



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2018

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2018

Sixty-third General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Mr. Chuck Porter, Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We will begin the daily routine.

The honourable member for Cumberland South on an introduction.

MR. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction in the gallery.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, in the House, I'd like to bring attention to the west gallery. The family I spoke about on Friday, the young boy, Keegan Kouwenberg, who saved the house in Oxford on his way home from the local swimming hole, is recognized in Oxford as a local hero. His father is with him, Steven Kouwenberg, one of the firefighters in Oxford, and his mother Jennifer and his little brother "Little Chief" Brody.

I'd like to give recognition and congratulations to Keegan on his heroic efforts and thank him very much on behalf of the province. (Standing Ovation)

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES****TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS, AND OTHER PAPERS**

MR. SPEAKER: As Speaker of the House of Assembly, and pursuant to Section 163 of the Elections Act, I am pleased to table the following reports: the Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer for 2017-18; Elections Nova Scotia Strategic Plan for 2018 to 2023; and Volume III of the Financial Information and Statistics.

The reports are tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

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

RESOLUTION NO. 44

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

Whereas on September 13th we recognize Stand Up Against Bullying Day and send a strong message against bullying in Nova Scotia - this is on a future day, Mr. Speaker - Stand Up Against Bullying in Nova Scotia schools, colleges, and universities; and

Whereas on this day we reaffirm our commitment to stop bullying and respond effectively to unacceptable behaviours including bullying, cyberbullying, violence, and all forms of harassment; and

Whereas government will commit to continue to support the development of safe, inclusive, caring school environments where all students are safe, engaged, and able to learn;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House acknowledge Stand Up Against Bullying Day and the commitment and dedication of our students, teachers, and education staff who work to eliminate bullying in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 45

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

Whereas A.F. Theriault & Son Ltd. of Meteghan River was founded in 1938 and remains one of the largest privately-owned boatyards in Atlantic Canada; and

Whereas the Meteghan River company has combined traditional knowledge and techniques with the latest innovation and technology to proudly build more than 800 state-of-the-art vessels including fishing boats, barges, ferries, yachts, and more; and

Whereas A.F. Theriault & Son Ltd. continues to make a strong contribution to the Maritime culture and economy of Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate A.F. Theriault & Son Ltd. on their 80th anniversary and their record of outstanding quality and performance and reliability.

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 Government House Leader.

RESOLUTION NO. 46

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

Whereas on July 5, 2018, the honourable member for Hants West was appointed to the Executive Council and resigned his position as Deputy Speaker of the House of Assembly; and

Whereas pursuant to Rule 11 of the Rules and Forms of Procedure of this House, Deputy Speakers are to be elected by the House in the same manner as the Speaker; and

Whereas it is desirable to elect a second Deputy Speaker as a result of the resignation of July 5, 2018;

Therefore be it resolved that the Speaker preside over the election by the honourable members of the House of Assembly of a Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees forthwith.

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

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

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 47

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

Whereas suicide remains one of the top three causes of injury-related deaths in the province; and

Whereas suicide is complex and touches the lives of many Nova Scotians; and

Whereas government remains committed to providing important resources like the mental health crisis line and is continuing to update the suicide prevention framework to support Nova Scotians when they need it the most;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature recognize September 10th as World Suicide Prevention 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 Environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 48

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

Whereas today marks the 17th anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks in the United States, where over 3,000 people lost their lives; and

Whereas the events of that terrible day and the weeks and months that followed will never be forgotten; and

Whereas in the wake of that tragedy, Nova Scotians - including countless volunteers, first responders, employees of the Stanfield International Airport, and many others - once again demonstrated the kindness, generosity, and selflessness for which they are known;

Therefore be it resolved that all Nova Scotians stand with our American neighbours as we remember those who lost their lives on that terrible day.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 10 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 260 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Liquor Control Act. (Hon. Karen Casey)

Bill No. 11 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 238 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Provincial Court Act, Respecting Sexual Assault Law Education for Judges. (Ms. Karla MacFarlane)

Bill No. 12 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 32 of the Acts of 2014. The Health Authorities Act, to Require Quarterly Reports and an Annual Expenditure Plan. (Mr. Gary Burrill)

Bill No. 13 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 120 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Day Care Act. (Hon. Zach Churchill)

Bill No. 14 - Entitled an Act to Address Sexual Violence at Colleges and Universities. (Mr. Tory Rushton)

Bill No. 15 - Entitled an Act Respecting an Advocate for Children and Youth. (Ms. Susan Leblanc)

Bill No. 16 - Entitled an Act Respecting Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Protection. (Hon. Mark Furey)

Bill No. 17 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 147 of the Acts of 1927. An Act to Incorporate the “Kenzieville Cemetery Company”. (Mr. Tim Houston)

Bill No. 18 - Entitled an Act to Amend Schedule A of Chapter 1 of the Acts of 2018. The Education Act, Respecting the Provincial Advisory Council on Education. (Ms. Claudia Chender)

Bill No. 19 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 5 of the Acts of 1993. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Respecting An Independent Review Commissioner. (Hon. Christopher d’Entremont)

Bill No. 20 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 32 of the Acts of 2014. The Health Authorities Act, Respecting Board Meetings. (Mr. Gary Burrill)

Bill No. 21 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 5 of the Acts of 1993. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Respecting Compromised Personal Information. (Hon. Christopher d'Entremont)

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

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition on an introduction.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, if I can have the members' attention to the west gallery, I'd like to introduce my friend, Senator Michael MacDonald - welcome. (Applause)

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

WORLD TRADE CTR. TRAGEDY: 17th ANNIV. - REMEMBER

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, on September 11, 2001, the world changed.

Few Nova Scotians do not remember where they were when terrorists hijacked and crashed planes, including two into the World Trade Centre. Out of that horror came a source of pride in our province.

Halifax Stanfield accepted the greatest number of aircraft of any airport and was the first major airport to have all diverted flights back in the air. Forty aircraft carrying 8,000 passengers were diverted to Halifax Stanfield International.

Members of Stanfield's airport community, along with so many Nova Scotians, opened their hearts and their homes. Accolades and thanks poured in from around the world. Nova Scotians were being Nova Scotians - the best neighbours one could ever have.

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

MINERAL EXPLORATION PERMIT: WATER SAFETY - CONCERN

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to echo the concerns raised by John Perkins, Gregor Wilson, Lydia and Paul Jenkinson, and other members of Sustainable Northern Nova Scotia.

The expectation that the province will issue a mining mineral exploration permit this year in the Warwick Mountain and New Annan area is stirring fear amongst residents who worry that the French River Watershed could be at risk. That provides the drinking water to Tatamagouche.

Two years ago, the Tatamagouche Source Water Protection Committee became aware of potential mineral extraction and we know that Energy and Mines and have been investing in the area.

Mr. Speaker, we would like to have robust turnout for the department to follow through on its call for public opinion and I hope that the Premier, Deputy Premier, and the Ministers of Natural Resources and Environment are paying attention.

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

WORLD TRADE CTR. TRAGEDY: 17th ANNIV. - REMEMBER

MR. BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Nova Scotians, I would like to express our sorrow and support for victims, first responders, and all families and friends whose lives changed forever on September 11, 2001.

This tragedy was felt all over the world and here in Nova Scotia, hearts and homes were opened to help those who were stranded and diverted from their planned travel destinations. Compassion and humility moved the residents of Nova Scotia to comfort, support, and took into their homes many of the confused and shaken travellers. Forty planes and over 8,000 passengers and crews landed in Nova Scotia's Halifax Stanfield International Airport. Nova Scotia was also changed that day. Many new relationships were built and thriving today. Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking the caring and kind people of Nova Scotia. Thank you.

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

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY: EDUCATION - RECOG.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, yesterday was World Suicide Prevention Day. It was an opportunity for everybody in the community to join together to promote understanding about suicide and highlight the professionals and advocates that work so hard to prevent death by suicide. It is estimated that each day in Canada 10 people end their lives and 200 make suicide attempts. The pain that leads individuals to take their lives is unimaginable and their deaths leave countless family and friends bereaved and their communities impacted.

The theme of this year's World Suicide Prevention Day is, Working Together to Prevent Suicide. It is important that we all do what we can to shine light on this important issue and to send a message of hope to those who live in despair and those who are grieving.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

BUS PASS PROG.: ESIA RECIPIENTS - HARDSHIP

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to share with members how much I am enjoying my annual Halifax Transit bus pass. I purchased mine as a top-up of my CarShare Atlantic membership and have used it far more than expected already. It's almost identical to the bus passes that income assistance recipients in Halifax now have through a collaboration between the city and the province, the Department of Community Services, except that their pass enables them to travel the extended routes such as, to the airport.

I met an ESIA recipient this summer who is actually using her pass to go to the airport for work cleaning cars for a rental company. I trust many income assistance recipients are taking the bus and enjoying it for social outings, education, and recreation and I certainly hope so. There is no question that social isolation is a painful part of living in poverty.

However, for those recipients who are not able to work, who do not have family members offering them additional support and who used to use a part of their woefully inadequate cheque allocated for travel to spend on food or rent, this program has been a cause of hardship. An obvious solution would be to raise the rates.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MACPHEE, CATHERINE: COM. SERV. - CONGRATS.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Catherine MacPhee on her dedication to our community. Catherine is a wife and mother of two young boys and works part time at the Nova Scotia Health Authority. Raising a young family takes a huge commitment of time and energy, but Catherine still finds time to give back to her community. Despite her already busy life, Catherine still makes the time to volunteer in the community. She now serves as the president for the Urban Farm Museum Society of Spryfield board. Catherine refers to the farm as her happy place and enjoys the work she does at the farm and the benefits the farm provides to the communities she loves.

I ask the members of the House to join me in congratulating Catherine MacPhee for her dedication and commitment to the community. She certainly is a shining star and an inspiration for all of us.

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

PEVERILL, DERRICK: ENV. INSPECTOR - DEDICATION

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work performance of Nova Scotia Department of Environment inspector specialist, Derrick Peverill. As with all of Derrick's colleagues, he believes in the value of integrity. Derrick has been in and out of our constituency of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage for a multitude of investigations, and each visit he goes above and beyond to be sure the recipient understands and is very clear with the findings. This type of performance is driven with a type of kindness and compassion that we would all love to see more of.

Derrick has six years in his position and our community looks forward to many more years of impressive service. It is a true honour to congratulate Derrick and to thank him for all of his hard work.

[1:30 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

DART. N. FIRES: COM. SUPPORT - COMMEND

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, this Spring saw tragedy shake my community. A fatal fire at 81 Primrose Street and another one at 23 Brule Street on the same night left community members grieving and many of my constituents displaced. But in the wake of these fires, we saw a community rally together. I want to express thanks and admiration to the first responders who arrived quickly and worked tirelessly to get the fires under control, who helped evacuate residents, and who offered them comfort and protection in a moment of trauma.

The members of the Dartmouth Masjid who quickly stepped up to offer shelter and food for those affected even while observing Ramadan proved once again what an integral part of our community's fabric they are. The Canadian Red Cross, The Salvation Army, the Disaster Animal Response Team of Nova Scotia, so many organizations helped our community navigate this tragedy, and I am grateful.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there were many, many constituents who called my office to offer assistance and to ask how they could help their neighbours. These people continuously remind me of what an honour it is to represent Dartmouth North. I am proud to be a member of such a resilient community, and I am humbled by the grace and generosity of the people in that community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

**HERRIDGE, CHRISTIAN:
FUNDRAISING, MENTAL ILLNESS - CONGRATS.**

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: I would like to call your attention to a young man from Mahone Bay, Christian Herridge. Christian, age 42, was diagnosed at the age of 18 with schizophrenia. Christian also suffers from an osteo condition. Christian now does public speaking on the issue with the aim of reducing the stigma around mental illness.

Christian had pounded the pavement prior to the Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia's 10th annual Road to Recovery Walk, which was held at the Halifax Common on May 5th, and raised over \$5,000. Last year, he raised over \$2,000.

Christian is a popular local photographer and was the official photographer at this year's event. He produces cards with the photos and includes a picture of himself, plus a brief description of his situation on the back. He hands his cards out, and also sells them at various shops.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you and all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Christian for his determination and involvement in raising over \$7,000 in the past two years for the Schizophrenia Society.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

INTL. BREAST CANCER PADDLERS: FESTIVAL - CONGRATS.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, the International Breast Cancer Paddlers Commission Dragon Boat Festival is an international non-competitive event for breast cancer survivors, who participate in dragon boat races as post-operative rehabilitation.

This year the festival was held in Florence, Italy. The event was created by Canadian Sports Medicine physician Dr. Don MacKenzie about 20 years ago. This type of racing is considered the perfect activity for women who have survived breast cancer because the upper body movement is crucial to recovery.

The Florence 2018 festival involved more than 4,000 people, 129 teams from 17 countries and, for the first time, all continents were represented. Congratulations to the members of the Pictou County contingent participating in the event and for winning a race during the two-day festival.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CREIGHTON, HELEN: PIONEER FOLKLORIST - TRIBUTE

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to recognize a woman whose dogged efforts to document Nova Scotia's folklore, songs and history left us with a treasure trove of cultural heritage. This month Helen Creighton would have been 119, had she lived to tell the tale.

I am in awe of this pioneering woman who had a multitude of careers before she became a folklorist. Helen was a driver with the Royal Flying Corps in Toronto and the Red Cross Caravan in Nova Scotia; she trained in social work at the University of Toronto; taught school in Mexico; and broadcast on CHNS radio - all in the early 1900s. I can only imagine she must have starred in as many tales as she recorded.

Our cultural heritage is precious, Mr. Speaker, and it informs our way forward. Helen wasn't formally trained as an historian but the work of this Dartmouth woman still informs the Nova Scotian identity today. She has received numerous awards for her achievements, but this month she was immortalized with a plaque from Parks Canada commemorating her national historic significance in her hometown of Dartmouth. Happy Birthday, Helen.

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

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make an introduction. In the east gallery, we have Jenine Panagiotakos. I would like to ask her to stand up to receive a warm welcome from the House. (Applause)

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

PANAGIOTAKOS, JENINE: MANY HATS WORKSPACE - CONGRATS.

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a woman who is providing entrepreneurs with access to affordable places to work. Jenine Panagiotakos believes entrepreneurs are stuck between two choices - run a small business at home or invest money into a space and struggle to keep it. That is why in January 2017, Jenine founded Many Hats Workspace, an affordable shared workspace where business owners can collaborate with fellow entrepreneurs.

Many Hats also offers its members admin and marketing support at reduced rates. Many Hats is located in Clayton Park West, on the third floor of the Bedford Basin Market. There are 42 active members sharing 16 offices, two large co-working spaces, plus a conference room.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Jenine on her success and thanking her for changing the way that we think about business space.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

WORLD TRADE CTR. TRAGEDY: FLIGHT CREW - COMMEND

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge that 17 years ago, our comfortable western world stopped turning for a moment. Life has been different since September 11, 2001. Our airline industry is forever changed. Security remains at the top of our minds.

On this solemn anniversary, I think of all of the victims of this terror attack and their families. I think of the heroic first responders, who tend to get forgotten - the flight crew. Whether it was the bravery displayed on the ground, saving lives and the recovery effort, or the bravery displayed in the air, staring the attackers in the face, September 11th was a day when a few people showed their darkest side, but many more showed superhuman heroism.

I ask all members of this House and all Nova Scotians, rather than think of sadness on this solemn anniversary, think of bravery. Let us be kind to people today and every day.

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

DAL. AGRIC. CAMPUS: BOTANICAL GARDEN - COMMEND

MS. LENORE ZANN: As summer draws to a close, I would like to acknowledge the staff at the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus in Truro, who in August launched the Bicentennial Botanical Garden, housed at the Bible Hill Campus.

Open to the public, a stroll through the garden will find a range of flora, including Scots Pine, chestnut trees, and black ash, or Wisqoq, a tree traditionally used by Mi'kmaq for making baskets and other household items. There are also 3,000 types of flowering plants blooming across 26 acres of plant collections.

Congratulations to the staff and botanists who maintain this important collection for the edification and education of our students and public.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

CROFT, MATT: BIGGS AWARD - CONGRATS.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Matt Croft, winner of the 2018 Biggs Award from Flower Cart in New Minas.

This award highlights workers who have become excellent role models for others and who demonstrate the work skills taught by the Flower Cart Group's partners in employment services. The Biggs Award allows Flower Cart to recognize community employer partners and allows employers to recognize great employees such as Matt. Matt has developed his skills at the Tim Hortons in New Minas and has worked with Valley Waste-Resource Management and Michelin in the past.

I would ask all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Matt Croft on this well-deserved award and wish him all the best in the future.

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

VAN DONINCK, HELENE - VETERINARIAN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

MR. LARRY HARRISON: I wish to note the passing of Helene Van Doninck, an international expert on the treatment of oiled birds. In a past statement in the Legislature, I mentioned her successful petition to eliminate the use of lead in hunting and fishing.

Dr. Van Doninck, with her husband Murdo Messer, operated the Cobequid Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre. In July, she was the recipient of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association's Humane Award for her dedication to caring for injured wildlife.

Dr. Van Doninck, whose efforts have been recognized by her professional community many times, was unable to attend the awards due to health concerns, and on August 11th lost her battle with ovarian cancer. Dr. Van Doninck will be sorely missed.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

GRANT, SHAUNTAY: BOOK, *AFRICVILLE* - CONGRATS.

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate and thank Shauntay Grant, who this week launches her latest children's picture book, *Africville*, published by House of Anansi and illustrated by Eva Campbell. The launch will happen on Thursday at the Africville Museum as part of the Prismatic Arts Festival.

Shauntay is a storyteller, a writer, a former Halifax poet laureate, and a multidisciplinary artist in music and theatre. Her previous books for children, including *Up Home* and *The City Speaks In Drums*, have earned a special spot on bookshelves at story

time and bedtime and feature beautiful illustrations of Black children as protagonists. This story follows a girl visiting the site of Africville during the annual reunion who imagines what that vibrant community was like.

As a mom who lives around the corner from Africville and whose kids will still sometimes climb on my lap, I am grateful for this way to explore with them the vibrant heritage of African Nova Scotians and the systemic racism they have endured, which we must constantly work to redress.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

REARDON, BOBBY LOU: LONG-DISTANCE SWIM - CONGRATS.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I would like to recognize and congratulate Yarmouth's Bobby Lou Reardon. Bobby Lou completed the Big Swim, which helps raise funds for Camp Brigadoon, a camp for kids living with health conditions and challenges.

Bobby Lou swam from New Brunswick to P.E.I. - a long, cold swim. Bobby Lou and the other swimmers who participated helped to raise more than \$160,000, which will give 160 children the opportunity to attend one of the 14 summer programs at Camp Brigadoon.

I ask this House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Bobby Lou Reardon on this truly amazing feat and in thanking her for her hard work and dedication to such a meaningful cause.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MEECH, BRADY - GRAD.: ATL. POLICE ACAD. - CONGRATS.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, serving on a police force is among the most noble of callings. This summer, four graduating cadets from the Atlantic Police Academy did their on-the-job training with the Truro Police Service. Among these cadets was Brady Meech, who grew up in Truro and studied criminology right here in Halifax at Saint Mary's University before heading to the police academy.

As a kid, Brady dreamed of being a police officer, and he hung on to this dream because of his passion for helping people. He is also the grandson of a very good friend of our Party, Roseanne MacIsaac. Now graduated, Brady is hoping to stay here in Nova Scotia to serve in his home province.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to congratulate Brady Meech and his classmates on graduating from the Atlantic Police Academy and wish them the best of luck in their policing careers.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY: RISING RATES - RECOG.

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to mourn the lives lost to suicide all over our province. Yesterday, September 10th, was World Suicide Prevention Day. Suicide is a leading cause of death among Canadians and one of the top two causes of those under 35. Sadly, rates are still on the rise in Nova Scotia.

Suicide is a preventable cause of death. Prevention begins with working to remove the stigma attached to its leading causes - depression, mental illness, trauma, addiction, and isolation - and to work as hard as we can to offer compassion and treatment in their stead.

Please join me in recognizing this devastating issue, and as leaders, let us heed the theme of this year's day of recognition and work together to prevent suicide.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

BLARNEY STONE: HOSPITALITY AWARD - CONGRATS.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, the Blarney Stone - a small restaurant in Hebbs Cross - provides locals and travellers with a variety of homestyle meals, from hot sandwiches and burgers to local seafood, including some of the best clams and fish available on the South Shore.

Blarney Stone has been operated by the same family for the past 32 years, first by Gary MacLeod and now by his son Sean. Together, they have developed a strong reputation on the South Shore and across the province as a first-rate family restaurant that offers quality, consistency, and value.

They are currently ranked No. 1 on Trip Advisor and have received many awards from *The South Shore Breaker* in their Readers' Choice. Last March, the Blarney Stone won a 2017 Business Excellence Hospitality Award, presented by the Lunenburg-Queens Business Excellence Association.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the Blarney Stone for receiving the 2017 Hospitality Award and for their outstanding service.

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

PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS MO. - RECOG.

MR. BRAD JOHNS: As some members of the House may recognize by my tie today, September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. All men over 50, and those over

40 with a family history of the disease, should without fail go to see their GPs about their prostate. In Canada, it is estimated that every year there are 21,300 new cases of prostate cancer and 4,100 Canadian men die from the disease.

The examination is easy and painless and only takes a few moments to help ensure peace of mind. Most importantly, this disease, if caught early, can be cured, and of course there are new treatments being developed all the time.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage every male MLA in the House, as well as men across this province, to book an appointment with their family physician today for a checkup.

[1:45 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

FRASER, SEAN: PARLTY. APPT. - CONGRATS.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I rise today in the Assembly to recognize the Member of Parliament for Central Nova on a recent appointment. On August 31, 2018, the Prime Minister of Canada announced changes to parliamentary secretaries. Sean Fraser, the MP for Central Nova, was named Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

Sean was elected as MP in 2015. Since then, he has served on the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, as well as the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women. In his new role, MP Fraser's responsibilities include taking questions during Question Period, working with fellow MPs, and collaborating with stakeholders regarding environment-related policies.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Sean on his new appointment and wish him the best of luck in this new role. I know he will do well.

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

WARRINGTON, TIGER: COMMEM. STATUE - CONGRATS.

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the commemoration of Queens County hometown hero and Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame inductee, Tiger Warrington, in a life-sized statue created by the tremendously talented Ivan Higgins from Cosby's Garden Centre and Sculpture Garden in Brooklyn.

Forty years after his death, Tiger, who was an outstanding athlete and well-respected community member, has been immortalized through this statue on the waterfront of his hometown of Liverpool. This has been a dream of his family members for many

years, and thanks to the efforts and generous donation of the J. & W. Murphy Foundation and support from the Privateer Days Commission, it has finally become a reality. Congratulations to everyone involved.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

HICKS, HANNAH: SPECIAL OLYMPIAN - CONGRATS.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday a number of the members in this House celebrated the achievements of Nova Scotia's Special Olympians, and the extraordinary National Summer Games held in Antigonish this summer.

I want to congratulate a Bedford resident and neighbour on her terrific showing at the Special Olympics National Summer Games. Hannah Hicks won five medals in rhythmic gymnastics - one gold, three silver, and a bronze.

Hannah won gold in the hoop, but she says her favourite apparatus is the ribbon. I should tell you that Hannah is also a talented artist. In fact, members can purchase her cards at the Protocol Office. Hannah is an exceptional young woman and I know members of this House want to join me in congratulating Hannah Hicks on her medal-winning performances at the Games. Way to go, Hannah.

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

BIG POND FEST.: VOLS. AND PERFORMERS - THANKS

MS. ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the organizers and volunteers involved in the annual Big Pond Festival Sunday Concert. This concert has been running annually for 54 years. Again, this year, it drew a standing-room-only crowd.

This year's show was dedicated to the memory of the late Rev. Joe Gillis, better known as Father Joe, who died this year at the age of 87. Father Joe served throughout the Diocese of Antigonish, including serving St. Mary's Parish in Big Pond, and Sacred Heart in nearby Johnstown.

This year's concert featured many local artists including Aaron Lewis, Kimberley Fraser, Kinnon and Betty Beaton, Marilyn MacDonald-MacKinnon, Keith MacDonald, Doug MacPhee, Jason Roach, and Colin Grant.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the organizers, volunteers, and performers of the Big Pond Festival Sunday Concert who continue to present a successful and Cape Breton-rich event.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

NOT SINCE MOSES RUN: 10th ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HON. KAREN CASEY: The Not Since Moses Run first took place at Five Islands and this year, on July 15th, it was the 10th anniversary for the run. During some of those years, Mr. Speaker, there have been over 1,000 runners participating.

The run is made possible by the powerful tides of the Bay of Fundy. At low tide the exposed ocean floor becomes the race track for the run. It has been likened to the parting of the Red Sea that allowed Moses and the Israelites to flee Egypt. There is a 5K run, a 10K run - both noted for the spectacular scenery - and for the children under 12 a wonderful experience called the Basket Run.

Not Since Moses is a not-for-profit run, and the members of the planning team are all people who have grown up, lived and worked along the shore, and who are proud of what they see and want to share the beauty with others.

Over 100 local volunteers assist each year in what is considered by many to be the most unique running event in the world. Runners get to view the magnificent cliffs that are normally only seen from boats. After their first experience, Mr. Speaker, many runners, including tourists, return to the area.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of this House to join the run next year. You run - I'll volunteer. (Laughter)

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

S. SHORE FLYING CLUB: AIRPORT RENO. - COMMEND

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the South Shore Flying Club for the tremendous work they are doing at South Shore Regional Airport, near Greenfield. Since taking over the operation of the airport from the Region of Queens Municipality, the club has also leased some land for the potential construction of hangars and the terminal building, which they have beautifully renovated.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the volunteers from the Flying Club for their hard work in breathing new life into this rural airport that has so much potential as an economic driver for the South Shore of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

BITTEREST TIME: MONA PARSONS DRAMA - CONGRATS.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that Heritage Day 2018 has created momentum to deepen our insight and appreciation for the likes of Mona Parsons, this year's honouree. Andrea Hill-Lehr's book *Mona Parsons: from privilege to prison, from Nova Scotia to Nazi Europe*, is now a stage production.

The Bitterest Time: The War Story of Mona Parsons, written by Andria Hill-Lehr and Sara Jane Blenkhorn and directed by Ryanne Chisholm, played to a full house on September 7th and 8th at the Al Whittle Theatre in Wolfville. In the performance, Mona is played by Amanda LeBlanc, who not only shines a light on the experience of women of war, but also reminds us of the power of memory and of art, of music, of poetry, to give meaning to our lives, especially in hard times, like a Nazi prison.

I'd like to extend congratulations to LunaSea Theatre and Serendipity Theatre. This gem of a production will play this week in Antigonish, Pictou and Neptune.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

WORLD SUICIDE AWARENESS DAY - RECOG.

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, my friend Laurel Walker has worked tirelessly to shine a light on the need to improve mental health in this province. Earlier this year, Laurel lost a good friend of hers to suicide. I'm so proud of her for continuing to keep the conversation going for mental health care, while at the same time grieving and honouring the life of her friend.

On Saturday, I joined my friend Laurel, and my colleague John Lohr, for a Suicide Awareness Walk in the Valley. Yesterday was World Suicide Awareness Day. Every 72 hours on average we lose another Nova Scotian to suicide.

Like Laurel, my family, and many other Nova Scotians, we have shared in their family experiences with mental health. May we all be committed to improving mental health services and saving lives in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: I'd like to remind the honourable member not to refer to other current honourable members of this House by their proper names.

The honourable member for Hants East.

SULLIVAN, MEGAN: AWARD-WINNING RUGBY - CONGRATS.

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Hants East has a proud history of champions in several sports and with the accomplishments of this young woman the future

is looking bright as well. Rugby player Megan Sullivan has been awarded the 19 and Over Female of the Year at the East Hants Sports Awards Gala. She was also named the 2017 Most Valuable Player of the Enfield RFC Women's. Her rugby skills saw her scoring 16 times in eight games. She was a dominant force for her team. She has led them to championship victories in the 2017 Oktoberfest 7s, the 2018 Truro 7s and the 2018 Sweetheart 7s Consolation.

Megan Sullivan is a consistent leader in the field and a force in the rugby community, bringing her best to every game. I'd like to offer this dynamic young woman our congratulations for her efforts and accomplishments in the sport of rugby and wish her all the best in every future endeavour.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

PEPPERDINE, HERBERT: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

MR. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, it was with a heavy heart that I draw attention to the House of the death of Herbert Pepperdine at age 95. Herbert was the last man to emerge from the underground after the 1958 Bump in the Springhill mine disaster. He started working in the mines when he was only 14 years old. Even after the disaster he continued to work underground 10 more years.

In October, 1958, Herbert was among 174 men underground when the Number 2 Mine exploded. Seventy-five men perished. He spent eight days underground without food or water. He had almost given up hope when he was rescued.

Herbert Pepperdine is a testament to the hard-working, tenacious spirit of thousands of Nova Scotians who worked in the mines. His death marks the end of an era.

Mr. Speaker, I know all members will join me in extending sincere condolences to his family and friends of Herbert Pepperdine at this sad time.

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

EVELYN, LEYA: SECORD GALLERY EXHIBIT - CONGRATS.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, on Friday I had the pleasure of attending the grand opening for Leya Evelyn's art exhibit at Secord Gallery on Quinpool Road. Leya is a NSCAD graduate, an incredible local artist and I urge all members and everyone, if they have a chance, to take in this great local talent.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

WALK THROUGH TIME: NEW MUSEUM - THANKS

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Scotsburn as being home to Pictou County's newest museum, A Walk Through Time. Alan Fraser always had a keen interest in history and the preservation of antique items and has been collecting for over three decades. These antiques were being held inside barns, on his property in Scotsburn.

Alan purchased the old Scotsburn Creamery building and knew right away what he could use the extra space for. There are items dating from the 1800s up, until the 1950s, including household appliances, farming equipment, sleds and carriages. Alan hopes the museum will be used for school tours to teach local children of daily life in the past.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to thank Alan for keeping our important rural history alive for all to see.

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

A.F. THERIAULT & SON: EXPANSION - CONGRATS.

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I want to once again recognize the important impact A.F. Theriault & Son Ltd. has had, and will continue to have, on our economy, an impact expected to increase with the expansion project just started this Spring.

The shipyard, one of the oldest in the province, is now working at a capacity in an industry where demand is growing. The \$6.65 million expansion will double its capacity and create 40 more skilled manufacturing and engineering jobs. When completed, the shipyard will have a new marine railway and a new office building. This will mean the company will be able to build and service vessels, and work on vessels of over 1,500 tons.

Our government and the Government of Canada is committed to invest in the future of the shipyard. We all expect A.F. Theriault & Son Ltd., a company founded by Gus Theriault in 1938 and now managed by his grandchildren, to continue to thrive and have a greater impact on our local economy.

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

MORIN, EMME: LONG-DISTANCE SWIM - CONGRATS.

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize a very courageous 14-year-old girl, Emme Morin.

On August 12, 2018 Emme partook in the 8th annual event called the Big Swim. Participants made the attempt to swim the Northumberland Strait from Cape Jourimain, New Brunswick to Borden, Prince Edward Island, a total of 15 kilometres.

The Big Swim is all part of a fundraiser for Brigadoon Village, a not-for-profit camp for children and youth living with chronic illness.

With strong tidal currents, Emme swam 19.8 kilometres. This journey took her six hours and 37 minutes to complete. Emme was able to raise \$3,165 which will send three extraordinary children to camp. To date The Big Swim has raised over \$170,000.

I ask all MLAs in the Legislature to join me in congratulating Emme and all those who completed the swim and thank her for raising money for other children.

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

CHEDABUCTO LIFESTYLE COMPLEX: GRAND OPENING - CONGRATS.

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of the grand opening of the Chedabucto Lifestyle Complex that took place on June 29th in the shiretown of Guysborough. I was honoured to be part of the ribbon-cutting ceremony and was so pleased to thank the hundreds of community members for working so hard to see this project through to the finish line.

This beautiful new multi-use facility is bustling with sporting events, health and living programs, and various community events. The children have really made the space their own with unorganized play; riding bikes, rollerblading, and just playing tag. I look forward to the bustling crowds throughout the winter months with the shinny rink, the figure-8 skating oval, and hot chocolate around the fire pit. This past Saturday, the facility hosted the 3rd Annual Gran Fondo with almost 500 registered bicyclers.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Guysborough and surrounding communities deserve the abundance of physical, mental, and social health benefits that this remarkable infrastructure will grant them for many years to come. I wholeheartedly congratulate them on their efforts and encourage them all to go out on that beautiful new soccer field and track and take their fully merited victory lap.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

SAUNDERS, STACEY: SPECIAL OLYMPIAN - CONGRATS.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, tears of joy started streaming down Stacey Saunders' face as she waited to take the podium to receive her gold medal in the 100-metre

during the Special Olympics Canada 2018 Summer Games in Antigonish. The Team Nova Scotia member also earned gold as a member of the 4 x 100-metre relay team and a silver in the shot put.

Stacey lives in Stellarton and was overjoyed with her success. Her hard work, training, commitment, and dedication brought her to that moment. Stacey's goal is to be a member of Team Canada for the 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Abu Dhabi. She also competes in floor hockey, basketball, and hockey.

I am sure all members of this Legislature will join me in wishing Stacey Saunders great success in her future competitions.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much for those member statements. We'll now enjoy a couple of seconds of solitude while we await Question Period.

[2:00 p.m.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

PREM.: SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS - SUPPORTS PROVIDE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: My question is for the Premier. I spoke last week of a young woman in Truro who is the survivor of sexual assault. She went to the Colchester East Hants Health Centre and did not receive the care that Nova Scotians would expect.

According to Statistics Canada, in 2017 there were over 1,000 reported cases of sexual assault, and a quarter of those were children. We know that instances of sexual assault are tragically under-reported. Hopefully, we will see this start to change, but change will only come when this government changes.

Stories like the one out of Truro are very discouraging to survivors who want to come forward. Will the Premier give survivors of sexual assault confidence that they will be treated with compassion by putting in place dependable supports in every part of our province?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): I want to thank the honourable member for the question. She is absolutely right. When someone comes forward, they need to be surrounded with the appropriate supports. That needs to be done in a timely manner. That's why in 2013, we invested in the first-ever sexual assault strategy here in the province.

We continue to invest in transition houses. She knows the Department of Justice provides support across our entire province. The same program that the honourable member is referring to is one that we as a government are committed to ensuring is all across our province.

What I said before, and I continue to say, is that the reason it's not in some places is ensuring that we have the appropriate training for those nurses who need the additional training it requires. That takes time, and we're working with our partners to ensure that that happens.

MS. MACFARLANE: In January, community groups that support survivors of sexual violence in Nova Scotia said they would likely have to turn people away without an extension of funding for the sexual violence strategy. The funding was \$2 million per year. One advocate argued that it is unethical for the province not to offer a long-term solution, especially because more victims are coming forward. I can table that document.

Despite all of this, the \$2 million that is earmarked for the 2018-19 budget will be spread between domestic violence and sexual assault. No matter how you look at it, that means less money for sexual violence. Will the Premier immediately restore and enhance the funding for sexual assault victims?

THE PREMIER: Again, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As she has alluded to in her question, I want to remind her that we were the first government to make an investment to ensure that we have a sexual assault strategy.

We said at the very beginning that that would be a three-year program that worked with our partners across the province. Following that, we built in, for the first time ever, \$1 million in the base of the Community Services budget to deal specifically with the sexual violence strategy. She would also know that we have invested, through the Department of Justice, across our province to make sure that we have supports. She would also know that we have dedicated supports in Public Prosecution to ensure that when someone comes forward, Public Prosecution has the appropriate training to deal with this very important issue.

MS. MACFARLANE: In the last sitting of the Legislature, the PC caucus raised the issue of sexual assault outreach and the reduction in funding. We asked the Public Accounts Committee to examine the issue. The committee agreed, but the witnesses were never called. The committee wrapped up its business three weeks early without addressing the issue. Now the government has wiped out the scheduled meetings, meaning it could be months before the topic is ever considered again.

Will the Premier explain why this government is going out of their way to avoid talking to sexual assault victims?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member again. I want to remind her of the work that we have been doing with our partners across the province.

I also want to remind her that the last time her Party was in power, on the floor of this Legislature, when in Opposition, we put in a bill around domestic violence, which, by the way, we implemented when we came to government. Their Party was prepared to trade it off on a scrap metal bill. We don't say one thing in Opposition. When we had a chance to make a difference in the lives of Nova Scotians, we did.

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

PREM.: MENTAL HEALTH SERV. - WAIT-LISTS

MR. GARY BURRILL: On the day following national Suicide Prevention Day, I want to point out to the Premier that if he or I or anyone should find ourselves today overwhelmed and make our way to avail ourselves of the Health Authority's community-based mental health services, particularly in Halifax at Bayer's Lake, we would be given an appointment to be seen by a clinician in 10, 11, or 12 months' time.

I want to ask the Premier, will he acknowledge that something is deeply out of whack when in our province, from one end to the other, we have people coming forward for help and having to wait six, eight, 10, 11, or 12 months just to get their foot into the door for an appointment?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. It's a very important, serious question.

One of the members from the Official Opposition read a member's statement, as well, in this House. We know that all of us have been impacted and it is important that these services are made available across our province. We are working and will continue to work with our partners to ensure that we do that.

It's also important that we learn to identify the issue very early on in the onsets of mental health challenges that our loved ones are experiencing and our neighbours are experiencing. That's why we have made this investment early on in the education system to make a wraparound service to ensure that we get early detection, because we all know that the earlier we detect these issues, the better the outcomes.

MR. BURRILL: It is not a matter of what the Premier or the government intends. It is a matter of what the government achieves.

The fact of the matter is that today in Nova Scotia we have a suicide rate considerably above the national average, while the percentage of our health budget which is dedicated to mental health is considerably below the national average, and we have a

government that took funds away from Eating Disorders Nova Scotia, the Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia, and the Canadian Mental Health Association. So, I want to ask the Premier, can he understand why there are a lot of people who feel that his government's record on mental health has fallen far short of what it should be?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we continue to work with our partners across the province to ensure that we provide the supports that community members need, that family members need. We, as a government, will continue to do that, and I want to assure the honourable member that we take the very issue he has raised here on the floor of the House of Assembly very seriously. The Minister of Health and Wellness, along with his partners across the Executive table, continue to make sure that we have the supports in place.

Is there more work to do? Of course, there is. There's always ongoing work, and we look forward to continuing to work with those partners to ensure that we continue to provide those supports to our communities.

MR. BURRILL: Yesterday, suicide prevention advocate Laurel Walker said in an interview, which I will table, that our system is built around band-aid solutions and only treating the worst when they have to go to the ER and they are really in a crisis. She said that the funding for mental health in Nova Scotia is inadequate. I agree with her. The province is full of people who, on the basis of experience in their own families, agree with her.

I want to ask the Premier, does he accept what Ms. Walker has had to say as a fair characterization, a fair assessment of where we are after five years of the Liberal Government on the file of mental health?

THE PREMIER: I think the important part in the honourable member's question was talking about when people present themselves at our health care facilities. What I've said earlier on is that we need to make sure that we have the supports there and in community-based mental health services, but I think it's equally as important to recognize that early detection of mental health issues is important for outcomes, important for the individual, and important for families. That's why we continue to make investments so that we can ensure that we can identify these issues early and the onsets with our children with the wraparound and supports we are providing in the public education system so that we continue to have better outcomes for all our families.

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

LAE: POST-SECONDARY INSTIT. - SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICIES

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. Researchers call the first weeks of school the "red zone" because sexual violence spikes on post-secondary campuses. Students,

particularly those in first year, face a higher risk of being assaulted during the season of back-to-school parties, new people, new places.

Ontario, Manitoba, British Columbia, and Quebec all have legislation requiring post-secondary institutions to develop sexual violence policies. Nova Scotia doesn't. Will the minister act immediately to protect students by introducing legislation that requires Nova Scotia universities to put sexual violence plans in place?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for bringing this issue to the floor of the Legislature. I'd like to reiterate that what our government has done is put this strategy in place in the MOU.

Every university is expected to have a sexual assault violence strategy in place and, as well, not only did we put it in the MOU, if the universities do not have it in place, there are financial penalties that the universities incur because of it. We felt that this was a very strong message to the universities, but more importantly, every university has been in step with our government and they are bringing these sexual assault strategies forward because they know that even one sexual assault is one too many.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his answer; it does sound fairly positive. Student organizations are leading the charge to keep their members safe on campus, and I applaud them for this. Because of their efforts, the federal government is even considering withdrawing funding from universities and colleges that are not implementing best practices to deal with campus sexual violence. It is a clear indication that the time for talk is over and that there needs to be real, concrete action to help protect students.

So, in the absence of legislation, will the minister consider attaching financial consequences to schools that fail to take appropriate action, but let us know what those fines will be in total?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, right now, what we've put forward to the universities, the fines will be their increases which can be as much as \$3 million per year. But I do want to say, I want everyone in this House to know that the universities were part of the process. The student groups we're talking about were part of the process. They brought a sexual assault strategy forward to myself as the minister and this was started under the previous minister. It was fully accepted. The universities are actually ahead of schedule implementing it.

We're very pleased about that and, again, I will reiterate, as we've heard in the Legislature today, times are changing and we are pleased the universities are moving forward. We want victims to come forward and we want no victims at all to have anything horrible like this happen to them. Thank you.

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

H&W: PHYSICIAN RECRUIT. PLAN - TIMELINE

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Yesterday, the NSHA's Senior Director of Medical Affairs said that the Department of Health and Wellness did not have a recruitment plan to pass along to the newly created Health Authority back in 2016. It seems odd to promise a doctor for every Nova Scotian three years prior without a plan for how to recruit them.

I'd like to ask the minister, does the minister think that four years is too long to wait for a plan while thousands of Nova Scotians don't have a family physician?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. As the member would know, part of the challenge that was being referred to is that you have a variety of different Health Authority districts within the province, different approaches to recruitment throughout the province. Bringing together a single Health Authority provides that opportunity to look at our province as a whole. I believe this has resulted in a number of improvements in identifying where needs are, how we implement, as the member mentioned, taking action, taking action with our incentives to help with recruitment like a tuition relief program, and also our locum initiatives, all those initiatives taking place. We've been learning from the experience in front-line health care workers to make those improvements on the ground.

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, we know 56,000 Nova Scotians are on the waiting list for a family doctor and last Spring the minister did announce a suite of major incentives designed to encourage doctors to take patients off the waiting list, saying that these changes offered more choice and added incentives to practise here in Nova Scotia. However, upon closer inspection, these incentives aren't available for physicians starting a new practice, for example. In fact, to be eligible for these incentives, physicians must have been practising for at least two years or have more than 1,350 patients on the roster.

Can the minister explain why he has suggested these incentives would bring more family doctors to Nova Scotia when it excludes those at the very beginning of their career?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for taking the opportunity to bring the suite of incentives that we announced in the Spring, that we developed in collaboration with Doctors Nova Scotia, to the floor of the House. The member is making reference to one particular incentive out of a suite of about five or six different initiatives. The one that he's referring to was designed to encourage the expansion of existing collaborative practices and comprehensive family care being provided in the province to attach patients to a family practice.

The other incentives that we've provided include increases in the compensation for comprehensive family care. It's incentives like that, increasing the compensation that's available to our physicians, that are attractive not just for retaining physicians but also recruiting new ones.

[2:15 p.m.]

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

**COM. SERV. - SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS:
SERVICES - STABLE FUNDING**

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Community Services. In a presentation to the Standing Committee on Community Services, the Sexual Assault Services Network of Nova Scotia said there is no statistical indication that the Liberal sexual violence strategy has reduced sexualized violence in Nova Scotia. In fact, they said the strategy increased the demand for comprehensive services as people are more often coming forward to report sexualized violence. Unfortunately, this same group of advocates said that long-term, comprehensive services are not available.

As a health care professional in Nova Scotia, I have seen the lifelong consequences on one's mental and physical health when those services are not provided. My question to the minister is, why has the Liberal Government refused to provide funding for long-term, comprehensive services for survivors of sexual assault?

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I will address my answer to services provided by Community Services. I want to confirm for the honourable member that we do, in fact, provide services for the prevention of sexual assault through the Department of Community Services. We have \$1 million in funding going forward, prevention innovation grants.

I would note that I would not simply take our plan to combat sexual assault as the cause for more people coming forward. I think the Me Too movement had something to do with that. I commend those who have come forward.

MS. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of anybody who has ever experienced a sexual assault, \$1 million in prevention is nowhere near enough.

The story of the young woman who waited for three days to get a SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) exam and the horrific story of the young Truro woman who was turned away from a hospital without any care show that short-term services for victims of sexual assault are inadequate and experts in the field say that long-term services are not available, but are critical.

In Nova Scotia we do not have these services available and the majority of people who are sexually violated are done by someone they know, making this an even more complex issue.

My question to the minister is, will the minister admit that the province has not done enough for sexual-violence victims and to act immediately to ensure there are greater services for both prevention, as well as appropriate services for long-term care, available when and where they are needed?

MS. REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for her question. We always want anyone who is the victim of sexual assault to have the kind of supports they need to get over this.

What I will say is that we do have an online training course that helps all of us to better provide support for people who are victims of sexual assault. I would encourage all members of this House to reach out and take that Supporting Survivors of Sexual Assault course. You can do it online.

Mr. Speaker, we are also developing programs that better reach those who often don't come forward. What we do know is that young people, particularly women, but people in marginalized communities, like Aboriginal Nova Scotians, African Nova Scotians, often don't come forward so we are, in fact, working on providing better services to those populations as well.

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

H&W - SANE PROGRAM: C.B. ISLAND - INCLUDE

MS. ALANA PAON: In 2015, Nova Scotians were horrified to learn that a victim of sexual violence was forced to wait three days for a sexual assault nurse examiner team to travel from Antigonish to New Glasgow. To make that awful story go away, this government told Nova Scotians not to worry, they were investing \$700,000 to expand the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program to Cape Breton and the South Shore.

Nova Scotians trusted this government to keep its word to them and to survivors of sexual assault, but the trust was misplaced, Mr. Speaker. More than three years later the SANE program has not been established in Cape Breton.

Mr. Speaker, it is three years, why hasn't the minister followed through on the promise to provide these crucial services to the people of Cape Breton Island?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for raising the question. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we've been following through with this commitment to expand SANE services and the member's preamble made reference to New Glasgow. I had

a meeting earlier this week with the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, which provides SANE services to Antigonish and the surrounding areas, including coordinating services out of the New Glasgow region.

Mr. Speaker, it was a very positive meeting. They appreciate the work that we're providing and the support that I provided both as MLA advocating on their behalf long before I came into this position. The work for expansion in the SANE services - just as recently as last week, a program was launched I believe in the Yarmouth community. The work is ongoing and as the Premier said in an earlier question, it takes time to get people the training that they need to fulfill the requirements and deliver those services.

MS. PAON: Mr. Speaker I'd like to take this opportunity to remind the minister that New Glasgow is not on Cape Breton Island. Three years ago, women were forced to wait days for a SANE examination - that is a situation that never should have been allowed to happen.

Things have become even worse, Mr. Speaker. Very recently, we learned that a young woman who has been sexually assaulted was turned away from a hospital having been given only some pamphlets - not medical advice, not an offer of a SANE examination. All our system could provide her was a few pieces of glossy paper.

Mr. Speaker, how can Nova Scotians trust this minister to ensure victims of sexual assault that the care they need when they already let them down on the promise of a SANE program on Cape Breton Island?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker as I've mentioned, work is continuing with our partners throughout the province at expanding these services. To the specific case that the member referenced about obtaining those same services, obviously this program is relatively new in the history of the province.

I want to assure her and all members of this Legislature and the members of the public that having an assessment that can be provided within hospitals throughout the province. Certainly, there are enhanced services provided by SANE - the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners - and that work is going to continue with these expansions including Cape Breton, the South Shore, and as we've mentioned, the Northern Shore as well.

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

H&W - SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE: VICTIM SERVICES - AVAILABILITY

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Every person who experiences sexualized violence should have the opportunity to present themselves at a hospital, if available, to have evidence collected by a health care professional. Every person who experiences sexualized violence should have the

opportunity to report the incident to police in a respectful, safe, and trauma-informed environment. And every person who experiences sexualized violence, either recent or historical, should have access to a specialized sexual assault therapist.

My question to the minister is, does the minister agree that it's only ethical to have these services available for all people who experience sexualized violence no matter what part of the province they live in.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, of course we agree that services for people presenting as victims of a sexual assault or sexualized violence - they do need to get the care in a compassionate way. I want to assure the member opposite that, in fact, they can present at hospitals and receive the examination by health care providers, by physicians throughout the province to collect the evidence.

As we noted, the SANE program is an enhanced service that is also available in parts of the province. We've committed to continue the expansion of that program and that work is ongoing. As recently as last week announcing the activation of that program in the Yarmouth region.

MS. MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, people who experience sexualized violence live in different communities across our province - not just Halifax, Antigonish, Pictou, and Colchester County. People who experience sexualized violence should not have to tell their story over and over again as it re-victimizes them. People who experience sexualized violence deserve timely and confidential support, by a professional who is appropriately trained, in a safe environment.

My question to the minister: Is he prepared to fund specialized sexual violence trauma therapeutic counselling in this current budget to all parts of the province or is he okay with parts of the province not having access to the service.

MR. DELOREY: Again, I thank the member for bringing this important issue to the floor of the Legislature. Indeed, we continue to expand and provide services for people who have suffered sexualized violence that included the services around sexual assault therapy, therapists, as well as the expansion of the SANE program. Mr. Speaker, this is work that's ongoing and will continue to expand across the province.

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

LAE: RISING TUITION FEES - GOOD FOR N.S.?

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. When university students returned to campus last week, they returned to the fastest rising tuition fees in the country. This year average tuition fees have

gone up 5.5 per cent, almost double the national average. Since this government came to office they have gone up a total of 26 per cent. We now have the second highest tuition fees in the country and the minister's policies have us on track to have the highest.

My question for the minister is, does the minister think skyrocketing tuition fees are good for Nova Scotia?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, it gives us an opportunity now to talk about the excellent universities we have in this province as well as the excellent programs they offer. This is why university students from all over the country come here. We bring in more students per capita than any other province.

Mr. Speaker, the member is right, the tuition fees reflect the quality of education, but we could possibly have lower fees if the NDP hadn't cut 10 per cent from the universities' budgets.

MS. ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I am getting so tired of this government trying to throw a former government, from like seven years ago, under the bus. Get with the program here, folks. Students are still telling us that they are leaving the province to pay off their debt and it is not hard to see why.

The average student debt in Nova Scotia is over \$39,000, one of the highest in the country and yet we have one of the lowest median incomes in the country as well, and in three weeks we'll have the lowest minimum wage in the country. In other words, the minister is forcing young people to take on some of the highest debt loads in the country and then enter one of the lowest-paid labour markets.

My question for the minister is, could he please explain why he thinks that putting young people \$40,000 in the hole is such a great policy for Nova Scotians?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, it gives me another great opportunity to talk about our most generous student loan program, the most generous in the province. When we came in we eliminated the interest on our student loans. Then we went a step further and we said to the students, if you graduate we'll completely wipe out the Nova Scotia portion.

Mr. Speaker, this government has increased the funding to universities every year, while the NDP cut out 10 per cent - it is no wonder that tuition fees rose. I would also like to add that not only did the NDP cut 10 per cent, they enforced a freeze on universities with no prior knowledge and the universities were stuck with abnormal tuition fees, NSCAD was stuck offering six courses for the price of four, which hurt them very badly. Then the NDP went a step further and started threatening NSCAD to move them into Dalhousie University. Shame on them.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

TIR - PORT HASTINGS ROTARY: IMPROVEMENTS - UPDATE

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Over the weekend I was travelling through the rotary at Port Hastings, by the Causeway, and lo and behold, I looked and there was a car coming at me, coming the wrong way, with Pennsylvania license plates. It travelled completely through the rotary in the wrong direction. Very dangerous, cars coming from all angles.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians are getting used to the rules for roundabouts. This is a rotary with different rules. Tourists are too busy trying to decide which route they want to take to enter Cape Breton Island and where they are going, they are not seeing the yield signs.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard of millions of dollars being announced for highways in areas that aren't being twinned, to improve safety. Can the minister provide an update on progress for changes that could come for the rotary in Port Hastings?

HON. LLOYD HINES: I thank the honourable member for the question. He certainly provides a lot of vigilance for the entry to Cape Breton, which of course is very important. It definitely could require some upgrades, no doubt about it. It's in the long-term plan.

I appreciate the advice in terms of what happened there on the weekend. Unfortunately, sometimes people get confused, no matter where they are at. We'll certainly take a look and see if the signage could be improved.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, we certainly hear about it a lot. There's a lot of these incidents and it's scary to see them happening with my own eyes.

Mr. Speaker, I've also raised issues around delays with the swing bridge at the Canso Causeway. There's an opportunity here. The rotary and the causeway traffic issues are all connected, because they are so close together. I have advanced ideas, some of which have come from constituents, about improving traffic flow, particularly for people who don't even want to cross the causeway, who have to make it through that rotary.

Mr. Speaker, the minister knows the area well. He's a resident - not too far away. Can the minister provide some indication before the end of this sitting that would suggest the government is prepared to do something about the rotary and the potential to improve traffic flow and improve safety?

MR. HINES: I thank the member for the question. As the House is aware, the province recently took over responsibility for the causeway and the attendant issues that he speaks to with regard to the swing bridge that's there. We were able to improve the bridge

and improve the system that last year resulted in significant delays when the mechanism went down. So we've gotten to that point, where we have local service which delays the time.

Our department is looking at alternatives for rerouting some of the traffic that may not be going to the causeway, either coming out of Trunk 19 or coming up from the Port Hastings area. That would alleviate some of the bottleneck that occurs when the bridge does go down. Thank you.

[2:30 p.m.]

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

TIR: LENNOX PASSAGE BRIDGE - REPAIRS

MS. ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, I have communicated to constituents regarding the Lennox Passage Bridge that links Isle Madame to the rest of Cape Breton Island.

Lennox Passage Bridge has had a rough summer this year. The bridge is the only way on and off Isle Madame, an island with approximately 4,000 residents. Minimal preventive maintenance has forced TIR to weld the span shut because of concerns that the bridge might not shut again once opened, so it has remained closed to marine traffic all summer long. This has impacted tourism and transportation not only in local marinas but throughout the Bras d'Or Lakes and the rest of Cape Breton Island. TIR has issued an RFP - thank you very much - to repair the bridge, with a total value of \$2.9 million.

My question for the minister, is he confident, given the state of this bridge, that \$2 million this fiscal year and only \$900,000 the next is enough to rehabilitate this bridge to an optimal working condition?

HON. LLOYD HINES: Again, this is an aging piece of infrastructure that, interestingly enough, has a fairly ancient mechanism associated with opening and closing the bridge. The estimate that she refers to is simply that it's a shot at what we're thinking the cost might be.

The tender has closed on the bridge. We are currently evaluating what we're going to do in that particular instance. Thank you.

MS. PAON: I didn't realize that bridges that were built in the 1970s were considered ancient. I was born in that era, so maybe I'm considered ancient as well.

I appreciate that the minister and TIR employees are working hard to keep that bridge open to marine traffic, but my community realizes that we've been having issues with this bridge for close to a decade now, and that the capital plan keeps kicking the can

down the road on a sustainable fix. We now know that the tender for the repair work has come in. It's closed, and it's come in over budget. As the tourism season comes to a close, people in and around Cape Breton-Richmond are wondering if this will impact yet another tourism season next year.

Will the department commit the necessary resources to complete bridge repairs in time for marine traffic to pass through over the 2019 tourism season?

MR. HINES: It is our intention at this point to have the work concluded before the beginning of the next tourist season, before the end of June of next year. Thank you.

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

TIR: ENGLISHTOWN FERRY - STATUS

MR. KEITH BAIN: It must be transportation day in Cape Breton, because my question is to the Minister of TIR as well.

Last December, the Englishtown ferry was supposed to be closed to all traffic until April of this year to allow for reconstruction of the ramps and other improvements. Well, April has come and gone, and so have the months of May, June, July, and August. Now we're past Labour Day, and still no ferry.

This delay is causing worry in the surrounding communities, and rumours are starting to swirl about when and if the ferry is finally going to resume service. My question to the minister is, will the minister update this House on the status of the project and when these communities should expect to see their ferry operational?

HON. LLOYD HINES: The project at Englishtown has been affected, of course, by Mother Nature and the challenges that that represents when dealing particularly with ice scour in the area. That actually resulted in a significant redesign during the project when it was under way. Recently, Transport Canada has okayed the operation of that facility, and there is some fine tuning going on. We are expecting that ferry will be open to the public shortly.

MR. BAIN: Well, shortly was also May, June, July, and August. Having the ferry closed for the last nine months has inconvenienced residents and businesses and has caused emergency providers possible delays when responding to emergency calls. On April 5th, I rose in this House and shared the concerns of local residents and businesses because the ferry connecting tourists to the Cabot Trail would not be operational during the busy tourist season. Unfortunately for those residents and local businesses, their worst fears were true. An incredible nine months and the loss of a tourist season that helps local businesses during the winter months are gone.

My question to the minister is, will the minister help to correct a wrong and commit to removing all the Englishtown ferry service fees, and if not, for at least six months following the ferry re-opening, whenever that might be, in recognition of the inconvenience this project has cost.

MR. HINES: I can certainly understand the frustration that particularly the local people are feeling with the loss of that vital service, which when you consider, represents quite a bargain for the users to be able to cut off that trip through Tarbotvale and get to your destination much closer. There are costs associated with providing that, the same as there is in any of the other highway structures. We'll be looking forward to getting that back in service shortly.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

COM. SERV. - CHILDREN IN CARE: CLOSED CONFINEMENT - TRACKING

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: My question is for the Minister of Community Services. Wood Street Centre in Truro is the highest level of treatment for youth under the care of the minister. The facility houses some of the province's most vulnerable children and teenagers who are suffering from emotional and behavioural disorders. Residential caring facilities are allowed to use therapeutic quiet rooms similar to solitary confinement. However, a letter received by our caucus through Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, indicates the department does not track the number of incidences of children in care of the minister being held in closed confinement or the length of time of each incident.

Mr. Speaker, is the minister satisfied that her department is unable to determine how many children in her care are being held in closed confinement or for how long?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question, and I want to inform the honourable member that the safety and well-being of children in our care is our top priority. I do believe that in this particular case, they asked for records that exist. Those records do not exist. We don't track that currently, but it is something that we could track in the future.

MS. LEBLANC: We look forward to getting that data soon.

Mr. Speaker, most youth in the Wood Street Centre facility are between the ages of 12 and 18. The department's policy on the use of therapeutic quiet rooms states that children who indicate a need to leave the therapeutic room due to sickness, need to urinate or defecate, or circumstances involving menstruation or otherwise will be instructed that the request will be approved when the chief administrative officer is satisfied that the child has demonstrated the ability to manage their behaviour. Mr. Speaker, 12-year-old children

held in close confinement and not allowed to go to the bathroom. Does the minister think that this treatment is appropriate for children who have been placed in her care?

MS. REGAN: I want to assure the honourable member that the safety and well-being of all children placed in our care and our authority is of the top priority.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

WCB: INDEPENDENT MED. SPECIALIST - DEFINITION

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Act. The Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia provides workplace injury insurance to a number of workers across this province. Therefore, when a worker gets injured on the job, they expect to have the peace of mind that they'll receive compensation for their injury. Often, the WCB requires that an independent medical specialist offer an opinion on the injury at the centre of the claim. The Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Act stated in this House that he would expect WCB to honour the findings of an independent medical specialist. My question, could the minister inform this House the definition of an independent medical specialist?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I don't have the exact definition of an independent medical specialist but, in terms of what the name says, they'd be independent. They wouldn't be subsidized by the Workers' Compensation Board, but I can provide the exact definition that WCB qualifies that individual to the member. Thank you.

MR. DUNN: Mr. Speaker, Darrell MacKinnon, a Pictou County worker, was injured on February 13, 2012. Six and a half years since the workplace accident, he continues to be denied by WCB.

Mr. MacKinnon was sent by his family doctor to see a specialist about his injuries he sustained that day in the job. The specialist provided his opinion after seeing him numerous times and concluded, along with four other specialists that reviewed Mr. MacKinnon's case, that, indeed, it was a workplace injury. So it came as a great surprise when the WCB officials informed Mr. MacKinnon that they denied his claim based on a five-hour visit from another specialist that WCB hired to review his file.

My question to the minister is, can the minister explain why WCB waits to hear from a hired specialist rather than make a decision from several independent specialists?

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I'm not familiar with the particulars of this case. If the member would like to obtain a release from their constituent, I'd be more than happy to review it with him. Thank you.

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

**EECD - HFX. REG. CTR. FOR EDUC.: COURTESY BUSES -
STANDARDIZATION**

MR. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and it's about local courtesy busing. Last September, I asked the minister a question in regard to courtesy busing in the local Harry R. Hamilton Elementary School and that the distance, of course, provincially is 3.6 kilometres and students are bused from five to 18. The Halifax Regional School Board had a policy of 2.4 kilometres from Grade Primary to Grade 6 which the Halifax Regional Centre for Education seems to be still following.

The minister said that a standardization policy across the province is one of the objectives of centralization. My question is will the minister please update the House on whether centralization has resulted in a standardized policy across the province or has he just helped to add to the crisis in busing for students in the Halifax Regional Centre for Education?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I know that for many parents they experience busing frustrations the first week of school. There has been significant progress made over the course of the weekend into this week. We are now at 98 per cent of our students in HRM being delivered to school and back home on time. That said, we want to make sure that we do a better job moving forward on having the best busing practices and policies possible to ensure the health and safety of our kids and efficient delivery of our students. So, we're currently reviewing best practices within Nova Scotia and our various regions and also in the other jurisdictions of the country. Thank you.

MR. JOHNS: In September 2017, the minister said that there are many people out there who would actually agree having their children walk to school was a healthy exercise. Then again, in March, I asked the minister if he would commit to come out to my constituency and join me and a five-year-old student as we walked the 7.2 kilometres to school and back. According to Hansard, the honourable then-Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development at that time replied with an unqualified maybe.

My question is, will the minister today commit to come out and participate with me in some so-called healthy exercise by walking the 7.2 kilometres to Harry R. Hamilton Elementary School in Wilson Lake Estates Subdivision and back again along Sackville Drive where there are no sidewalks, very narrow road shoulders, and over 20,000 cars a day.

MR. CHURCHILL: Part of the review of busing that we're doing right now does entail the various distances that we have for elementary and higher grades in the province. We're also looking at the number of buses that we do have on our routes. I'll remind the member that those thresholds were brought in by a previous Progressive Conservative Government and I think it is about time that we review those. The fact that we were able

to change the governance structure of the education system has actually finally allowed the province to play a very direct and active role in this file.

[2:45 p.m.]

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

TIR: TRUNK 3 RDS. - BUDGET PLANS (2019)

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, and I know, as he and his department are starting to get ready for planning for 2019, I thought I would ask him a question on what kind of monies will be available for paving the Trunk 3 highways through our communities, the Trunk 1 - that secondary highway system that is so important to us.

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, the question is well put, and I thank him for the question.

It is that time of year when we are determining where the budget is going for next year and we have invited all the MLAs to avail themselves of the opportunity to put their particular opinions on what their priorities are directly to the department people who do the planning, and I would invite the member to take the opportunity to highlight the importance of Trunk 3 to our senior management. Thank you.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Well, let me do one up - let me get it on to Hansard and I'll bring it to Hansard when I do have that meeting with you and your staff.

As we flow through Shelburne County, as we come across the Shelburne-Yarmouth county line in Charlesville, the highway there, Highway No. 3, travels all the way to Barrington Passage. All of it needs to be replaced. That's about 20 kilometres of paving which would take up all the budget for Argyle-Barrington as it goes forward.

I just want the minister to understand that it has been neglected far too long. Millions of dollars of lobsters and fish products come through there that have to travel over that road and it is coming to a state that it is unsafe.

On Hansard, I will bring this to the meeting, but maybe he can comment on the availability of Charlesville to Barrington Passage.

MR. HINES: Mr. Speaker, I was so happy to present the budget in this year's budget process last Spring that increased our capital spending from \$225 million to \$287 million - a huge increase in our capital spend, unheard of and unseen in former governments - together with an increase of over \$2 million in the maintenance budget which hadn't seen an increase for quite a long time, over a decade.

In terms of the very good points that the member makes in regard to the condition of the highway and the importance of it for commerce, as all our roads are, it is important that the House notes that we are spending more money on capital than this province has seen in many, many years.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

L&F - FORESTRY REVIEW RPT.: RECOMMENDATIONS - IMPLEMENT

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Lands and Forestry. Bill Lahey's independent forestry review report has a clear message: if we don't start protecting the ecological underpinning of the forestry sector, we risk it all.

This is not news. Commentators point out that Mr. Lahey's recommendations are not very different from the Natural Resources Strategy released in 2011 after years of public engagement and consultation. The New Democratic Party began implementing the strategy, but the Liberals have refused to follow it.

My question is, will the minister admit that the forestry review report confirms that the government should not have backed away from the goals of the Natural Resources Strategy?

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, Professor Lahey did submit a report about three weeks ago. It is very comprehensive, but it does have a strict focus on the forestry industry instead of a full natural resources strategy. There are 163 conclusions drafted, 45 recommendations. It is over 70 pages, so the department is ongoing, looking at each recommendation and we look forward to seeing if our analysis supports his recommendations.

MS. ROBERTS: Twelve organizations representing more than 2,000 woodlot owners have had time to come together and decide to endorse the report, but we haven't heard anything from the government about what it will do. In the meantime, the same practices to undermine the future of our forests are continuing, including a new announcement of 878 acres of Crown land proposed to be clear-cut.

My question is, will the minister commit to implementing Lahey's recommendations?

MR. RANKIN: Again, we will be looking at each recommendation and not just cherry-picking which ones we think will work well in the short term. There's lots of work to do.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 2.

Bill No. 2 - Develop Nova Scotia Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Business.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 2, Develop Nova Scotia Act, be now read a second time.

It is my pleasure to rise in the House today for the second reading of this important bill. This bill, Develop Nova Scotia, is a formal, last step in the transition of a Crown Corporation that is key to the prosperity of our entire province. Until July, Develop Nova Scotia was known as the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited.

With that new name comes a new, province-wide mandate. It is a mandate that aligns with our government's commitment to drive economic growth and create vibrant places to live and do business in all our communities. Develop Nova Scotia is about putting these words into action.

When this bill passes into law, Develop Nova Scotia will be responsible for managing strategic economic infrastructure across the entire province. That means leading the way to improving high-speed Internet for all communities, building on Brightstar Canada's recommendations. If you live in rural Nova Scotia, you will understand that high-speed Internet is a key piece of economic infrastructure that will connect our people, help our businesses, and attract all-important investments.

The new mandate also means Develop Nova Scotia will be leaders in place-making across the province, making our communities more attractive places to live, visit, and do business. The Develop Nova Scotia team has already done a tremendous job with this sort of work - thinking about Halifax and the Lunenburg waterfronts, attracting millions of visitors and new business activity, and most recently, the COVE project in Dartmouth - creating a new strategic economic asset that will support innovation and business growth in the ocean economy, one of our most important and thriving economic sectors. At the

same time, to mirror the provincial scope of the board, this work of Develop Nova Scotia will expand for the board's perspective to include up to three new members, to better reflect all regions.

Finally, I want to recognize Jennifer Angel, President and CEO of Develop Nova Scotia, and her team for their excellent work and congratulate them on their expanded mandate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. ALANA PAON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to speak to Bill No. 2, Develop Nova Scotia Act. I just want to start off by saying that it's wonderful to see that the government is actually moving towards thinking very much on expanding the entire development of Nova Scotia. However, I'm really concerned about the significant amount of money that will be flowing through this Crown Corporation and I'm worried about the amount of oversight or lack thereof that will be associated with this Crown Corporation.

There is going to be more uncertainty in economic developments, an additional layer of bureaucracy, and there's no sense of what the return on this investment is going to be at the end of the day.

In my former life, I used to do economic development in rural Nova Scotia. One of the things that was really important when I worked for the regional development authority was that the board of directors were from the community where the development was occurring. There's obviously nobody that knows regions better than representation from those actual communities. I am a true believer in that, having practised it myself.

There's a concern for me with the way that the Crown Corporation is going to have a board of directors that is supposed to represent the regional areas within the province, but there is nothing in this bill that speaks particularly about what areas and the percentages that will be represented. For example, there's nothing in this bill that actually specifically says that Cape Breton Island, which is obviously where the portion is that I represent, which is Cape Breton-Richmond, is going to be directly represented in this new Develop Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, I guess the overall theme for me here is that there's a bit of a worry about trust and transparency yet again. This Liberal Government has proven again and again that it cannot - I'm going to say cannot be trusted to ensure transparency. I don't say that lightly. The word "trust" is something that we should all take close to our hearts and it's a word that seems to have lost meaning over the years, for some reason, when it comes to government and to politics. I think it's important that we put that at the forefront again and that we have as much transparency in government as possible.

This government now wants to spend millions of dollars to expand a Crown Corporation and give it new powers. Since most of its operations would have involved the private sector, most of its activity will again be hidden from the public. This is not what I see as a move towards more transparency and more trust.

I know that, of course, anything within government, you're capable to do a FOIPOP on it, but that is meaningless under this government and in the only province in Canada where the FOIPOP Commissioner is not an independent officer of the Legislature, and where the government can simply tell the commissioner "no" when she requires access to information. To be perfectly frank, I find it rather shameful.

The minister can impact a composition and decision of the board, which again, does not speak to trust and transparency. When we look at appointed boards across the province, and that the minister can have basically such an impact on the composition of who can sit on a board, I would rather not see that the decisions that are made in especially rural Nova Scotia, but across Nova Scotia as a whole, are skewed to political Party partisanship.

What could possibly go wrong when I say all of that? Well, I think a lot could go wrong. As far as regional representation under this bill, there's no legislative guarantee, as I said before, that Develop Nova Scotia or its board will reflect the regional makeup of Nova Scotia as a whole. We're a very large province, some see us as very tiny, but we all have our specific challenges across this province and it's really important that we all have an opportunity to have representation around the table when decisions are being made not for us but, I would hope, by us.

We don't know how the existing regional enterprise networks - I have the Eastern Strait Regional Enterprise Network in my own constituency, and they exist across the province. We don't know how the existing RENS will be handled under this expanded mandate, either. I worry somewhat what the existence for the RENS will be under this new Develop Nova Scotia Act.

Who was consulted in this province? Who was consulted before this bill was put together and this legislation will be put through? What voice did our municipalities have in this process? And are those organizations about to be fully defunct when it comes to really having an overall ability to be able to give their input into the process of what happens at their own doorsteps as far as development in their regions and across this province as a whole?

I think the government is actually doing a grave disservice to the credibility of this new organization and I believe, I'm sure, that the government obviously wants it to succeed, but again, I cannot emphasize enough the importance, and I do not see it in this piece of legislation, of the almost mandated or legislated representation of all people in all regions across this province.

If this Act is actually going to, and this board and this organization are going to, act as a consultancy service of sorts, to go out into the regional areas of this province, it needs to make sure that its board of directors represents the province as a whole.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm not one to add more layers of bureaucracy, and this seems to be another layer of bureaucracy with, I'm not really quite sure, how much to show for it. It seems that the Liberals don't have a plan for connecting underserved areas with the Internet beyond the initial money from the still-somewhat-vague offshore windfall.

[3:00 p.m.]

I almost said "secret" there, Mr. Speaker, but I'm going to try and stay with "very vague." We still don't really quite know the details of the money that has come from the offshore money that's going to be invested into the rural Internet projects across this province.

So, adding new staff and new board members, but having admitted that the private sector is going to be doing most of the work, I'm not really quite sure how effective this organization - this new Crown Corporation, rather - is going to be. We don't have a business plan regarding this Crown Corporation. I'm not certain, and I don't think anybody is quite certain, what the new Crown Corporation is actually going to entail. It has no plan. I see no plan for it coming across my desk.

Strategic economic development as a whole is extremely important in Canada and in the Province of Nova Scotia. It has been a buzzword: economic development, community economic development, strategic economic development. This is not a new concept. It has been around for a really long time. I mean, when I worked in economic development, specifically with the RDAs and doing entrepreneurship training before that with the Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development - economic development has been discussed for decades.

Again, not to make this all negative, it's really good when one sees that there is some movement to try and enhance economic development in our province. But I'm not really quite certain exactly how this new Crown Corporation intends on doing that, since there is no strategic plan and no business plan that's been put forward.

Rural Internet and economic development obviously go hand in hand. I'm sure many in the House will remember that in the last session, in the Spring, I spoke quite extensively regarding the importance of the lack of Internet, specifically in my constituency in rural Cape Breton Island - lack of cellphone service. These are really important infrastructure investments to make across the province, but especially in the rural countryside so that people in rural Nova Scotia can feel that they are connected to the rest of the world and so that economic development can thrive in rural Nova Scotia as well as urban Nova Scotia.

There are places in Nova Scotia - and of course, I represent one - that don't have obviously reliable landline or cell service. It seems incredible that in 2018 we still have this issue anywhere in North America, anywhere in Canada, but that in my constituency, specifically, we still don't have reliable service to be able to call out for the most basic of services, which of course is 911. It's a sad state of affairs.

What exactly is the mandate for this government with regard to this bill? Will there be an annual report tabled in the House to outline their plan and then give report progress and spending, or is it going to be an issue where we're going to be in this House again at the end of another year or two and asking for transparency and an understanding of where the money is flowing when it's going through this Crown Corporation?

I have just a few more words. I guess in summary, I don't want to sound cynical. Again, it's my way to always try to work positively with everyone in this House. I understand that there is movement here in trying to provide Nova Scotia and the different regions within it with Internet broadband service. It's really important that we all get connected. It's important as well that we're not only connected with Internet but that we're also connected - and it's a most basic service nowadays with cellular coverage.

I know that the honourable minister understands the difficulties that we have in rural Nova Scotia, as I've spoken to him about it on several occasions. I don't want to be cynical. It's just that it's a repeated experience with this government that we're having issues with really trust and transparency.

I guess, in summary, Mr. Speaker, I am hoping this doesn't become another situation where government is just saying, just trust us on this, without really giving us all the facts and all the information we need to make a very important decision. All decisions that are made in this House on legislation and on bills that pass affect Nova Scotians every single day. I think that's something that we don't talk about enough and when we say yes to a bill and it passes in this House and then it goes through Royal Assent, it affects Nova Scotians across this province. And it's really important that we have all the information that we need prior to being able to say yes or no on a bill that passes on our desks.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for the time to be able to say these few words on Develop Nova Scotia Act, Bill No. 2.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I just have a few words here on second reading. We have been and will continue to pay close attention to this new corporation, Develop Nova Scotia. I had the chance to meet with Jennifer Angel and hear more about these plans and, to start on a positive note, I would say I think it's wonderful to see some focus on local economic development from this government. Since I was elected, I have been asking everyone I can think of that has anything to do with the Department of

Business, “But what about local businesses? Where do they go? How do small local businesses get help from this government?”

I’ve had a very hard time getting any answer at all to that question and so I am very hopeful that with its focus on place-making that Develop Nova Scotia can be a home for what I feel we lost with Rural and Economic Development when that disappeared.

I think the government really has to take seriously that place-making approach. From my perspective if that is, in fact, the sort of *raison d’être* of this new Crown Corporation, then I would hope to see this Crown Corporation liaise with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development around school site selection, to liaise with TIR around active transportation and to truly take a holistic look at what that, frankly, buzzword of place-making actually means.

It means creating strong, vibrant local communities that people want to live in. I think we’ve learned over the years with the concentration of our populations in the urban areas of Nova Scotia that that takes more than any planning guidebook is going to give us. That actually means understanding the communities on the ground and what they need and what it takes for people to live there. Again, I think school site selection is a great example of that process.

I think that there are many concerns. I would echo some of the concerns of my colleague the member for Cape Breton-Richmond. I think we still have a lot of concerns about what this Internet plan will look like. Ten or 11 years ago, the Progressive Conservative government spent \$26 million to bring broadband to rural Nova Scotia. We know that that was partially successful, but certainly not at all sufficient. This government is now investing a great deal more money in that project which is important, but there still doesn’t seem to be a fundamental recognition - despite the use of the right language - that this is in fact a market failure.

So essentially what we’re hearing is, well, we’re going to negotiate a better contract this time. But the reality is you’re not going to negotiate a better contract when there’s nothing in it for the provider and so I am skeptical that this money will be anything more than a give-away to large corporations who will do some of the work and that we’ll be in the same situation we’re in now in 10 years.

I’m very hopeful that we can look outside the box so to speak, particularly for this government, at a publicly-owned option. I think that taxpayers want to own this particular kind of public infrastructure. Part of the reason for that is because it brings them something that we haven’t heard anywhere in this conversation around Internet, which is affordability. People need rural Internet, of course, but they need to be able to afford to pay for it. Even in Develop Nova Scotia’s new deck that it’s presenting in all its consultations we don’t see that word affordability. That’s not at the forefront of this conversation. If the Internet is not affordable, it might as well not be there.

Mr. Speaker, we know that people need to be able to access it and we don't have to look any further than another Canadian province, Saskatchewan, to see how successful publicly-owned Internet is. SaskTel gives Saskatchewan the lowest Internet prices and the highest rate of customer satisfaction in Canada and it delivers revenue to the province. It's a revenue generator.

Mr. Speaker, we look forward to seeing all of this unfold. I look forward to hearing further comments from my colleagues and from the minister and we are cautiously optimistic and remain vigilant as to how Develop Nova Scotia will evolve.

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

MR. HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I will open and close my remarks by stating that this bill is further proof that the government is committed to building a stronger province, stronger for our communities, stronger for our residents. This is a commitment based on strengthening our provincial economy.

As we heard last week in the Speech from the Throne, government will introduce legislation that will support businesses to grow our economy and create jobs for Nova Scotians. Today we're moving forward on that commitment through the formalization of Develop Nova Scotia, so that this fine, progressive organization can evolve from the Waterfront Development.

Mr. Speaker, we must and we are doing things differently to grow our economy. In today's globally competitive market for innovation and entrepreneurship it's simply not enough to say that we're open for business. We must differentiate ourselves from the crowd and Nova Scotia will differentiate itself by focusing on our greatest natural asset, our place by the sea.

Place attracts people, smart people, innovative and entrepreneurial people and such people attract investment and with investment comes jobs and with jobs more provincial wealth that creates greater security for all Nova Scotians.

Our place by the sea, our ocean advantage is what we will harness to give Nova Scotia the competitive edge to develop a new momentum both now and for future generations of Nova Scotians.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation formalizes Develop Nova Scotia as a province's Crown Corporation with the authority to lead the development of strategic, economics, land, and infrastructure across the province. That includes real property, improvements to land, improvements to physical assets, which will support strategic sector and population growth. Develop Nova Scotia will be guided by a strategic framework built on four cornerstones: (1) build on our ocean advantage; (2) plan for people; (3) preserve and

enhance public access and the public interest; and (4) foster a culture of innovation and action.

In building on our ocean advantage, Develop Nova Scotia will identify high potential property and infrastructure to attract people and investment to Nova Scotia, thereby supporting the development of our ocean sector and contribute to our population growth. It will attract visitors to our shores by enhancing destinations such as Peggy's Cove and iconic tourism sites such as the Halifax and Lunenburg waterfronts and others.

In planning for people or placemaking, Develop Nova Scotia will plan and create authentic, sustainable places for Nova Scotians. It will engage with communities across Nova Scotia. In placemaking activities, it will design and implement programs with our diverse population, reflecting our whole community while increasing accessibility and balancing our continued economic, environmental, and social development.

In preserving and enhancing public access and the public interest, Develop Nova Scotia will steward provincial opportunities, properties, and resources. It will establish financial stability through multi-year program budgets and explore new business opportunities for generating revenue from our properties. Develop Nova Scotia will continually update and optimize internal controls and systems and actively seek out and implement ways to maximize transparency.

[3:15 p.m.]

Fourthly, in fostering a culture of innovation and action, Develop Nova Scotia will enable communities of creative people to draw inspiration from all around our province. It will lead the alignment of private and public sector partners, provincial departments, and Crown corporations to champion place-making and economic development.

Mr. Speaker, government is committed to and acting upon building stronger, safer connected communities throughout the province. As the representative for Chester-St. Margaret's, primarily a rural Nova Scotia constituency, I recognize the benefits for our communities of increasing the capacity and the reach of our electronic highway. Access to high-speed Internet service connects our communities to the world. It retains families in rural Nova Scotia. It attracts businesses to areas outside of the urban areas. As a province, it makes us stronger. It makes us safer and more connected with each other and with others.

I'm pleased that one of Develop Nova Scotia's top priorities will be to work with communities, Internet service providers, and other levels of government to build a strong, vibrant high-speed Internet system across Nova Scotia. Working with the Nova Scotia Internet Funding Trust, Develop Nova Scotia will implement government strategy to deliver high-speed Internet to 95 per cent of Nova Scotian residents and businesses.

Waterfront Development's purpose was to redevelop and revitalize the land surrounding Halifax Harbour and Lunenburg Harbour. It successfully harnessed the potential of those waterfronts by developing ideas, infrastructure, and experiences that stimulated both business investment and community pride. The spectacular success of Waterfront Development in these areas and its leadership team has given us full confidence to entrust them with the development of a high-potential property and infrastructure to drive economic growth across Nova Scotia.

This legislative transition of Develop Nova Scotia from Waterfront Development will be seamless. When drafting the bill, we considered the best practices of Crown corporations and entities, not just in Nova Scotia, but also in other jurisdictions. Mr. Speaker, the introduction of this bill to formalize Develop Nova Scotia is further proof that government is taking the necessary steps to protect, strengthen, and grow Nova Scotia. It aligns with government's commitment to drive economic growth and create vibrant places to live and do business.

I stand here as a proud rural Nova Scotian and a proud member of this progressive and inclusive government that focuses on building a stronger Nova Scotia for today and for tomorrow.

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

The honourable Minister of Business.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I would like to thank my honourable colleagues on all sides of the House for their comments on this one. I'll be brief with a little bit of a response. Also, I'll temper my disappointment with the Opposition's position on this. I know they're always shocked and appalled and devastated by decisions government makes, but every once in a while, Mr. Speaker, I think even the Opposition can admit when we get something right. That's all governments of all stripes.

We are spending \$193 million to connect Nova Scotians. It doesn't matter how you slice it, how you criticize it, or how you position it, it's unprecedented in the Federation. It's more money per capita than any province is spending by a country mile. It's something that doesn't exist anywhere else. The purpose of this bill, Bill No. 2, for Develop Nova Scotia, is to give us some form of process, procedure, and a home base that plans a massive amount of spending on broadband in this province. That's what this is about.

One of the comments from the member for Cape Breton-Richmond was around another layer of bureaucracy. In the absence of nothing else that could spend \$193 million, we need a Crown corporation to carry out this all-important work for many, many people in all regions of this province.

We could start over and build a Crown corporation from the ground up, which would be another six months, eight months, and then we'd be criticized for taking too long. So, looking at the strategic investment history, experience that Jennifer Angel and her team have at Develop Nova Scotia, it makes perfect sense to create this legislative framework to allow them to carry that out.

Again, the member for Chester-St. Margaret's talked about Lunenburg, Halifax waterfront, the COVE, the strategic tourism investments of \$6 million, which we'll spend over the next number of fiscal years. That's all the work of Develop Nova Scotia. Jennifer, her team, the tremendous board that's there - they will carry that out.

Just to be very clear for the House and for all people in this province, Develop Nova Scotia is not going to waste the money because they aren't in charge of the money. An Internet trust has been established, as I think all members should know or would know. Develop Nova Scotia creates the structures, creates the tendering process, creates the relationship with ISPs, with municipalities, with all stakeholders that have a vested interest in broadband. They're not in charge of the money. They submit their work to the Internet trust fund that controls the finances, and they say yes or no.

This isn't a wasteful "we don't know what we're going to do with the money." This is not them making that decision, but let me tell you for the record - if it was, I would have full confidence in Jennifer and her team.

As with every Crown corporation, there will be a report that's produced annually. Jennifer will be fully accountable. The public will be aware every step of the way where every dollar is going, which ISPs are involved, which municipalities, which private sector entities, which satellite companies, which wireless firms. Everyone who is involved in this, it will be very public. They're public dollars. The whole purpose of this bill and of this process is to have accountability and transparency. That is the point on the piece around accountability.

With respect to membership, it's baked right into the legislation that we will be adding three additional members to represent the different regions of the province. It's very clear to me and to us - and we talked about Waterfront Development becoming Develop Nova Scotia - there is a branding issue. That seems to be something built for the peninsula. Broadband and the broadband solution is province-wide, so of course from a branding perspective, from optics, we've got to make sure that we're more inclusive and understand that every part of the region, every part of the province - each region - will be represented by this board and have a fair shot at getting in with the priorities that they have.

Again, with \$193 million and a good structure and a good foundation in place, every region will have that ample opportunity to access this money, access these programs and make sure that we're increasing broadband capacity in those regions.

Also, a comment about consultation and what municipalities were saying. Municipalities were heavily consulted and the message, the reaction, the feedback was again and again, get this money out the door - no more stalling, no more delays, no more funding holdups, get this out the door. Develop Nova Scotia will get this out the door. Municipalities had very much a decision-making factor in the sense that they needed an arm's-length independent body with Develop Nova Scotia and with the Internet trust that would do just that.

So that's what the plan is. This is going to work. I have full confidence, again, in the Develop Nova Scotia team and Jennifer with respect to broadband, first and foremost, but also in the strategic infrastructure. Place-making is critical. When you have government funds and when you're responsible for a fiscal budget, you can allocate funds to initiatives - you need somebody to execute plans. You need somebody to build the proposals, set the table, execute that plan. That's what the strategic infrastructure initiative aspect to Develop Nova Scotia is.

So they will consult with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development on schools and public facilities; they will consult with the Department of Health and Wellness; they will consult with TIR; with the Department of Tourism Nova Scotia; and with the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage. There will be a full gamut of explanation, consultation, collaboration on how this money is spent.

What this plan looks like, again, is unprecedented. That's the point and that's the exercise that Develop Nova Scotia is involved in now - to get this right. Public ownership, ISPs, municipalities - they all have a say, they have a voice at the table, and the only mandate, the only direction that Develop Nova Scotia has gotten from this government is to get this right, take your time, be meticulous, get it ready, and when it's ready we're going to get this money out the door.

That's what this is about. This isn't about corporate giveaways. This is about getting Nova Scotians broadband access - \$193 million will do that and Develop Nova Scotia will get us there.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I close second reading on debate.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 2. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 4.

Bill No. 4 - Corporations Registration Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I move that Bill No. 4 be now read a second time.

The amendments of today's Corporations Registration Act validates this government's commitment to promote economic growth and foster the spirit of entrepreneurship. These changes, quite simply, will help encourage new business in this province; it will help more Nova Scotians succeed.

These amendments are about strengthening our support for new business development across this great province and, to help give you context, there were approximately 3,000 companies incorporated in Nova Scotia in 2017-2018, and these changes will benefit thousands of entrepreneurs who want to start and grow a new business today and well into the future - and here's how.

With these amendments, we are waiving the annual registration fee for Nova Scotia companies during their first year of operation. It will continue to be required for out years. We also have amended regulations to the Companies Act to reduce the incorporation fee for a limited company from \$336.40 to \$200 flat. Both changes will take effect January 1, 2019.

What this means is simple. In the first year of operation the cost to incorporate and register a limited company will be \$200, which is significantly less than the current combined cost of \$454.75. I am pleased to say that we are going from a province with one of the highest incorporation fees to the lowest in the country. For comparison, New Brunswick's fee is \$262 for on-line and \$312 for paper; Prince Edward Island is \$250; and Ontario is \$360.

When the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness held workshops for the business community, business registration was the most cited issue as an area needing red-tape reduction. We are pleased today to start to make some improvements in that area.

In addition to going from one of the highest incorporation fees to the lowest in the country, we are also introducing a new service standard. It will now take three days for incorporation documents to be processed by the Registry of Joint Stock Companies, compared to the current five- to ten-day wait. This new service standard will take effect immediately.

I think it is fair to say that the benefit of reducing wait times during the critical start-up phase cannot be underestimated for any new business venture - in business, time is indeed money.

Jordi Morgan, Vice-President, Atlantic Canada of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business welcomed our news last week, saying it was good news for the province's entrepreneurs now that it will be faster and less costly to set up a new business here in Nova Scotia. Jordi continued to say that setting up a new business is challenging and this will lighten the load. He was pleased to see the work we are doing, and continue to, to reduce red tape for small businesses. The Halifax Chamber was also kind enough to lend their support to our announcement through social media last week, as well as the Canadian Bar Association and Fusion Halifax.

[3:30 p.m.]

Service Nova Scotia has an important role in helping Nova Scotians succeed. The breadth of the work out of Service Nova Scotia speaks to the ample opportunities the office has to contribute to the province's economic growth and help build a stronger Nova Scotia. We are contributing to the conditions to enable the private sector to drive job creation and economic growth and to reduce barriers to success. In fact, Service Nova Scotia has a significant role in government's work to reduce undue burden on businesses by more than \$25 million by the end of this year.

We are working to build a stronger and more inclusive economy, one that creates more jobs for younger Nova Scotians and one that allows them to focus on what's most important - growing their business. We are taking steps today to support businesses at a critical point in their start-up phase. It is all part of our commitment to build a stronger and more inclusive Nova Scotia. Service Nova Scotia will continue to work together with industry partners and engage stakeholders as we continue to aim to strike a balance between reducing red tape for Nova Scotia businesses while ensuring that important protections remain in place.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I conclude my remarks.

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

MS. ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to have once again a moment or two to be able to speak towards Bill No. 4, Corporations Registration Act. It's hard to say no, which I'm sure the minister will be happy to hear on such an Act when, of course, it's always a positive thing to see government trying to reduce taxes or fees in any way, but especially obviously to new business owners. Now, with regard to new business owners, I'm not really convinced regarding the messaging on this bill. The government's message on this suggests it would benefit small business but the legislation is not really targeting small businesses.

Having been a small-business owner myself and knowing many who are in the stages of start-up, many people who are starting up businesses are oftentimes working off their dining room tables. They are working off their kitchen tables. They are working in small office spaces and in other areas that are cost effective. In the agricultural industry, of which I know a few things, having a farm myself, most farms are not incorporated, and they don't become incorporated until they become multimillion-dollar companies.

So, for really the government to be messaging this to the people of Nova Scotia and to small-business owners, I'm really concerned that it's sending kind of a false message. Most people who are in the stages of wanting to do incorporation are well beyond the start-up phase. Most businesses, as I mentioned, start up very small. They're consultants for most people in Nova Scotia. They are small-business owners. We're not looking at people who are making exorbitant amounts of money to start off with. They are people, who are looking, yes, of course, and every business does throughout any stage of their development to try and save money.

Again, it's very positive that this government is looking at reducing obviously taxes and fees for business owners but, when you get to the stage of wanting to incorporate, it has been my experience anyway, you're at a very different stage than a start-up and the messaging seems to be targeted that this is really going to start new start-ups across the province and I don't think that is going to be the case.

As much as the minister has mentioned that there was a quote obviously from Mr. Jordi Morgan from CFIB who, you know, is in line with what we think is a very positive move obviously in reducing fees. He also said I don't think that you're going to see everybody saying, look, I'm saving \$183, so I'm going to go start up a new business. So, if government really wants to help business get through the very critical stages before it would be at a stage of incorporation, we have to look at something perhaps a little bit more radical than just reducing fees for a couple of hundred dollars and, again, that's nothing to sniff at. A couple of hundred dollars for any new business owner or for anyone in Nova Scotia is a significant amount of money. But at the end of the day, for the most part, it's not going to make or break a smaller, medium-sized enterprise.

I also wanted to mention that in the One NS Dashboard report, which tracks the goals of the Ivany report for building a new economy, it indicates that the goal of more new business start-ups is really not progressing. It concerns me greatly that, you know, not everybody in this province wants to be a business owner. Many people just want to go to work every day and be an employee, they don't want to be an employer. There are a lot of risks involved in being a business owner. For those people who are really looking at being an employee it concerns me, Mr. Speaker, that for example the employment rate has really climbed significantly from 6.7 per cent earlier this year to 8.4 per cent in August. This government currently still does not have a jobs plan and we don't talk enough about that, I think, in this House. We still do not see a jobs plan for this province from this government.

So as much again, Mr. Speaker, as it is a very positive move and I thank this government and the minister for putting forward this bill to be able to reduce some of the fees to small, not small, and medium-sized enterprises - more medium-scale enterprises that we're really talking about if we want to be really, truly honest about it. I think that we have a long way to go before this, a small gesture I will say, of this sort really has a significant impact on a developing business in Nova Scotia.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat and look forward to the comments of my other Opposition colleague.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I'll keep it very short on this one. As my colleague said, it's hard to argue with making things a little bit easier for businesses so, by all means, I think reducing red tape - reducing the cost to incorporate - is a good thing. I think it's a little disheartening that this is Bill No. 4 of this Session of the Nova Scotia Legislature when I think of the issues facing Nova Scotia; reducing the incorporation fee by a couple of hundred dollars is not right at the top of the list, but it's there somewhere, I guess, or it would be if I thought really, really hard about what was important.

I guess I don't have much more to say at this point, but I will say that I think some of the commentators got it right, and what I read in some of the commentary which was cited by the minister and by my colleague - and these are people who are supportive of the changes - was that, essentially, this sends a signal. It's a positive signal. It's likely not going to result in any more businesses of any size opening or any jobs particularly being created, but it sends a signal that the government is supportive of business and is looking to reduce red tape. So, on that count, bully for you and great, but I look forward to what I know will be swift passage of this bill so we can get on to more important things.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Once again, I would like to thank my honourable colleagues across the way for their comments, much of which I agreed with.

I think that without question, a couple of hundred dollars isn't going to make or break a business. In some cases, maybe that is the situation. Any time anyone can save \$200-plus dollars on a business initiative or anything, I think it's good news. Certainly, there is a signal that Nova Scotia's open for business.

Again, businesses and investors and entrepreneurs don't have to see the dollar amounts to know that reducing red tape, speeding up the process from 10 days to three days, and becoming the lowest jurisdiction for fees in the country, that is a significant sign

that the government's serious about supporting the private sector. I know that some of the comments from the opposite side of the hall were geared around that and I think that we're all on the same page there.

With respect to the comments from the member from the NDP, I certainly understand her position around the priorities here but, for me, I guess coming from my portfolio, I see this as all very important to the bigger picture. From social programs to giving people jobs, if we're going to balance the books, if we're going to beat down the debt, if we're going to put people to work, if we're going to support health and community services and education, we've got to create wealth and we've got to collect revenue. So our job in building the economy and creating more entrepreneurs and creating more businesses in all regions of the province, in particular rural Nova Scotia, is exactly the way to support those social programs. I think that it's steps like this that get us there.

Mr. Speaker, with that I'll close the debate on Bill No. 4.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 4. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that the adjourned debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne be now resumed.

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

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to reply on behalf of our Party to the Speech from the Throne that was presented by the government last Thursday. Now the word reply covers a certain amount of ground, it's got some different meanings. On one hand it means reply, as in respond, as in the back and forth that you would have in a conversation. But the word reply also means, at the same time, to contradict or to reply in the sense of offering a retort or a rejoinder. In this sense, it is sometimes said when we talk about a reply, it means to give answer. This is the sense of the word reply that I want to

use this afternoon. It is in that sense a privilege to reply, that is to give answer to a range of the counter-factual and vacuous positions that make up the government's point of view, as we have seen it expressed and articulated in this Throne Speech.

I want to give answer first to the contention in the Speech that it is appropriate in any way to use the word "opportunity" as this government is, in fact, using that word in that Speech to describe the dirty work of June 25th, Black Monday for health care in Cape Breton; June 25th, the announcement of the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member that the phrase "dirty work" would be an unparliamentary term.

The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party.

MR. BURRILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I wasn't aware of that - I'll retract the term. That Black Monday for health care in Cape Breton, the announcement of the closure of the Northside General and the New Waterford Consolidated Hospitals, and the emergency facilities that are contained there, to use the word to describe that, as the Throne Speech does, as an opportunity for people is something to which, in my view, a person ought to give answer. The answer I wish to give is this, it is to say that the government's apparent extraordinary disrespect for the health care community, and the community as a whole of the CBRM in making this announcement, as they did was, in my judgment, hurtful and duplicitous and insulting. Where was the community dialogue? Where was any local conversation? There was no dialogue, there was no conversation.

Professor Tom Urbaniak of CBU has spoken about this I think very clearly and I want to quote from his analysis, which I will table. Mr. Urbaniak writes, ". . . we never had an organized public dialogue and local process about how to meet the health objectives or benchmarks that we are trying to attain. We as Cape Bretoners never dissected the different options and studied their impact as a community. Instead, the premier flew in with a few hours' notice, assured us he knew best and then departed."

Professor Urbaniak is not kidding when he says a "few hours". Dr. Craig Stone, staff anesthesiologist for the CBRM hospitals, who has provided such important leadership in the health care crisis in Cape Breton, received an invitation to that announcement at 8:30 that morning without any inkling prior of what was to be taking place.

Dr. Abdul Atiyah was in the same situation. They both arrived in scrubs. Dr. Margaret Fraser, president of the Cape Breton Medical Staff Association, said, "We were essentially blindsided." I will table her remarks.

I asked the Premier on Friday if this conduct met the standard of respect for communities and the standard of respect for the medical community that he sets for this government and he indicated that it did. Lord help us.

[3:45 p.m.]

How could the government have possibly learned so little? Every rally about the health care crisis in Cape Breton - and there have been a lot of them - every town hall, every march, every gathering in front of a hospital or in a high school, every one of those has had, at its core, one consistently articulated message, namely: don't impose on us. Work with us. Don't dictate; listen, consult with, pay attention to, communicate with the people who are doing the work already, who are deeply, clinically acquainted with what's needed.

And what happens? The Premier blows in on Black Monday with the \$350,000-a-year CEO of the Health Authority, a couple of others and the MLAs for Glace Bay and Sydney-Whitney Pier and unilaterally saws the legs off the hospitals and emergency services in New Waterford and North Sydney.

Now, a picture is worth a thousand words and, in this case, maybe it's worth 2,000. Cape Bretoners are familiar with the picture that appeared on the front page of the Cape Breton Post the next morning. I'm going to table it. This is a picture on the top part of the front page of the paper that morning of the row of those who had come to make the announcement of what the government calls this opportunity for Cape Breton.

Then, in the row in the picture, down at the end, the two CBRM Liberal MLAs with their eyes averted, heads hung, hands folded on their haunches, looking for all the world like boys outside the principal's office having received a punishment that they totally deserved.

Look, I'm a minister. I've spent most of my working (Interruptions).

MADAM SPEAKER: Order. The Leader of the NDP is speaking.

MR. BURRILL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I can't avoid a sense, when I look at that picture, that this is a picture of public officials who, at some kind of a level, have some kind of awareness that they have been involved in the people they represent having been somehow disrespected.

I think it's also disrespectful that the government should have insulted the intelligence of the people affected by this decision with some of the arguments that have been put forward for the hospital closures. Oh, shocking revelation, the facilities are older and in need of infrastructural capital investment. So, when your car needs brakes and a muffler, do you junk it and tear up the driveway? Or try this for a piece of logical wonderment. We can't keep the emergency rooms reliably open, so we have to close them. What? If I went to the doctor with a broken arm and she told me that she was going to enroll me posthaste in the palliative care program, I would be concerned about the quality of the care that I was receiving.

So, there are problems. There are challenges. There are difficulties, plainly, with the staffing of emergency rooms, but problems, difficulties, challenges, those call for solutions and answers and treatments, not for the termination of the patient.

Particularly disrespectful, in my judgment, is the intimation that it is unnecessary and anachronistic to have four hospitals with four emergency rooms in the CBRM. To begin with, it is a profound misunderstanding to think - and Tom Urbaniak has also pointed this out - that geographic proximity means inherent duplication. It doesn't, which is why in Toronto, they have over 40 hospitals.

Further and more nefariously, let me say clearly - there is only one point of view from which North Sydney, Sydney, New Waterford, and Glace Bay appear to be more or less all the same place, and that is the point of view of Halifax. The place to which this government has moved all education decisions with the centralizing of the school boards. The place to which the government has moved all health decisions with the centralizing of the health authorities. And from which the government has failed to see that Nova Scotia is not well served by the Liberal ideology of gathering up everything and centralizing everything that moves.

It's disrespectful and, in my view, it is disgraceful that the plan to close the New Waterford and North Sydney hospitals should be proceeding without a glimmer of an answer to the question of how people without vehicles in the context of the existing CBRM transit system - by which you cannot even get directly from New Waterford to Glace Bay, by the way - how people without vehicles are supposed to be able to get to hospitals from which their home is now going to be separated by a \$40, \$45, or \$50 taxi trip, round trip. It's disgraceful that the Black Monday plan should be proceeding without a glimmer of an answer to the question of where the 271 people who work at the Northside General and the 123 people who work at the New Waterford Hospital are supposed to go now to look for jobs.

One thinks of Professor Lachlan MacKinnon, who has newly taken up a position in the department of history at CBU and whose specialty is the study of the impacts on communities of de-industrialization. In the course of Dr. MacKinnon's studies, there is a common word he uses, a kind of central concept of his work, and it is the word "ruination." What a profound betrayal to visit this level of ruination upon this many people and then have the gall to spin it, to market it, to PR it back to those very people as what the government calls an opportunity for those people, for their health care.

I want to give answer to this, Madam Speaker. I want to give answer also to the government's contention that the long-term care sector is so unproblematic and so devoid of pressing issues that the long-term care sector doesn't even merit a mention in the Throne Speech. There are so many things that could have been said, that could have been announced in the Throne Speech on the subject of long-term care, which would have marked the beginning of this session of the House as a real reset, which could have marked

this Throne Speech as other than a collection of the platitudinous, which is really what it is.

The Speech from the Throne could have said, for example, something like this, “My government recognizes the pressure that the long-term care sector has been under as a result of the \$5-million reduction in funding over the last four years. My government has heard the concerns of administrators, employees, residents, and families in the sector. In this upcoming session, the entirety of these funding restrictions will be restored.” The Throne Speech could have said that.

A government that was competently knowledgeable and effectively concerned about the long-term care sector might well have done this in the Throne Speech. This government, however, on the subject of long-term care, so paramount in so many people’s minds, has here given us not one single word.

No one ought to minimize the impact of the cuts to the long-term care sector, as has been done by the governing Liberals. Nursing home administrators certainly don’t minimize it. One thinks of the deep frustration that was expressed this Spring in a letter to the families of residents of the R.K. MacDonald Nursing Home in Antigonish, whose management in that letter spoke about how although every other avenue had been explored - in the context of those two years of budget cuts, the R.K. MacDonald had no alternative but to, with regret, lay off continuing care assistants.

Administrators don’t minimize the impact of the cuts in nursing homes, and neither do people who work in nursing homes. All MLAs in the course of their work receive delegations from people bringing forward various points of view and various points of experience they have had. Of all the delegations that have come to see me as an MLA, none have moved me more than a delegation of nursing home employees who came last year from across the province. Mostly these were people who worked in dietary services, in laundry services, and in environmental services and cleaning.

They came to Halifax to make public officials aware of how living conditions for residents in the institutions where they worked had been deteriorating since the onset of the cuts. That morning, 20-, 25-, even 30-plus-year nursing home employees spoke about how for them before the cuts, working short was an occasional experience, something you would have to deal with just from time to time. Since the cuts, working short had become a regular part of the experience of their work, with observable negative impacts on the tenor and the morale of the home where they worked.

One woman’s testimony has stayed with me particularly sharply. She spoke about how, prior to the cuts, as a cleaner for a couple of decades, she had never, ever had the experience of coming to the central stores of the facility and finding there were no supplies to do her work. But since the cuts, she said, cleaning work in her institution had to be

discontinued mid-shift a number of times just because there was nothing in the stores for her and the colleagues in her department to work with.

People who work in nursing homes don't share the minimization of the impact of the cuts that the Throne Speech shows. Administrators in long-term care don't share the minimization of the significance of the cuts in long-term care that the Throne Speech shows, and families of people who live in long-term care do not minimize the impact of these cuts.

Over the summer, as a number of cases of questionable care resulting in bedsores because the subject of public discussion and concern, Dr. Jeanne Ferguson of Families for Quality Eldercare, a geriatric psychiatrist, was asked to comment. I'll table her remarks to *The Chronicle Herald* from April 28th. She said, "Nursing homes have done excellent work, but they haven't had a staffing increase in 14 years, and in addition, they had a one-per-cent cut in their budgets in each of the last two years."

One looks in vain through the Speech from the Throne for any, even the most minimal, addressing of any of the levels of this crisis. Similarly, the Speech from the Throne might have said something like this: My government has heard the cries for investments in new long-term care facilities, and over the course of our continuing mandate, the shortfall of new nursing home places of recent years is going to be redressed.

[4:00 p.m.]

Madam Speaker, the impact of the government's failure to invest in new long-term care places is being felt across the span of the health care system. I was pleased to meet with the Nova Scotia Paramedics Union early last month, just before their release of startling statistics about frequent shortages of available ambulances around the province. The paramedics spoke with detail, as they did in their release on this subject, and they spoke with precision about how delays in offloading patients at hospitals are backing up the system and causing burnout amongst paramedics, who are often then required to work long back-to-back shifts as the system tries to catch up from the number of hours in which its personnel stand by in emergency rooms.

When the discussion I was having with the paramedics about the figures they were about to reveal on this subject turned to what they would propose to remedy this situation, at the top of the paramedics' list was investing in more long-term care beds and the reason that was at the top of the list is that that would alleviate the inability at present of emergency rooms to discharge patients to the general hospital population, an ability which is rooted in the fact that the hospital is so chronically filled with people who are only there for the reason that they are waiting, waiting, waiting for a placement somewhere in a nursing home.

Now the facts of this matter are meriting of attention. Twenty-one per cent of the hospital places in all of Nova Scotia are occupied by people who are not hospital patients but who are rather staying in the hospital temporarily, they hope, while they wait for a placement in the long-term care facility. The figure is greater than 21 per cent in considerable parts of the province. It's 30 per cent in the Western Zone. It's 30 per cent in the Northern Zone of the NSHA. Consider this fact that over the last five years, 2,281 people in Nova Scotia waited in the hospital for long-term care between 91 and 365 days and 15 per cent of those people passed away before the awaited place in a nursing home came open.

None of this merits a little nod, none of this merits a half a breath. None of this merits any indication in the government's program, as it is put before us in this Throne Speech. Nor is there a nod or a breath or an indication about the need to consider building new nursing homes or to consider reversing those funding cuts in the parameters that were set out last week for the expert panel appointed by the government of the province.

Yet, we know that every credible voice in health care policy anywhere speaks about how all of these matters are, we need to understand first and foremost - well then they're deeply related. They're all deeply integrated. That's the first thing that policy people speak about when you ask them about the nature of the present crisis and what road they need to go. They say, well, the first thing you've got to understand it's all connected. It's all integrated. It's all entirely of a piece.

So, I think it's important to give answer to the entire absence, to the complete silence in the Speech from the Throne about the continuing and deepening crisis in Nova Scotia in the world of long-term care and I most certainly also want to give answer in addition to the subjects of the Cape Breton hospitals and the long-term care.

I also want to give answer to the contention in this Speech from the Throne that the government's work in the area of poverty reduction, the contention that in any way it merits the tone of self-satisfied self-congratulation that is put forward here in this document. On the contrary, in the judgment of our Party, the thing that would be appropriate for the government's work on poverty reduction would be more a tone of humility, be more a tone of quiet acknowledgement of not having gotten really very far. That would be more appropriate. That would be more fitting.

I attended a striking event in July, the opening of Feed Nova Scotia's new facility in Burnside. I was there with the member for Dartmouth South and the member for Dartmouth North and we were pleased to meet there also the member for Dartmouth East. By my memory, I don't recall there being any members of the government present there but, at that event, they did an interesting thing.

The new warehouse's facilities are much larger than the old ones and so the guests at the opening for the new facilities of Feed Nova Scotia could grasp this, the people from

Feed Nova Scotia marked out and traced out the dimensions of the former facility on the floor of the new warehouse floor, and then the ceremony to open the new warehouse that was held within this marked-out space. The effect was that because they had the seats for the ceremony within the marked-out space, you had to walk and step over the line into this space in order to sit down when the ceremony was going to be held.

In addition to the marking that they had on the space, Feed Nova Scotia had also placed a series of about two- or three-foot high infographics along that border depicting the character of the situation of hunger and poverty in Nova Scotia. The result was that if you were going to go in and sit in the chairs where the ceremony was held, you had to walk by and register, at some level, the information that was contained in those infographics.

Here's the information. Infographic one: one in six households in Nova Scotia is food insecure, which means lacks adequate food because of money conditions. Infographic two: Nova Scotia has the highest rate of food insecurity of any province in Canada. Infographic three: 41,000 people had to receive their food from a food bank in 2017 in Nova Scotia. Let me say, in these opening days of this session, which could well take us into the sixth year which these Liberals have been the government of our province, I want to say that this is an unconscionable scandal for which the responsibility rests squarely with this government.

No amount of condescending pronunciation of the word "transformation." No amount of self-aggrandizing breast-beating about the \$28 income assistance increase of 2016. None of this changes one particle of the fact that the primary authors of the scandal of hunger in our province on September 11, 2018, are the Liberal Government of Nova Scotia.

Let's just pause a moment to consider that \$20 increase in income assistance from the 2016-17 budget about which the government does so much unseemly bragging. The truth is that there had been no increase - zero - in the two Liberal years before that and there have been no - zero - increases since. This government does not have a poverty reduction strategy, they have a strategy for producing poverty-related spin.

Let's compare that record, for example, with the record of the Government of the New Democratic Party elected last year in British Columbia, which in its first Act, other than something that had to be done immediately in connection with the wildfire that was taking place at the time - with the exception of what they had to do about that wildfire - in its very first Act brought in a monthly increase in social assistance in B.C. of \$100.

I don't diminish in any way the significance of such income-supporting measures as are, in fact, mentioned in the Throne Speech, whether these have to do with bus passes or personal allowances for people who don't have a home or the treatment of earned income relative to a person's cheque. I do, however, think it is important for these matters to be placed in perspective and looked at in proportion, placed in perspective and proportion

relative not just to the depth of the problem but also to the wider scope. The bigger seriousness, really dealing more with the matter that we see in jurisdictions elsewhere. When we compare ourselves to that \$100 brought on day one of that new government, in comparison to what has been delivered on this subject by the Liberal Government of Nova Scotia, can't be described as other than a pittance and very paltry.

On the subject of keeping things in proportion and thinking comparatively about our position and the rest of the country, I also don't want to overlook the fact that in the course of this current session it is very likely, with the scheduled change to take place in Saskatchewan in the minimum wage on October 1st, that in the course of this session in about three weeks, Nova Scotia is on pace to become the province with the worst minimum wage in our whole country. This is going to happen on precisely October 1st, that in Alberta the three-year march towards \$15 is going to be completed. This is happening in a context across our country, a context in which a commitment to \$15 has been made in B.C. and in which Ontario has made the move to \$14. It's also, while we're in the comparison with the rest of the country, it's a context in which we have the third highest paid Premier in the country and we have the only Premier in Atlantic Canada that the people of their province are paying more than \$200,000.

I want to give answer to the thought that any of this is acceptable. I want to say that it is unacceptable and it is contemptable and it is a scandal. There is much more, that if time permitted, I would wish to give answer in this Throne Speech.

A great deal of effort is made by the government in the Throne Speech to associate itself with the successes of young people in the province. I want to give answer to the fact that in the course of this, the government fails entirely to acknowledge the enormous burden it continues to lay on the young people of the province by continuing the situation in which we have the fastest rising tuition in the country. The Throne Speech uses the word, it speaks about how young people are showing - this is actually the word that is there - how young people of the province are showing "courage."

I think it takes courage to look towards Ontario where, if your household is making less than \$50,000 a year, your tuition in an Ontario facility is paid by the public of the province. It takes courage then to look at New Brunswick where if your household is making less than \$60,000, your tuition is paid at a New Brunswick institution by the public of the province. Or look to Newfoundland and Labrador where tuition is just slightly over \$2,600 or look to Quebec where it is just a little bit more than that. Then look back at Nova Scotia, it takes courage to stomach and take in that here in our province the average tuition is \$7,726.

All of this deserves to be given answer but more than anything else, I want to give answer now to the core outlook which defines the Liberal enterprise in Nova Scotia which, in my view, is exposed in its unworthiness in this Throne Speech, and that is that all of this, as it has been presented, is as good as we can in our province at this moment hope for.

It's not a crime to have written a bad speech. Most public figures, certainly myself included, would have done that a time or two. However, it is precisely a crime to be entrusted with the governance, to be entrusted with the leadership of people in a time of sharp and pressing-felt need, and then to offer no ideas, to offer no goals, to offer no program.

I reject the idea that what we see in this Throne Speech is a government that is building itself on incrementalism. This is not incrementalism, this is nothingism. Why? Because this government lives entirely under the umbrella, is completely under the sway of one core, now discredited and erroneous idea, namely that we ought not to aim for anything except as can be accomplished within the limits of an annually balanced budget.

This Throne Speech is a starkly clear measure of precisely where this stale-dated Thatcherism gets us. The government is going to what? Oh, it's going to bring in a traffic safety Act. Well, yes, right, good - and? Well, the government is going to make it cheaper to incorporate a company. Well, yes, good, right - you mean that's kind of it? That's your program? You're moving into year six and that's what you're bringing? It's a bag of zeroes in a box of hubris. And every one of these areas of failure that is brought into view by the thinness of this Throne Speech is the result of concrete choices which have been and are now being made by the Liberal Government of Nova Scotia.

We do not have the appropriate amount of nursing homes in Nova Scotia because the Liberal Government has decided it is a higher priority to have a budget surplus. The nursing homes we do have are not adequately funded because the Liberal Government has decided that it is a higher priority to have a budget surplus.

One in five of our children, one in three in significant regions of the province, lives in poverty because the Liberal Government has made the decision that it is a greater priority, it is of higher priority, it is a larger place to have a budget surplus.

Every day, people overcome with anxiety and people overcome with depression arrive for help at our public mental health services and receive appointments in four, six, eight, 10, sometimes 12 months' time. Why does this happen? It's a solvable problem. It happens because the Liberal Government has made the decision that it is more important that we should have a balanced budget in Nova Scotia than deliver those timely services.

Young people in our province are unable to establish themselves in the world because the burden of educational debt is sitting on them so heavily. Why is that? It's because the Liberal Government, now moving into its sixth year, has made a decision that that might not be a good thing but that the solution to it is not as important as producing a budget surplus for the province.

[4:15 p.m.]

These are wrong decisions. These are wrong decisions which are rejected now by a growing chorus of people - a growing chorus of economists, of authors, of commentators, of jurisdictions going in a different direction, of leaders in our province, and of leaders in different communities - all of whom understand the exciting and hope-filled doors that can be opened when governments stop worshipping their surpluses and instead invest seriously in the needs and the futures of their people.

Let it be stated absolutely clearly: we don't have to have a health care system that is broken at the level of primary care, emergency care, long-term care, and any other kind of care that you might care to mention. We don't have to have communities whose efforts to attract new people and retain and bring home their own are undermined by emergency rooms that are closed as often as they're open. We don't have to be at the bottom - the province with the highest proportion of its population who can't afford to buy their groceries, the province with the lowest minimum wage, the province with the most unrepayable levels of tuition.

I think of a marvellous song by the British indie rock band Florence and the Machine. It's on a terrifically-titled album. The album is called *High as Hope*, and the name of the song is [We All Have a] Hunger. We all have a hunger for something profoundly better. Make no mistake, it is absolutely coming. The arc of history holds that promise. But first we have to take all this false and self-flattering failure and move it to one side. We're at that, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

MR. TORY RUSHTON: It's a great privilege to stand here today and to be the representative for my home area, Cumberland South. I'm sort of taking the family reins, if you will, as my late grandfather, the Honourable D.L. George Henley, served this Assembly from 1963 to 1984. He was well respected in the old constituency of Cumberland West. I'm very humbled that the people of Cumberland South have granted me this opportunity.

No one would be able to achieve this goal if it were not for the lives and dedication of close family and friends. I would like to recognize that since January, my wife, Tracy, has stood beside me 100 per cent, along with my two boys, Bayley and Cooper, and my two-year-old daughter, Briar. Ever since day one, when we talked about this adventure that might happen to Dad, they have been there 110 per cent. My family has never eaten so many pancake suppers in one month.

The support of other family members such as brothers and sisters, and especially my mother and father, Les and Nancy Rushton - I would not be able to stand here today if it were not for their dedication and their question: Boy, what are you getting into?

Of course, there's the campaign team, the association back home, and my friends here today. The support has been overwhelming, and the dedication to make sure that in a by-election I came here into this House very comfortable. I thank you for your support.

The best reception was from the people of Cumberland South. They have shown me, since this election, that Nova Scotians truly are great people. Their reception has been second to none.

My quick story: I'm a lifelong resident of Oxford, with 20 years in the fire service. For the last 10 years, I have worked for Oxford Frozen Foods, the past two as a production manager at the onion ring facility. For eight years prior to that, I was a licensed electrician.

For the last 12 years of my life, I've been the fire chief of the Oxford Fire Department and have served many associations and I'm currently the president of the Maritime Fire Chiefs Association. This leadership, dedication and community service is one reason why I felt the need to run politically.

I got into politics because I love my province and I love my country. And, yes, my family history and my namesake helped me push my way through to the election this past June. As a young boy, I always wanted to be a firefighter, but deep down inside, watching my grandfather even after his retirement still serve the people of the Cumberland area made me want this job even more. It truly is, and I think everybody in this House will agree, a great job.

I'll take you for a little tour around Cumberland South. If you were to come from New Brunswick, you come to the gateway of Nova Scotia. You leave Amherst and hit No. 2 Highway, to the entrance of what used to be the Rainbow Bridge that is currently closed. Locals know it as Rainbow Bridge. We now know it as a bailey bridge that carries all the traffic from Cumberland North to Cumberland South. Over the last few months, since April 19th, we were honoured and pleasantly happy to hear the announcement from the minister that the bridge would be replaced. Five months later, still no bridge, still no tender.

So, we go on through the detour. We hit Nappan and Maccan, which were once rich farming communities - I believe that opportunity is there again. The dedicated and hard work of the people of River Hebert and Joggins area. I had the privilege to go to a country masonic benefit a few months back where the Masons held a fundraiser for the local 4-H. The 4-H program thrives very strong in Cumberland County and we're very proud of this program. Two weeks ago, these 4-H students celebrated their year-end rewards at the Cumberland County Exhibition held in Oxford where they celebrated their 100th anniversary of exhibition experience.

The sense of community in River Hebert and Joggins and down to the beauty hidden shore of Minudie is represented by the River Hebert/Joggins and Area Development Association. Recent improvements to the Joggins War Memorial attest to this dedication

these people have and their spirit. You could stop at Maggie's for a burger or the new McPuffin's Atlantic Seafood before you hit the adventures on the Joggins cliffs or you could take it out to local entrepreneurs Brian Hebert and Laura Thompson, who own and operate Fundy Treasures. Brian and Laura gather treasures, jewellery and make candles and, renowned throughout the country, the rock guitar picks, which were a present for the Country Music Awards gift baskets for the musicians.

Your Bay of Fundy experience truly begins here in that area: the Fundy Geoparks, the fossil cliffs, the world's highest tides, the scenic heights, camping, family adventures, and great food.

As you go through Shulie - with a population of two - you have to take the opportunity to stop and visit with the people of Advocate. You truly will not find a more humble, generous people in Nova Scotia. Prior to arriving in Advocate, every car you meet will give a friendly wave. Their door is always open. The coffee pot is always on.

As you leave Advocate and stroll out through towards Spencer's Island, it's truly a picturesque moment. And, if you're there on a Saturday night, you have the advantage of open-mic night where you experience the local talents of the Advocate people. Before you do leave Advocate, though, you should take advantage of the Cape d'Or, the hiking trails, the camping area, and the beautiful scenery of the Bay of Fundy.

Fox River, Port Greville, and Wards Brook in reverse - because it's locally known as FPW - is the location of the Age of Sail Heritage Centre where you can learn about the ancient shipbuilding of years past or you could take part in the firefighter field days where they just recently celebrated their 50 years of service to the area of FPW.

Just outside Parrsboro from Diligent River, you'll see vast wild blueberry fields. In mid-August, you will see fields of blue, minus this year due to the frost that we had this early June. It is truly a damaging blow to the area of Cumberland County and Nova Scotia as a whole, damaging much of this year's crop. These fields are shared with the mountains of maple that connect the Cobequid Mountains right straight through to Wentworth Valley.

Once in Parrsboro, there is much to see and much to do. During the campaign months, you would meet many people who have come back from the West, Ontario, U.S., back to their home area of Parrsboro to retire because of the picturesque scenery. Shops and stores that were not long ago empty have been taken up by the artisans of the Parrsboro area.

You can visit the beautiful Ottawa House By-the-Sea Museum, which was once home to Sir Charles Tupper, and learn the history of one of our founding fathers of Canada. You cannot forget the Fundy Geological Museum that is fun-filled for kids and adults alike.

As you head back on the trail, the next stop we cannot forget - get your picture taken with Glooscap at the Old Town Hall in Parrsboro, a statue of the Mi'kmaq legend.

Between Parrsboro and Springhill you will find Southampton, a small community but very proud of their baseball heritage. Springhill is the hometown of our very own Anne Murray. The Anne Murray Centre can be seen busy from May until the end of October.

Springhillers have a great deal of pride and it is entrenched deep within their coal mines. I must take a moment to remember Honest Ken Melanson, a miner who was trapped underground for 80 hours in the bump of '56 - he passed away earlier this summer - and Herb Pepperdine, whom I recognized earlier during this afternoon's session, who was in the bump of '58 and passed away earlier this week. And a true Nova Scotian hero I should recognize who passed away earlier this year in late winter - Dr. Arnold Burden, who was a true rescuer for both disasters in Springhill. We should recognize them as a group. (Applause)

Springhill has much to celebrate and much more to come - home of the main office of the Cumberland Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College, and we have the state-of-the-art arena by the name of Dr. Carson & Marion Murray Community Centre, which uses geothermal energy to freeze the skating surface.

With the works of the municipality, plans are in full force to create a full-functioning geothermal industrial park in this area. The pit pond revitalizing job and track just received provincial funding, for which the community is thankful. We look forward to working with the department and seeing the project fulfilled in a productive manner.

Baseball runs deep in the community of Springhill. The Fence Busters is a well-known baseball name within the area. Baseball didn't necessarily start here, but this past weekend we certainly finished it.

This has been a historical year for the Community of Springhill. The Stone twins and the Rushton twins both played for the Truro Bearcats and went west in the Under-18 National Championships. Alaina Porter and Avery Smith competed on Team Nova Scotia a few weeks ago in Bedford, on team one and team two of Nova Scotia Under-16 Canadian Championships.

This past weekend, the Mosquito Under-11 Fence Busters went undefeated to win the Nova Scotia provincial title. Avery Smith travelled to St. John's in Newfoundland and Labrador this past weekend with Oxford native Hailey Jackson, who both played for the girls Nova Scotia team Under-14 and brought home gold from the Atlantic championships. Congratulations to all.

Before you leave Springhill, take a moment and visit the Anne Murray Centre. Springhill has a historic past of devastating Main Street fires and the bumps of '56 and '58. Take a chance to learn this history at the Miners Museum.

Springhill has much to be proud of and much to look forward to with the recent announcement of a new elementary school that will replace two aged, outdated, and decayed schools. This has been a long time coming. Springhill is very proud of this announcement.

As you continue through Springhill on to the Valley Road, you can play a round of golf before leaving the community, and entering Collingwood you can stop by and have one of those famous pancake dinners - I especially enjoy the strawberry dinners, myself.

As you go through the road leading to Westchester, take the time to see the area, fish the lakes, hunt the woods, and the vast network of trails that can connect you through almost anywhere in northern Nova Scotia.

If you are a person who loves the four seasons, Wentworth is your spot. In the next few weeks, we will see the leaves and mountains turn colours, Ski Wentworth will open their chairlift for tours, and prep for the snow to be coming very soon.

As you round back into the Oxford area, the wild blueberry capital of Oxford and my hometown, you will see the home of Oxford Frozen Foods, started by John Bragg who just recently celebrated his 50 years of business in the Oxford area.

Oxford is now home to Springhill native Christopher Brown, an up-and-coming musician who is now on the Nova Scotia charts with one of his hit songs. Oxford has some of the best salmon fishing with two rivers that connect right in downtown Oxford. And the trail system that would lead anywhere with the introduction of the underpass on the highway.

I almost forgot - three weeks ago, our ever-popular sinkhole used to be a swimming hole. Oxford has never been so popular in the news than it has been in the past few weeks. I find it very surprising, even as I walk down here and into the House, people ask, how is your sinkhole doing, when most people may not realize that our eight-year old, unoccupied school sits vacant this year.

As you leave town on Route 204 you will travel through Leicester. Now remember I said earlier about pancake breakfasts? Do not go to their Good Friday celebration and go away hungry.

Residents of Cumberland South are a proud, friendly group of people. The scenic, laid-back lifestyle with the gateway through to the tourism industry and the Bay of Fundy

adventure truly does start here. We need to promote and draw from the highway to expose our hidden gems, buried deep within Cumberland South.

A large percentage of Nova Scotia's wood fibre comes from Cumberland County. We need to utilize and maintain our natural resources in the proper manner to sustain this lifestyle for Cumberland South for years to come.

We need the commitment from this government to help secure health care. It is breaking news in our area if the ERs are actually open. While door-knocking in the last few months, just the vast amount of stories of people without doctors - a heartfelt cry from one lady who just found out at the ER a few weeks prior who had cancer but had no family doctor to go to. We need these ERs covered. We need doctors, and we need the commitment from this government to work towards that.

Our roads need attention, just like everyone else's in the province. The bridge that affects the lives of almost everybody in Cumberland County, the Rainbow Bridge, we need to move forward on this project. On August 23rd, my home community was surprised to find out that our children would not be returning to our P-12 school this year, due to some issues. Families had to see a six-year-old child - just so I can paint a picture for you - getting up at 5:00 a.m. to get on the bus for 6:00 a.m. Some families don't get their older children home until well after 7:00 p.m., due to the split shift.

The safety of the children and staff, yes, are first and foremost. I applaud the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for taking care of the safety of my child in this manner, but there are answers that need to come. Questions are unanswered.

I also applaud the welcoming hospitality the Village of Pugwash has extended to our children and our staff, it is second to none. I urge the minister to use his position to move this business in a timely manner to find out the answers for these families, these children, so we can get back to our rightful home. This is an eight-year-old building built by the taxpayers of Nova Scotia. We, as elected officials, have many answers and we're looking for many answers.

One question that is unanswered is why, when the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board knew about this on August 7th, it took just a mere two weeks to actually announce that our lifestyles would change for our children, merely seven days prior to the children returning to school. Why are we nearing a month of knowing everything that is going on in this school and still no answers? I have offered to work with this government to find answers for my community. I have reached out, and I will continue to do that and question during the proceedings of this House.

We need to be moving forward on these issues, no matter whether it's a bridge, the school in Oxford, or the announcement of the Springhill elementary school. When are doctors coming? We cannot afford to stand still on these issues.

Madam Speaker, I take this job very seriously. It's a job like none other, and I'm a mere two months in. I am very humbled to be able to stand in this House where my grandfather once stood. I'm humbled to be the voice of Cumberland South. Many people have aspirations of running in politics. My dream did come true, and for that, I am greatly thankful. I look forward to respectful debate with everybody in this House at most times to better this province, as we all have run in this position to make this province better based on what we believe. We can do it.

Again, thank you to my wife Tracy and my kids at home for the dedicated support that they have shown me.

Madam Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate. (Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn Address in Reply. Would all those in favour please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: On behalf of the government's side and all members of the House, I would like to congratulate the member for Cumberland South on a job well done. It's great to have you in this historical place, and we know you'll do good things for your constituents and for all Nova Scotians. Great job.

Madam Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House do now adjourn to meet again tomorrow, Wednesday, September 12, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. I would now ask the Deputy House Leader for the Official Opposition to provide the government's business.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy House Leader for the Official Opposition.

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: I, too, would like to applaud my colleague from Cumberland South on the great job he did today in delivering his maiden speech in response to the Speech from the Throne. His grandfather would be very proud of him, I'm sure.

Madam Speaker, tomorrow, after regular routine and Question Period, we will be calling Resolution No. 18 and Bill No. 19.

I now move that we adjourn until tomorrow, beginning the House at 1:00 p.m. until 5:30 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise to meet again on Wednesday, September 12th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned until tomorrow.

[The House rose at 4:39 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 49**

By: Hon. Labi Kousoulis (Labour and Advanced Education)

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

Whereas today marks the 17th anniversary of 9/11 where so many innocent victims lost their lives as the world watched in horror and disbelief; and

Whereas one of the lost souls' memory remains eternal as family and loved ones of Danielle Kousoulis keep her spirit alive today and every day; and

Whereas Danielle was 29 on 9/11, she was young and had a bright future ahead of her;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly remember Danielle Kousoulis and keep her parents, George and Zoe, as well as siblings Eleni, Faith, Peter and extended family, loved ones and friends in their thoughts and prayers.