAN'S COVE WHARF - ACTION

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Tourism Nova Scotia.

In this budget year, it looks like there is going to be less money for tourism compared to the previous year, including less money for marketing. In my constituency, as I mentioned before, we have Fisherman's Cove, where we don't have any place to dock a boat if you want to come over from Halifax or Bedford or even Dartmouth.

I'm just wondering if the minister can explain to us what they're doing in terms of trying to help increase the tourism in our area, as well as whether there are efforts to help us get the wharf we need to increase our tourism.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, obviously the budget is reflective of what not only the government but the private sector, the stakeholders, are doing to reach that goal of \$4 billion of tourism revenue by 2024. Currently, we are at \$2.7 billion at this point, which is significant, and there are a number of sectors, a number of different areas, large and small, that have a role to play.

I don't know the specifics of the member's constituency and what that entails, but I'd be happy to have that conversation.

We look at the broad issues, such as marketing, which is a big one. We let the experts and the third-party players do that for us, and they do a great job. We look at our investments and our infrastructure, which has been significant and historic, and of course, the direct air access, which is going to make a big difference for the tourism complement here in Nova Scotia.

We're doing great things in the tourism sector leading that charge.

MS. ADAMS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that answer.

My question now is to the Minister of Community Services. In the last three years, there was a \$6 million budget for the sexual violence strategy. In this year's budget document, it says that at-risk women will be getting a \$2 million fund grant for community projects, research, and other initiatives focusing on preventing domestic violence and supporting victims.

I'm wondering if that \$2 million is a continuation of that \$6 million program, or if that program funding has been completely cut and now we have a different budget for sexual assault victims?

[4:00 p.m.]

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for that question. Of course, we want to support victims of violence whether it's sexual violence or domestic violence.

As we indicated previously, the Sexual Violence Strategy was ending. There was \$2 million in the budget for each of the years of the Sexual Violence Strategy. There is \$1 million dollars continuing forward on sexual violence. Of course, sexual violence can also be domestic violence, so there is money for that as well. There is also money going to Health and Wellness for the continuation of trauma counselling.

MR. SPEAKER: Just before we move on to the next question, I want to remind the honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage that the supplementary question is

intended to be a supplement to your first question, not a separate question from your first question.

The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

EECD - SCH. INCLUSION REPORT: IMPLEMENT - COST

MR. TIM HALMAN: My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Nova Scotians are waiting for the province's report on school inclusion, and according to the latest information from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, they are not due to release the final report until next week.

Despite this, the department has earmarked \$15 million to implement the recommendations of the commission. The commission website claims that submissions are still under deliberation.

The certainty of the budget figure would indicate that the minister already has a copy of the report. My question is, can the minister tell us how long he has had the report? Or did his department simply make up an amount for the inclusion recommendations?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I do not have a copy of the report. That report has not been submitted to the department yet nor to the union. Those are the two groups that the commission is mandated to deliver that report to.

I will say though that, in our budget deliberations, we did consult with the commission on the realm of what the financial ask would be because we did want to ensure that it was embedded in the budget so that we could move on that report as swiftly as possible.

MR. HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, \$15 million works out to about \$40,000 per school in our province. That might not be enough to pay for what's required to tackle the issues within our classroom.

Without the report, there is no way to know what it is intended to cover and whether it will be enough. Without that report, this House cannot properly examine the budget for this initiative.

My question is, can the minister indicate whether the \$15 million will be ongoing funding, or is it a one-time spend?

MR. CHURCHILL: I think it's important to clarify for the member and the House that there is a difference between the fiscal year of the government and the academic year of our school. That \$15 million would actually be representative of half an academic year's investment.

We believe that those dollars are significant. We know that we have to do a better job in terms of providing more behavioural supports, mental health supports, psychologist supports, and speech pathologist supports. We are committed, as we have been in every single Liberal budget, to investing more and more dollars in our education system.

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

LAE: YOUTH EXODUS - RESPONSE

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. As we heard in the budget today, one of the priorities of this government is to enable young people to stay here in Nova Scotia, put down roots, and lead fulfilling lives.

Unfortunately, there has been an exodus of young people from our province, and that hurts us economically and culturally. All our young people want to do is have the opportunity we have all had and enjoyed - a chance to get an education, find a job, and settle into a productive role in our community. All too often, our young people don't see a future here at home and leave for greener pastures.

My question to the minister is, why is the minister content to watch our best and brightest go down the road to build their lives?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the member's attention to Statistics Canada, which has recently said that for the last two years, Nova Scotia is retaining more youth than it's losing. That's the first time it has happened since the 1980s.

What we are doing is, we are keeping our youth here. We're giving them opportunities not only in government but in the private sector with Graduate to Opportunity and Innovate to Opportunity.

Today's budget had \$20 million more in the research fund which goes to our youth, which goes to our brightest. Look at all the great work happening at Volta Labs, the sandboxes, COVE - I could go on and on. One minute is not enough.

What there is happening in this province is a lot of excitement. Our youth have opportunities here and they are embracing the opportunities and going to work.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, recently I had a young man in my office who applied for a job creation program to help him stay at home and contribute in his community until he can find work in his field. He was denied that grant, was told that he didn't have enough of a job search in his pocket, and then told by the ENS staff to look outside this province for work in his field.

This government is telling him to do just that - leave here to look for a job outside his field. So why is the minister driving our trained young people to other provinces instead of helping them stay here to build a better future?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, we are doing nothing of the sort. I'm going to draw the member's attention to a policy change that was done at the Public Service Commission while I was the minister there.

When I became the minister of that department, every single job posting in the Province of Nova Scotia said you need two years of experience. That meant anyone graduating from university or our colleges had to go somewhere to get two years of experience, so what the government's message was, go to another province, get experience, then we'll take you back when you have that experience. This government changed that policy. (Interruption)

I'll repeat that again because I heard the member yelling, and I think he should hear this. This government changed that policy. After it changed that policy (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. KOUSOULIS: Once that policy change was made, 1,800 youth got jobs in the Public Service Commission who would never have had that opportunity before.

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

H&W - C.B. ISLAND: ER CLOSURES - ACTION

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. In Cape Breton, not a month goes by without a weekend where the emergency rooms in New Waterford, Glace Bay, and the Northside General are all closed. My question to the minister is, what is the minister's excuse for failing to take any action to keep emergency rooms open on Cape Breton Island?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for the question. As the member knows, investing in our health care system is a priority for this government. and is a significant part of the budget that was tabled by my colleague, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, earlier today.

We are seeing significant investments, and expanded investments, in our health care budget, providing investments to support our partners throughout initiatives in mental health and primary care. We are going to continue with these investments on behalf of Nova Scotians, from one end of the province in Cape Breton, but also all the way down to Yarmouth, as well.

MS. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, during the difficult times when families find themselves in an emergency, they should be able to count on their local emergency rooms to be open, but under this Liberal Government not a single new collaborative care emergency centre has opened - actually, the mobile care team in New Waterford has closed. So is the minister satisfied standing by while families across Nova Scotia show up to emergency rooms that are closed?

MR. DELOREY: We continue to work with our partners to ensure that emergency rooms and emergency services across this province are available to Nova Scotians. It's an integrated system of health care services. One of the reasons why we have a single health authority - the Nova Scotia Health Authority - is to ensure that services are provided at multiple sites throughout the province, ensuring that the standards of care are being provided. We have an amazing first-class emergency health service ambulance system. The paramedics in Nova Scotia are top-notch, and they have excellent equipment to provide care to all Nova Scotians, from one end of the province to the other.

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

EECD: WALK AND BUS DISTANCES - STANDARDIZE

MR. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I did try to attempt to get this question in prior to the break, but time ran short, so we're going to try again today.

Through you to the Minister of Education and Early Child Development, parents have continued to express concerns to me about maximum distances that the province and school boards are setting for walking and busing. Distances set provincially at 3.6 kilometres before students can be bused, whether they're five or 18 years old. Halifax Regional School Board has a policy of 2.4 kilometres which many parents in HRM already feel is too far.

The minister did say that a standardized policy across the province is one of the objectives of centralization, and in September the minister stated that there are many out there who would argue that having our children walk to school is a healthy exercise.

My question is, will the minister commit to coming out to my constituency and joining myself and a five-year-old to walk the 7.2 kilometres to school and back?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I took up the offer of the member for Pictou Centre on a walk on the beach. I'd be happy to take the member's offer of a walk along the streets in his riding.

MR. JOHNS: The minister is probably a little bit younger and in better shape than me, so it won't be as hard for him, I'm sure.

The Halifax Regional School Board uses its discretion based on more than just distance. However, at the end of this month of course the Halifax Regional School Board is not going to be there anymore. Parents are left with anxiety and they are worrying about the safety of their children who are walking to school at distances they may have to now walk.

Will the minister commit today that the busing distance for students in Primary to Grade 6 within the HRM will continue at the 2.4 kilometres and not increase?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to work with our regional education centres to ensure that our kids are safe getting to and from school, and that we have the best practices that are applied in every single region in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

EECD: WALK TO SCHOOL - SAFETY CONCERNS

MR. TIM HALMAN: On October 17th, I asked the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development about a constituent whose daughters were walking 47 minutes to school, crossing one of the busiest streets in our province. The minister stated that if indeed there are safety concerns being expressed by parents, they do need to be properly addressed by the school board - and I can table that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it may surprise the minister to hear there are safety concerns being expressed by parents. This mother has logged dozens of phone calls, searching for the solution since May. She has been to every possible level of the education system and her daughters are still walking 47 minutes to school daily, crossing one of the busiest streets in Nova Scotia.

My question is, with power about to be taken away from elected school boards, will the minister take charge of the Colleen Hollohan issue and find a solution to safely get her daughters to school?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, transportation has been an issue of concern primarily in the HRM area. That is something we are going to be taking a look at because safety is paramount to getting our kids to and from our schools in a way that we know we can all be comfortable with.

MR. HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, on January 31st my office sent a letter to the superintendent of the HRSB, as well as to the minister's office. This letter proposed a very reasonable solution to get Colleen Hollohan's daughters on a school bus. This letter has gone unanswered and Colleen's daughters continue to walk to school.

My question is, why has the minister failed to respond to a simple request from my office to help my constituent get her daughters to and from school safely?

MR. CHURCHILL: That's because we want to look at potential solutions with the regional executive director to make sure that all options are being considered before we provide a response to the member on behalf of his constituent.

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

EECD - ÉCOLE WEDGEPORT: NEEDED WORK - BUDGETED

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development as well. I've asked about École Wedgeport a number of times in this House, but I haven't asked the minister so I can get him on Hansard.

École Wedgeport is a school of about 100 students in a small francophone community in my constituency and a very close neighbour to the minister's own constituency as well. We've been seeking some significant renovation or complete replacement for that school. The current facility is facing some serious physical challenges that make it a difficult learning environment.

My question is, is the minister able to tell this House if the capital plan in today's budget includes the much-needed work for École Wedgeport?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: As the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board stated earlier today, the capital plan is not being released with this budget although the dollars are invested in this budget to make sure we are able to conduct that capital program. However, we are looking at the Auditor General's recommendations, along with Dr. Glaze's recommendations, to improve that process so that it's longer term and that we have a process for capital planning that is predictable and that the public can have full faith and confidence in.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: École Wedgeport has been on the top of the CSAP's capital plan for the last 12 years. I've tabled petitions in this House as well, and with recent changes to the Education Act, I believe that École Wedgeport now sits at the top of half of the capital plans - or half of the school boards in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the last time any investment was done on this school was when the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board was the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development in the previous government - a previous government, I just want to say. Of course, I thanked her at that time for her investment but it was the hold-over money until the school could get a replacement.

[4:15 p.m.]

So, my question is, how long will this project sit at the top of the list before your department will allocate its capital funding?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I've actually toured École Wedgeport myself with members of the community, the school advisory committee, the school board, and CSAP. I agree with the member that we do need a new school for that community. It's important to preserve the culture and language of Wedgeport and the surrounding area. I want to see a new school in that community.

I will say that we will not have a finalized capital list until June, as the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board said today, but I think once we solidify a better process for capital planning, a long-term process for that planning, I think members of the public will be very satisfied with that list at the end of the day.

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

FIN. & TREASURY BD.: WAGE PATTERN - FAULTY ASSUMPTION

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board told us that the budget building involves establishing a set of economic assumptions that become the foundation upon which the budget is built. A central part of that foundation is the wage pattern that has not been agreed to by many of the groups the government is still trying to negotiate with.

Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board satisfied to build a budget around this faulty assumption?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to commend the member for the actual quote, you have it correct, you heard correctly. We do base our budget on assumptions. We do recognize that, as I said earlier, any budget is a plan, you have to monitor closely the revenues and the expenses. What we've done over the last three years is to be able to build some capacity within our budget each year for unexpected expenses, and we will certainly continue to make sure that if there is an unexpected expense that we have capacity to respond to that.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, not only have the workers of the province not agreed to the wage pattern, this issue is now before the courts. The economic assumption of this government's budget may be found to be unconstitutional; that has been the case in a number of our provinces across the country. What is the minister's plan if the courts decide the basis of this budget is illegal?

MS. CASEY: I know that members opposite like to use the word unconstitutional, however, we do know that we await the rulings of the court. We're fairly confident in the ruling of that, but we will certainly respect that ruling, whatever it may be.

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

NAT. RES. - E. CHEZZETCOOK BERM: REPAIRS - ADDRESS

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Last week, my colleague asked the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal about a situation in East Chezzetcook that has local residents very worried. I'm talking about the berm that separates the freshwater lake from the ocean. The berm was breached in January and again in March. Meetings were held, but nothing has been done to address the breaches.

Of course, residents are worried that all the fish in the lake will be killed, or washed away, but they also fear that their wells will be contaminated, and their basements flooded with seawater. With every stormy weather report, those fears become greater.

So, my question through you to the minister is, when will the CBCL's consultant report be complete, and when can the people of East Chezzetcook expect to see some action to address the problems with this berm?

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for brining this question forward. It's something that the Speaker himself has been advocating for very strongly, a great representative of his community . . .

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, a great Budget Day. We'll call it at that.

I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow, Wednesday, March 21, 2018, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Following the daily routine, Question Period, and Opposition Business, we will move to budget responses from the Opposition.

With that, I ask the Official Opposition House Leader to provide tomorrow's agenda.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Government House Leader for that. After the daily routine and Question Period, we will be calling two bills that were introduced today: Bill No. 88, which is the Mental Health App Act; and Bill No. 89, which is the life skills course.

Mr. Speaker, I move that we do now rise to meet again tomorrow between the hours of (Interruption) Sorry, did I get them wrong there?

AN HON. MEMBER: Bill No. 90.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: So let me call Bill No. 90 in case, just to make sure I have all of them.

Mr. Speaker, I move that we do now rise to meet again tomorrow between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for the House to rise to meet tomorrow, Wednesday, March 21st, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

[The House rose at 4:21 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1034**

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Agriculture)

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

Whereas Pastor Doug Duncan of the Lake Echo Fellowship Baptist Church (LEFBC) has worked since 2013 in our community as a dedicated servant; and

Whereas he led a service program at Ross Road School that involved other churches in supplying a Christmas dinner for the whole school; and

Whereas he encourages seniors of the church to reach out to the community with free luncheons to other senior citizens;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House recognize and congratulate Pastor Doug Duncan for his ongoing work to inspire others to give of their time, talents, and energy to improve the lives of others in our community.

RESOLUTION NO. 1035

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Agriculture)

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

Whereas Kardeisha Provo of North Preston is a recent recipient of the prestigious \$5,000 Horatio Alger Canadian Scholarship; and

Whereas she has demonstrated strength of character and strong academics as well as a commitment to pursuing higher education; and

Whereas she has demonstrated perseverance as a student at Cole Harbour High School with a desire to contribute to society and has achieved this significant recognition.

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House recognize and congratulate Kardeisha Provo, who now joins the ranks of other exceptional individuals who have received the \$5,000 Horatio Alger Canadian Scholarship.

RESOLUTION NO. 1036

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Agriculture)

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

Whereas Reverend Kim Burke-Cole, minister of the Lawrencetown-Lake Echo Pastoral Charge of the United Church of Canada, provides spiritual and pastoral support to these congregations; and

Whereas she is active in providing care and support to individuals and families in the community in their time of need; and

Whereas she is also actively pursuing additional academic qualifications at the Atlantic School of Theology;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House recognize and congratulate Reverend Kim Burke-Cole for her tireless efforts to improve the lives of others in our community.

RESOLUTION NO. 1037

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Agriculture)

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

Whereas Pastor Scott MacKenzie of the Lake Echo Fellowship Baptist Church (LEFBC) has served tirelessly for the last nine years in ministry to our community; and

Whereas he has directed many children's programs such as Vacation Bible School for 100 children and the Approved Workman Are Not Ashamed (AWANA) program that reaches families throughout the area; and

Whereas he worked on the Restorative Justice Program and welcomes every opportunity to work with young people;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House recognize and congratulate Pastor Scott MacKenzie for his tireless efforts to improve and make a positive difference in the lives of young people in our community.

RESOLUTION NO. 1038

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas each year Junior Achievement Nova Scotia and the Business Hall of Fame honour individuals who inspire the business community and future business leaders with a record of unparalleled lifetime achievement, and Truro businessman Stu Rath has been named as a Junior Achievement of Nova Scotia 2018 Laureate for the Business Hall of Fame; and

Whereas Rath, one of the most successful businesspeople in Colchester County, has been involved with a variety of business pursuits over the years and is currently the owner of the Truro Bearcats Junior A hockey team; and

Whereas Rath has received many prestigious awards, including the Truro Chamber of Commerce Businessman of the Year in 1997; honorary membership in the Kiwanis Club in 2001; Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Club of Truro in 2002; the United Way Outstanding Leadership Award in 2007; and the Truro Chamber of Commerce Lifetime Achievement Award in 2011;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Stu Rath for his assistance to local businesspeople and entrepreneurs and as an outstanding community supporter.

RESOLUTION NO. 1039

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas Gerry Tucker from Valley, Colchester North, a retired member of the RCMP after 40 years of service, recently received the Governor General's Sovereign Medal for volunteers, which recognizes exceptional achievements of volunteers by honouring their dedication and commitment; and

Whereas Tucker has been a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, taught shooting skills to cadets, volunteered with minor hockey, initiated an effort to collect clothing for underprivileged Inuit children, and raised thousands of dollars for Special Olympics in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Gerry became involved in the forensic identification unit and in 2000 he volunteered as a United Nations peacekeeper to go to Kosovo, where thousands of ethnic-cleansing deaths were occurring, and as well, following the devastating tsunami of 2004, was placed in charge of forensic identification in Thailand;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Gerry Tucker for his contributions to humanity, both here and abroad, and for being able to give some comfort to people by helping to find their loved ones.

RESOLUTION NO. 1040

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas Michael C. Latinski, a very talented and gifted athlete, was a dedicated hockey player, and after years with the Tatamagouche Minor Hockey Association, he went on to play for the Cumberland/Colchester Colts in the Junior C hockey league; and

Whereas tragically, on July 5, 2015, Michael died as the result of a motorcycle accident, just four days short of his 25th birthday; and

Whereas a new hockey room at the North Shore Recreation Centre in Tatamagouche, Colchester North, has been named the Michael C. Latinski Minor Hockey Room, with a sign installed to acknowledge the dedication of the room, as well as a jersey with Michael C's number;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing a very popular young man in the community; the room will be a lasting memory to those who knew and loved him.

RESOLUTION NO. 1041

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a partnership of 15 Canadian churches, works internationally to provide funding and other supports for projects involving emergency food aid, agricultural development, nutrition, and food security; and

Whereas in February, Greg Jones, a chartered accountant with a background in agriculture, and his wife, Carol, took part in a two-week Canadian Foodgrains Bank Learning Tour to Malawi, spending three days living with a family there; and

Whereas the Malawi family were provided with seed and information to grow a variety of crops rather than just maize, and the success of this program is evidenced by the fact that the hospital for malnourished children in the area is now closed and expanding to other places;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the volunteers here in Canada who have seen first-hand the benefits of their commitment to help others in need beyond our borders.

RESOLUTION NO. 1042

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Finance and Treasury Board)

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

Whereas Stacey Culgin from Debert, Colchester North, published *An Historical Miscellany of Debert and Area* in 2017, focusing on the area's first settlers, their homes and businesses, and other interesting facts about their time and way of life; and

Whereas Stacey's interest began when she was looking into the genealogy of her own family; and

Whereas as she examined old photographs, she began to take notice of houses and buildings in the Debert area, and that led her to seek out senior residents in order to find out more details;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Stacey on her first published book.

RESOLUTION NO. 1043

By: Mr. Chuck Porter (Hants West)

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

Whereas 13-year-old Blake Carson is passionate and dedicated as the point guard for the West Hants Middle School Sabers and the Shooting Stars basketball teams, showing that his small stature is not a deterrent to becoming an ideal athlete; and

Whereas his physical education teacher Jody Isenor says Blake is an ideal student because he puts others ahead of himself; he's in a class with some students who have some physical needs, and sports aren't in their comfort zone, and Blake wants to have those students on his team so he can make sure they're included; and

Whereas Blake is a natural leader: he leads by example, and that makes him an ideal leader;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly congratulate Blake Carson for his dedication to sport and his fellow students.