



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2018

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2018

Sixty-third General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, Mr. Brendan Maguire

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

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

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I draw your attention to the east gallery. I'd like to introduce two special guests, if you could rise when I acknowledge you: Fallon Jones, events and development coordinator for the Atlantic region, Prostate Cancer Canada, and Dennis Potharst, executive director for the Atlantic region, Prostate Cancer Canada. I ask the House to give a warm welcome to these two special guests. (Applause)

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

RESOLUTION NO. 141

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

Whereas prostate cancer is the most common cancer among Canadian men; and

Whereas one in seven Canadian men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime; and

Whereas there continues to be a tremendous need for greater awareness and education about prostate cancer;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature recognize September as National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

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 Immigration.

RESOLUTION NO. 142

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

Whereas on September 22nd, Nova Scotians will welcome His Beatitude Cardinal Mar Béchara Boutros Raï, Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, as part of his pastoral visit to Canada; and

Whereas the Maronite community in Nova Scotia is very grateful to have Cardinal Raï in Halifax to consecrate the new site of Our Lady of Lebanon Church and the community centre, followed by a solemn Mass and dinner banquet; and

Whereas the visit of Patriarch Raï to Nova Scotia is great proof of his dedication, leadership, and commitment to communities all around the world and that from the beginning of the community in Canada in the early 19th century, it has integrated and contributed to the great diversity that Canada is built upon;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House wish His Beatitude many years of peace and happiness as he continues tirelessly to bring the faithful together and shape the life of the Church, and congratulate all those organizing the event.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 143

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

Whereas Nova Scotian country music artists Aaron C. Lewis from Sydney, Matt Balsor from Hantsport, and Bill Guest from Dartmouth were the 2018 inductees into the Nova Scotia Country Music Hall of Fame; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Country Music Hall of Fame is committed to the preservation, promotion, and development of country music in Nova Scotia and continues to recognize the deserving artists who have made a significant impact to our province's country music industry; and

Whereas the music and songs of Mr. Lewis, Mr. Balsor, and Mr. Guest are keeping our province's country music traditions alive and well, ensuring our country music culture and heritage will continue to live on for generations;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating this year's inductees and thank them for sharing their extraordinary talents with all of us, and that we also acknowledge and thank the current president of the Nova Scotia Country Music Hall of Fame, Mr. Roger Bleasdale, for his leadership, and past-president Mr. Floyd Spicer for his service and past leadership in ensuring Nova Scotia's country music talent is honoured and preserved for generations to come.

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. 45 - Entitled an Act Respecting Property Tax Rebates to Senior Citizens. (Hon. Geoff MacLellan)

Bill No. 46 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Labour Standards Code, Respecting Sick Leave. (Ms. Tammy Martin)

Bill No. 47 - Entitled an Act to Establish Cancer Survivors Day. (Ms. Barbara Adams)

Bill No. 48 - Entitled an Act to Amend Various Statutes Administered by Service Nova Scotia. (Hon. Geoff MacLellan)

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

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. ADAMS: I would like to draw all the members to the west gallery where to the right, in the front row, is my constituency assistant, Lisa Rochon, and to her left is Master Corporal Ginny Eisan from Eastern Passage who, upon having her journey with cancer, turned around and has already done two cancer fundraisers and has raised almost \$20,000 on behalf of those with cancer. (Applause)

NOTICES OF MOTION**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

JDRF: RIDE FOR A CURE - THANKS

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the fourth annual Pictou County edition of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) Ride for a Cure.

The Ride took place at the deCoste Performing Arts Centre in Pictou. The JDRF is the world leader in researching type 1 diabetes, and their work has been critical to understanding more about the disease and someday finding a cure. This event included motorcycle and bicycle riders who gathered to show their support. There were prizes offered to the top three pledge collectors, as well as a barbecue.

I would like to thank the dedicated and kind organizer, Leah Sutherland, and the participants who came together to make this a successful event for all.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

K OF C TOY DRIVE: INTL. SERV. AWARD - CONGRATS.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, seven years ago the Msgr. Hugh MacPherson Council 14596 Knights of Columbus launched their annual toy drive. Since then, they have assisted close to 2,000 families and over 2,100 children all while providing over 8,300 volunteer hours. The toy drive, which starts mid-November and wraps up on Christmas Eve, has become an essential resource for many in the community. Its positive impact on local families, during what can be a very stressful time of year, has earned them a special honour.

[1:15 p.m.]

In acknowledgment of the tremendous success of its annual toy drive, the group based out of St. Andrews earned a third-place honour in the Knights of Columbus International Service Award in the Family Service category. To put it in context, Mr. Speaker, there are more than 15,000 councils worldwide, so this recognition is significant and well-earned.

I ask my fellow members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating the Knights of Columbus for their tireless efforts to assist families in need during the holidays. The dedication of the volunteers at this busy time does not go unnoticed.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

MINOCHA, SONIA: WELLNESS AT WORK - THANKS

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I am pleased today to recognize Sonia Minocha of the Amherst Recreation Department. This summer, Sonia went into local workplaces and businesses and encouraged workers to participate in a fitness break. She encouraged workers who are busy to remember that their health and wellness are important

parts of their lives. Sonia showed great leadership involving our workers to take a few minutes to consider their health and fitness. It's something we should all remember to do.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking Sonia for her leadership in promoting healthy workplaces.

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

MEM. GOLF TOURNAMENT: COM. FUNDRAISER - RECOG.

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a group of family and volunteers who hosted a golf tournament on August 3rd in memory of my deceased uncle Mike Kennedy, at the Lingan Golf and Country Club. With more than 20 teams playing on one of the hottest days of the year, it was a complete success.

From the countless donations of prizes from area businesses, volunteers, lots of fun and laughter, we all came together to give back to the community in his memory, just as he gave back during his life. After a good meal and prizes for all, we were able to raise almost \$5,000, donating half to Special Olympics and half to the Cape Breton Cancer Centre.

In true Mike's spirit, the one trophy that was given was for most sportsmanlike, as this was more important to him than winning.

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

NAUGLE, MELANIE: COM. POSTAL SERV. - RECOG.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: I would like to recognize Ms. Melanie Naugle who has changed her mail delivery routes and assignments on July 13, 2018, as the dedicated mail carrier for the Mineville area.

She has faithfully delivered mail to the community for the past 20 years. She went above and beyond the call of duty in delivering parcels and letters to residents' homes, always with a smile on her face and a pleasant greeting. The selfless act eliminated trips to the Cole Harbour post office for packages. The residents presented her with a card, a monetary donation and flowers at a community get-together.

I applaud and congratulate Ms. Melanie Naugle on her exemplary service to the residents of Mineville and doing it in such a pleasant and efficient manner.

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

MS. ALANA PAON: I beg leave to make an introduction. I have the pleasure of introducing to this House my son, Gharrett Patrick Paon, who is here with us today in the west gallery. He has just come back from the Toronto International Film Festival after having a successful pitch to Telefilm Canada. He is going to be coming back home - we won one back, Mr. Speaker. He's coming back home to work on a film here in Nova Scotia. Welcome home, Gharrett. (Applause)

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

PALLIATIVE CARE PATIENTS: SUPPORT - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

MS. ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to be the voice of the now-silent, the voice of the palliative care patients who were undervalued by our health care system. Every life should be valued, treated with respect, and provided with access to programs and services that help improve quality of life.

It is now up to members of this Legislature to be the voice of a vulnerable sector of our populations - those who require palliative care services. These people lived, they worked and they invested in their families and our Nova Scotia economy. Their lives mattered. These same people needed our help when it was most urgent, and we failed them.

Mr. Speaker, these people no longer can speak for themselves. I feel compelled, and I hope the members also feel compelled, to act on their behalf and on behalf of anyone who finds themselves in the position of not receiving adequate support in the final days of their lives.

MR. SPEAKER: I will remind members you are not to speak on bills or debate bills that are before the House.

The honourable member from Dartmouth North.

CASAR: SOC. ASSISTANCE REFORM - RECOG.

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to recognize the work of an important organization in Nova Scotia, Community Agenda for Social Assistance Adequacy and Reform is a group of individuals and organizations that believe that true social assistance reform can happen in Nova Scotia.

CASAR asserts that we need a social assistance program that has at its foundation four essential principles: human rights, that is creating policy that is inclusive of human rights and which reflects the social determinants of health; adequacy, where everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living; collaboration, where government works in true collaboration with recipients of social assistance and their allies to develop new policies and legislation; and trust, where a social assistance program is based on a culture of trust and problem solving.

Currently, Mr. Speaker, our Community Services programs seem to be based on mistrust and punitive measures. Currently many people on social assistance find it difficult to live dignified lives and currently many people are frustrated and feel unheard.

I applaud the work of CASAR and wish to give voice to its agenda in this House today.

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

D'AMBROSE, DEAN: COM. SUPPORT - CONGRATS.

MR. GORDON WILSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and welcome to your new position in the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I am often so proud of my community, the place where I grew up and which I now represent. I live in a place where we care about our neighbours and show up when a neighbour needs our help. Often this is to someone diagnosed with cancer or some other serious illness. This diagnosis has an obvious impact on the patients and his friends and family but can also have a devastating impact on the family's finances as the patient is treated and recuperates.

Recently Dean d'Ambrose was diagnosed with esophagus cancer and he needed to be treated in Halifax. Unable to work, family and friends wanted to help and organized a benefit hosted at the Digby Fire Department. The afternoon included a silent auction and a bake sale, in addition to a raffle. In that afternoon the organizers raised slightly more than \$20,000 for Dean. This will allow him to focus on his health and not have to worry about his finances for now.

I want to congratulate the organizers and thank the people who dropped in to buy a ticket, listen to music and help a neighbour.

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

JOHNSTONE, MAMIE: FARMERS' EXHIBITION - THANKS

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: I rise today to recognize Mamie Johnstone who has been volunteering at the Cape Breton Farmers' Exhibition in North Sydney for the past 58 years. This year marked the exhibition's 102nd Anniversary and over the many years she has been involved Mamie has witnessed numerous changes. This 84-years-young lady plans to take an active role in this exhibition for many years to come.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Mamie for her years of service to the Farmers' Exhibition and to the Northside Community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, may I please make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: You may.

MS. ROBERTS: Thank you. If I can draw the attention of the House to the west gallery, we're joined today by my mother-in-law, Olga Leitao. When we realized, looking ahead at the calendar, that my partner was going to be travelling for possibly two weeks of this sitting of the Legislature, we begged her to come. She has and, therefore, I am eating well, my children are happy, and I'm very grateful that she has joined us from Montreal.

Olga came to Canada as an immigrant in 1972 - lucky for Nova Scotia. Now two of her three children are in Halifax and I am ever grateful for that as well.

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

DELOREY, KAREN: LOST SHORES GRAN FONDO - THANKS

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, this past weekend the greater area of Guysborough was happily overrun with nearly 500 excited cyclists participating in the annual Lost Shores Gran Fondo event. There are over 100 community volunteers who help with registration, road safety, and billeting for this widely popular event.

Today I rise in recognition of one of those essential volunteers. For the past three years Karen Delorey has volunteered at the water station in the lovely Acadian community of Larrys River, where she provides great hospitality to each cyclist with her warm smile and pleasant words of encouragement. Her thoughtful efforts and positive attitude are greatly appreciated by the hundreds of thirsty participants and event organizers alike.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Karen Delorey for being a fine example of the power of community-minded action and I would also like to commend Lost Shores Gran Fondo organizers, volunteers, cyclists and sponsors for another very successful event.

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

4STRINGS: UKULELE QUARTET - CONGRATS.

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate four young ladies from Queens County whose musical passion, which started off as something to pass the time, has taken off in a big way.

Grace Currie, Ava Smith, Zoe Munroe, and Ruthie Hartlen are better known as the 4Strings and have wowed audiences throughout Queens-Shelburne with their ukulele playing this year. With appearances including the Queens County Music Festival and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union dinner, and a float in the Privateer Days parade, these self-taught Grade 7 students have taken the humble ukulele to a whole new dimension.

Congratulations on your accomplishments so far, and we look forward to seeing where this goes.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

BRUNELLO ESTATES: SKI LOOP - THANKS

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, the Halifax Nordic Ski Club, through the work of Armdale's Lorenzo Caterini, is moving forward with the construction of a 600-metre ski loop at Brunello Estates.

The ski facility will be open to everyone and should be equipped to allow users of all levels of mobility to partake in the fun. With the Brunello Estates Golf Course partnering with the club to make the project a reality, the loop will offer a safe and scenic opportunity for winter fun and will be an excellent place for kids to learn to ski through the ski club's seasonal programming.

I want to thank Lorenzo, the Halifax Nordic Ski Club, and the team at Brunello Estates for working to expand winter recreation opportunities in our city.

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

COXHEATH HILLS WILDERNESS ASSOC.: SUMMIT AWARD - CONGRATS.

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Coxheath Hills Wilderness Association. The group took part in the recent Hike Nova Scotia Summit. The Coxheath group was presented with the summit award for outstanding leadership and commitment to the growth and development of hiking in Nova Scotia.

The Coxheath Hills Wilderness Recreation Association was formed in 2002 by volunteers dedicated to protecting the Coxheath Hills, located in Blacketts Lake near Sydney. The hills are also known as the Coxheath Mountains, and they include 10 kilometres of trails that provide panoramic views of the surrounding areas as well as a hilltop cottage called Pitman Lodge.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to thank the Coxheath Hills Wilderness Association and the many volunteers who work so tirelessly to maintain this wonderful area and to congratulate them on winning this award.

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

CELTIC COLOURS: MUS. FEST. - RECOG.

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Celtic Colours. The upcoming Celtic Colours Festival on Cape Breton Island is an experience like no other.

For nine days in October, Cape Breton Island is alive with music, energy, and excitement as people from far and wide come to celebrate our rich culture. From concerts to dances and workshops to community suppers, we offer a full range of events against a gorgeous backdrop of autumn colours. Forty-nine concerts island-wide, 300 community experiences, and nine unforgettable days and nights.

I'm thankful to be invited to the gala opening, which is a remarkable event in and of itself. I urge my colleagues to take in any performances this fabulous festival provides and enjoy. Céad míle fáilte.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Portland Valley.

ORTIZ, JORDAN & CALEB: DUKE OF ED. - CONGRATS.

HON. TONY INCE: I would like to acknowledge two very hard-working bright students who, in my mind, are future leaders of our community and possibly the province, Jordan and Caleb Ortiz.

Jordan and Caleb are dedicated participants in the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Nova Scotia Program. These two outgoing young people are part of Cole Harbour-Portland Valley's Duke Group, which is mentored by our constituency office team. Jordan and Caleb have received the bronze award and now are receiving the silver award.

On behalf of the Cole Harbour-Portland Valley community and myself, I would like to say congratulations to these well-deserving students. Well done.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

DOUCET, LUCETTE: INSPIRING EDUCATOR - THANKS

MR. TIM HALMAN: Monsieur le Président, je me lève aujourd'hui pour reconnaître Lucette Doucet, une enseignante à l'École Bois-Joli.

Comme enseignante de maternelle, M^{me} Doucet est une des premières enseignantes pour accueillir les élèves à l'école lorsqu'ils commencent leur trajet d'éducation. M^{me} Doucet est une enseignante qui met les besoins de ces étudiants par-dessus tout et s'assure que leurs besoins sont satisfaits. Elle s'inquiète sincèrement de chaque enfant et veut les voir atteindre le succès. M^{me} Doucet aperçoit lorsque ses élèves essayent de leur mieux et les encourage dans leurs moments faibles. Elle encourage l'apprentissage de manière amusante pour ses élèves. Rejoignez-moi pour remercier M^{me} Doucet pour encourager une amour d'apprentissage et d'éducation dans ses jeunes élèves.

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

BENSON, JENNY: UGANDAN WOMEN STUDENTS SUPPORT - THANKS

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Jenny Benson of Timberlea. Jenny initiated a project that provides financial support to enable 20 girls in Uganda to attend school and receive an education.

Jenny's interest in helping girls in Africa receive an education came from her own firsthand experience of meeting a young woman from Africa participating in the International Aids Conference. Their deep friendship led Jenny to help change the lives of vulnerable girls living in high-conflict areas of the world.

I would like the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in thanking Jenny for her community work which has made a significant difference in changing the lives of women.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

THERIAULT, VERNON: BK., WESTRAY: MY JOURNEY . . . - CONGRATS.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, Vernon Theriault began working at the Westray Mine six months before the devastating explosion that occurred on May 9, 1992. The incident took the lives of 26 men, 15 who were recovered, 11 employees who were left forever underground somewhere below the Parkdale Memorial Monument.

Vernon has authored a book, *Westray: My Journey from Darkness to Light*. It is an account of his experiences working at the coal mine in Pictou County. He joined the dragger men who courageously tried to rescue the miners but, as days passed by, hope vanished. Theriault along with numerous others would later receive a medal of bravery for their efforts in trying to rescue the trapped miners.

I'd like to extend my congratulations to Vernon for writing this book and honouring his fellow workers and memories of that dreadful day in the history of mining in Pictou County.

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

BILLARD, BILL: 95TH BIRTHDAY - BEST WISHES

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, welcome to the Chair.

I rise today to recognize Fairview resident Bill Billard on his 95th birthday celebrated this past June at the Fairview legion. Bill served as president of Fairview Branch 142 and is looked at fondly by his friends and his family. Many people were in attendance including fellow Legion members, close friends, and family. The gathering included food, a little bit of punch, and many laughs that were shared by all in attendance.

Bill is loved by everyone at the Fairview branch not only for the hours and dedication he put in during his time as president but for his kind, generous, and fun-loving spirit. Without his hard work the organization would not have been as successful as it is today.

I ask the members of this House of Assembly to join me in celebrating Bill Billard on his 95th birthday.

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

FOULDS, JOELLA: RECORDING, *LOOKING BACK* - BEST WISHES

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, Boularderie's Joella Foulds is a well-known figure in Cape Breton and beyond. Joella has cohosted CBC Cape Breton's Information Morning. She cofounded the Celtic Colours International Festival where she also served as artistic director for 20 years and directs the Boularderie Lakeview Choir and much more. In 2012, she received the Order of Canada for her incredible commitment to her community.

Now retired, Joella is pursuing her music and songwriting and recently released her new CD, *Looking Back*, a collection of songs that reflect the stories of her life. On August 10, she celebrated the release of her CD at Rita's Tea Room in Big Pond.

I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in thanking Joella Foulds for her many contributions to the Cape Breton community in so many ways and wish her all the best in her retirement.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

FINNISH SCH. SYS.: SUCCESSFUL EDUC. REFORM - CONSIDER

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, during recent lengthy conversations about education that have happened in Nova Scotia both in this House and outside of it, often, there has been reference to Finland and to the success of the Finnish school system. It achieves great results and teachers working in that system are held in very high esteem.

I wanted to share something that I learned recently about that school system from reading a great non-fiction book called *The Nordic Theory of Everything: In Search of a Better Life* by Anu Partanen. On education, Ms. Partanen explains how Finland reformed their education system at a time that it was not achieving great results and she's clear that the goal of education reform was to promote equity. It was to make sure that all students had every opportunity to learn, to realize their potential and to have the social supports they required, and food, and recreational and artistic opportunities.

The goal of the Finnish school system was and is equity, and a result - almost a side effect - of that equity was that the students' results began improving. So equity begets excellence.

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

FAULKNER, MEREDITH: COMMISSIONING SCROLL - CONGRATS.

MR. BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, Fall River resident Meredith Faulkner received her commissioning scroll on May 14, 2018. The commissioning scroll is a personal link to the sovereign and a tangible symbol of the trust of the Crown places in the recipient. Meredith was honoured to receive her scroll from Lieutenant-Colonel Russell Hubley, a decorated Second World War veteran. Meredith is a member of the Halifax Rifles Army Cadets and is a graduate of Lockview High School.

I ask all members of the House to congratulate Meredith on receiving the commissioning scroll.

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

BROOME, BEN: NATL. PEACEKEEPERS' DAY - RECOG.

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to acknowledge Ben Broome for the hard work he and his team of volunteers did this summer to establish Nova Scotia's first Metro Annual National Peacekeeping Ceremony on August 9th. Ben worked for Veterans U.N. NATO Canada as a provincial representative. In communities across Canada, there are cenotaphs and monuments to remember the sacrifices made by the men and women who have served as our peacekeepers.

It was my honour to speak at the Dartmouth ceremony this summer. It was made all the more special because my son, Corporal John Lavoie was leaving the very next week to go on his first four-month peacekeeping mission in Kuwait.

I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in thanking the members of the Canadian Armed Forces, police, fire and all other peacekeeping first responders for their courage and sacrifice.

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

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD HS: SKILLED TRADES CTR. - CONGRATS.

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Sir John A. Macdonald High School on the completion of its Skilled Trades Centre. Students will now have the opportunity for vocational training that will promote skills development that may point them in a direction to explore career options in the trades. Six different courses will be offered this school year, designed by high school teachers, Nova Scotia Community College and industry representatives.

Students will have a mixture of theory and practical hands-on activities. Students will spend approximately 80 per cent of their time completing trade tasks using basic tools used by professionals. Based on the actual time in class while under the supervision of a certified journey person teacher, students taking these courses can receive apprenticeship hours and will then have the opportunity to continue on their chosen career path.

I'd ask all members of the House of Assembly to wish the students and teachers of the Skilled Trades Centre at Sir John A. Macdonald High School well on this exciting endeavour.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

GIRLS EMPOWERMENT CAMP: DIVERSIFIED - COMMEND

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, recently Pictou hosted its first Girls Empowerment Day Camp organized by the Pictou County Women's Resource and Sexual Assault Centre.

The focus of the workshop was empowerment, self-esteem and building confidence. Some of the activities included self-esteem workshops, science experiments, entrepreneurship games, confidence building and, most importantly, how to apply these skills to everyday life.

The scientific component of the day camp was added at the request of girls who participated in the past and wanted to stress to other young women that they can take part in a wide variety of interests. I applaud Pictou County Women's Resource and Sexual Assault Centre for expanding day camps into Pictou so they can reach even more young women and impact more lives positively.

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

ASPOTOGAN HERITAGE TRUST: GOLF CLUB - CONGRATS.

MR. HUGH MACKAY: Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, congratulations on your first day in the Chair. (Applause)

I rise to congratulate the Aspotogan Heritage Trust on the successful first season of operation for the Aspotogan Ridge Golf Club located in the growing community of Mill Cove, just outside of Hubbards.

The Aspotogan Heritage Trust encourages and supports the social, environmental, educational, and economic development of the Aspotogan region. The golf course is part of a larger residential development in the Mill Cove and Hubbards area, and the trust is confident that the golf course's positive, social, and economic spin-offs will translate into continuing growth and development in the region.

I ask the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating the Aspotogan Ridge Golf Club upon its first year of operation under the auspices of the Aspotogan Heritage Trust. I wish them success in the years to come.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

HOCKEY ATHLS.: MULTI-ETHNIC SPORTS HALL OF FAME - CONGRATS.

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Bill Riley, Mark McFarlane, and Craig Martin, all of Amherst. They were recently inducted into the Multi-Ethnic Sports Hall of Fame.

Bill Riley was the first Black Nova Scotian to play in the NHL, with Washington and Winnipeg. Mark McFarlane played in the Western Hockey League in Saskatchewan. Craig played in the NHL in Florida and Winnipeg, as well as the AHL in Moncton.

These men are an important part of our community's sports history, and I am proud to have them represent Amherst in pro sports. The young men and women of our community will look up to them as fine examples, and we honour them here today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

JENSEN, TOREN: HAPPY HANDS PROG. - CONGRATS.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Toren Jensen, a student from Bluenose Academy who won the Deb's Happy Hands national contest for students in his age group.

Deb's Happy Hands is a contest open to Grade Primary through Grade 8 to educate students about the importance of washing their hands. When asked what his entry was, Toren answered that, when asked to draw pictures by his art teacher Nina Matthews, he decided to draw some germs.

Scott McGrath, hygiene specialist for Deb Canada Inc., presented Toren with his prize. Toren was awarded a \$100 gift certificate from Amazon and received a soap

dispenser that displays his design for his home. Bluenose Academy received up to 500 Deb manual soap and hand sanitizer dispensers, with each dispenser exhibiting the winning design. The school also received a prize of \$500, which they are going to use to purchase some flexible seating for classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and all members of this House of Assembly please join me in congratulating Toren Jensen on winning the national contest with Deb's Happy Hands.

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

PALLIATIVE CARE: EXCELLENT CAREGIVERS - THANKS

MS. ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank every physician, nurse, homecare worker, paramedic, and volunteer who takes the extra step to ease the pain and distress felt by palliative-care patients who are experiencing life-limiting or life-threatening illnesses.

Our province has limited beds dedicated for the care of patients at the end-of-life stage of their illness, and often individual health care providers who live in the same communities as our patients take the extra step and go the extra mile to ensure that the patients and their families are well looked after.

These individual caregivers are our province's unsung nursing heroes. They share the stress of our patients and our families - their neighbours - and they provide advice and comfort when needed.

I ask this House to join me in sending a huge thank you to the caregivers who know what should be and needs to be done to care for our palliative-care patients, and who do it.

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

DEVEAU, GABRIEL: BLUE MTN. WILDERNESS VOL. - COMMEND

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce a man who has taken it upon himself to preserve the wilderness in his riding. Gabriel Deveau first got involved with the Blue Mountain Wilderness Park in 2012. He has constructed safe walkways for visitors with rocks and stones, and he also put up signs to help guide people out of the woods, because getting lost in the area is common.

Gabe wanted people to have a clear idea of how to get to the lakes to enjoy their pristine beauty. He produced over 14 kilometres of hiking and mountain bike trails for Fox Lake, Ash Lake, Crane Lake, and Hobsons Lake. Gabe says he volunteers so much of his time because he is most comfortable in the outdoors. To him, the trails are a treasure. He says he'd like to assemble a team of volunteers to clean up the area, as garbage has become an issue.

Mr. Speaker, I would like for this House of Assembly to commend Gabriel Deveau on taking this initiative and contributing to the beauty of the Blue Mountain trails. Thank you, Gabe.

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

COX, PAIGE: OVERCOMING LEARNING DISABILITIES - BEST WISHES

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Paige Cox of North Sydney, who graduated from Cape Breton University with a Bachelor of Arts in Community Studies. Paige was diagnosed with multiple learning disabilities in Grade 5, but she knew that she wanted to go to university.

At CBU, Paige found that the Jennifer Keeping Centre helps students with learning disabilities, physical restrictions, and psychological limitations. Paige is now at Holland College in the child and youth care program found that the Jennifer Keeping Centre helped students with learning disabilities, physical restrictions, and psychological limitations. Paige is now at Holland College in the Child and Youth Care Program and will devote her life to helping others with challenges to succeed.

[1:45 p.m.]

I wish to take this opportunity to wish Paige every success as she fights to make a difference for students in school and in university with disabilities.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

BALSOR, MATT: N.S. COUNTRY MUS. HALL OF FAME - CONGRATS.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, welcome to the Chair.

Nova Scotia is home to so many talented musicians and performers and today I would like to recognize one of these exceptional artists, Matt Balsor of Coldbrook. On September 15th Matt was inducted into the Nova Scotia Country Music Hall of Fame and

2018 will mark 20 years in the music business for Matt. In that time, he has released 12 studio albums, made various radio and television appearances and performed in concert with Grand Ole Opry star Larry Gatlin, Canadian country music legend Carol Baker and many other Hall of Fame inductees.

I would like all the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Matt Balsor on being inducted into the Nova Scotia Country Music Hall of Fame. We look forward to Matt continuing to entertain Nova Scotian audiences with his unique renditions of classic country songs for years to come.

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

GIRL TALK: POSITIVE PEER MENTORING - CONGRATS.

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate six Grade 9 students from the North Queens Community School who, after attending a conference back in May, were immediately inspired to start a girls' program called Girl Talk, for Grades 4 to 6. They meet twice a month after school and focus on positive peer mentoring, exploring new skills, engaging in science and technology, as well as building confidence and self-esteem.

Mr. Speaker, these girls are dreaming big and are passionate about making a difference in girls' lives in their schools. I look forward to seeing further developments as their program unfolds. Congratulations for channelling your enthusiasm into such a worthwhile cause.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

HOSP. HULLABALOO: FLEA MARKET FUNDRAISER - THANKS

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: The annual Hospital Hullabaloo in support of Yarmouth Hospital Foundation will take place this weekend at Mariners Centre, carrying on a tradition that goes back more than a century. The Hullabaloo is an initiative of the Yarmouth Hospital's Women's Auxiliary and is one of the biggest flea markets in the tri-counties. This year the auxiliary is raising money for a urology laser device and their goal is to raise \$53,500.

I'd like to encourage everyone in the tri-counties to attend and support a great cause at this year's Hullabaloo on Saturday, September 22nd, at the Mariners Centre in Yarmouth. I'd also like to thank the dedicated volunteers of the Yarmouth Hospital Women's Auxiliary for their countless hours of hard work that go into organizing this important event.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

DOBSON, TIM: INSPIRING EDUCATOR - THANKS

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Tim Dobson, a teacher at Prince Andrew High School. At the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year he promised his students that he would always tell them the truth.

When a problem occurred during a final film project, he told his students that he would stay at the school until the problem was resolved, even if he had to stay until midnight. He kept that promise, Mr. Speaker.

Throughout the school year he shared what he calls his Tim's Bits of Wisdom, reminding his students that they are valued, with a lot to offer the world.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House to join me in thanking Tim Dobson and all our teachers in Nova Scotia for seeing the value of each and every student.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

BAKER, COURTNEY: UNIVERSITY ATHL. - CONGRATS.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, Bridgewater's Courtney Baker, a third-year player on the Dalhousie Tigers volleyball team, made a smooth transition from playing the right side to centre for the 2017-18 season. This special athlete led the Atlantic Conference with nine assists per set and led the Tigers to a 19-1 regular season record.

Even more impressive, Courtney helped her team claim the six straight Atlantic University Sports Women's Volleyball title and she was named the league MVP. She was also named the first team all-star for the second consecutive season and represented Canada on the 2017 senior national team. According to Dalhousie coach Rick Scott, Courtney is a dominant, highly skilled athletic player and is one of the top players in the country. He said she had a tremendous season quarterbacking the offense but is also a key team leader.

Congratulations to Courtney Baker, a strong, confident, hardworking female athlete who is a role model to all Nova Scotia athletes and demonstrates that the sky is the limit.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

TURNBULL, BLAYRE/MASON, LES: OLYMPIC PARK - RECOG.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, a placard recognizing the accomplishments of Les "Babe" Mason and Blayre Turnbull was unveiled Sunday, August 26th in their home town of Stellarton. The town honoured the Olympic athletes by having a park named after them.

Both athletes competed in the Olympic Games; Turnbull was a member of Team Canada's Women's Hockey Team last February in South Korea, and Mason was a boxer in the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne, Australia. A beautiful park in the town was renamed Olympic Park, recognizing their success in sports.

The community of Stellarton are very proud of the fact that they have two residents who have competed at this level. I would like all members of this Legislature to join me in thanking the Town of Stellarton for recognizing and honouring Babe and Blayre.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

LOWE, LEZLIE: BK., NO PLACE TO GO - CONGRATS.

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Halifax Needham resident Lezlie Lowe on the publication of her book published by Coach House, *No Place to Go: How Public Toilets Fail Our Private Needs*. It's a tour of public bathrooms from London, England to San Francisco to the Halifax Commons. It's readable, entertaining, and provides a new lens through which to examine urban design, disability rights, homelessness, and gender equity.

The author Lezlie Lowe is a freelance journalist and journalism instructor and because she is also a friend, I know that she's really good at juggling a lot. This book, which she completed along with a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Nonfiction at the University of Kings College, is a huge accomplishment that will be celebrated tonight with a book launch at the Art Bar, very close to here.

I ask all members of the House to please join me in congratulating Lezlie Lowe.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

MAJALAHTI, JOAN: COM. VOL. - THANKS

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you about a super volunteer in my riding. Joan Majalahti is one of those people who always steps up to help. In fact, at the Bedford Volunteer Awards in May, this is how she was introduced: "Need help with something? Call Joan."

For nearly 40 years, Joan has given back to her church and community, always with boundless energy, and enthusiasm. Joan has been involved with Saint Ignatius Catholic Church, the Catholic Women's League, and Chalice, the Bedford-based charity that helps children in developing countries. Quite frankly, a full list of her various offices held and committees served would take me well beyond my allotted time - and I hear the new Deputy Speaker is a real stickler.

What I do want to say is that these organizations and others have been well supported by my friend and neighbour and I am delighted to be able to recognize her faithful and selfless service here in the House today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member from Pictou East on an introduction.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce two young political enthusiasts we have in the House with us today. Riley Hill Pettipas is no stranger to this House. He comes down on his free classes and takes in the proceedings - thank you, Riley. He has brought Dylan Jourdain-McGrath here, making his first appearance. If they could stand and receive the welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

BOSOM BUDDIES: INTL. COMPETITION - CONGRATS.

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize a breast cancer survivor dragon boat team called Bosom Buddies. The team paddles on Lake Banook and this year attended an international festival in Florence, Italy. The event took place in early July 2018.

Some members of the team are from the Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage constituency. Debbie Kennedy of Cow Bay and Christine Broyden of Eastern Passage placed 23rd out of 125 teams and were happy to have supporter Michelle Morash of Cow Bay alongside them. All members of the Bosom Buddies team presently have breast cancer or are in remission.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in congratulating this outstanding team.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

LILLIAN FRASER MEM. HOSP.: HEALING GARDEN - BEST WISHES

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, in 2014 the staff and auxiliary of the Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital in Tatamagouche wanted to create a space where patients, especially those who have an extended stay, their families, and the health care staff could go outside to enjoy fresh air and natural sunlight in a relaxing and safe environment.

Fundraising for the Healing Garden came from the efforts of the hospital auxiliary, which held a chowder fest in March, a strawberry fest in July, and also the help from Sara Bonnyman's open house in October. They also received donations from the community through Scotiabank, memorials, and personal donations.

The Auxiliary funded the main construction of the garden, but donations are still being collected to do the landscaping. The hospital and the auxiliary celebrated the Healing Garden and their 50 years of service this year with a special event.

The Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital has been a vital part of Tatamagouche and the surrounding communities for 50 years and they are to be congratulated.

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

JOHNS, JAMES HARRIS - BIRTHDAY WISHES

MR. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to take an opportunity today to wish James Harris Johns a very happy 74th birthday today. Not only has Jim been one of my strongest supporters along my political journey over the years, but he's also my father, so I want to wish my Dad happy birthday today.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax-Armdale.

LONG LAKE ADVENTURE CO.: KAYAKING ENTERPRISE - THANKS

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, in the last few years, constituents have enjoyed the nature and recreation facilities at Long Lake Provincial Park. This year, thanks to the Polley sisters of Armdale, there was an exciting new adventure. In July, Sarah Polley and her sister launched Long Lake Adventure Company, a kayak and paddle-boat rental enterprise, with the assistance of their father.

With a variety of kayak models available, they offer an option for all, from the curious child who's a first-time kayaker to the entire family with double kayaks that accommodate four. Sarah grew up paddling on the Northwest Arm and recognized the lack of available rentals in the area. I'm happy to see her start this new business.

I ask all members to thank the Polley sisters for their entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to using their energy in their community.

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

WALKER, OLIVIA: ME TO WE PROG. - CONGRATS.

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, though the school year has just started, a group of eight students from Digby Regional High School are already fundraising for their trip to Kenya this March through the Me to We program. Me to We, a social enterprise, encourages people to work together to change the world. For a short time, people get to live in the community and work on a sustainable development project.

Recently, Olivia Walker, one of the group members and an avid swimmer, raised \$1000 through a swim-a-thon. Her sponsors paid her \$10 a lap. Local restaurants are also helping to give by emptying their bottles. This is inspiring that this group of youth are working so hard to raise funds so that on their March Break, they will be able to live in a community so far from their own and help to build a school or a safe-water program.

I want to recognize Olivia and all her classmates for going to Kenya on this adventure. They will learn so much during their time there and will have a positive impact on their community. To quote Olivia, "It will be an amazing experience."

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Portland Valley.

COLE HBR. HERITAGE FARM MUS.: COM. EDUC. - THANKS

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the great work of one of our local non-profit organizations: the Cole Harbour Heritage Farm Museum. It is a community museum dedicated to preserving and interpreting Cole Harbour's agricultural past and developing an awareness of horticulture, livestock care, and farming in general for today's generation.

This unique urban farm and museum works with a volunteer board from Cole Harbour Heritage Farm Society. The museum relies heavily on community support, volunteers, and visitor donations. Their great work helps bring hundreds of visitors to the farm every season and, in turn, also to the area. This year, the farm had a number of great programs, like preparing the garden for winter, operating a blacksmith's shop, a summer program for kids, and opportunities to explore the marsh.

I wish to thank the Cole Harbour Heritage Farm and all its volunteers for the hard work and dedication to this community and its heritage.

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

ANGUS, IAN: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Ian Angus, real estate agent with Royal LePage, for his support as a Fun Zone Sponsor at the 4th annual BLT Canada Day event for the kids. Ian has been a strong community supporter and a host of a number of events and activities in the community.

Ian has been very successful in highlighting the qualities, assets, and amenities of our community to clients, resulting in the purchase of new homes for families in the community. In fact, he is so good at building our community the area is sometimes referred to as "Angusville."

I'd like the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Ian Angus for his contribution to community and for having an excellent first name.

[2:00 p.m.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

[2:00 p.m.]

PREM. - INFO. & PRIV. COMM'N.: REQUEST - COMPLY

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. This government has a complicated, perplexed relationship with privacy. This government fails to protect the personal information of FOIPOP users and pharmacy patients, but it's all-hands-on-deck for their own secrets.

We were reminded yesterday that the former Minister of Health and Wellness and current Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage used a private account to shield communications from the FOIPOP system. The FOIPOP Commissioner is now demanding those emails be made available to her - and rightly so.

Will the Premier ensure that the minister in question complies with the request of the FOIPOP Commissioner?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to inform this House that when the situation was brought to the minister's attention, he acknowledged the fact that information had been sent from his government account to his gmail account. He has stopped that practice and now his government work is done on his government account and his constituency work is done on his own account.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, we also remember when the Premier admitted, proudly admitted, that he conducts his communications by phone with the express purpose of ensuring it wouldn't fall under Freedom of Information guidelines. He has deliberately pushed the boundaries of his duty to document the decisions he makes and the considerations that go into those decisions.

It is no wonder that the former Minister of Health and Wellness wouldn't take the FOIPOP Commissioner seriously when he sees the example the Premier is setting.

So, I ask: Did the Premier direct his minister to retain the emails that the commissioner has demanded, and does he know if they even still exist?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member for the question. The situation was brought to the minister's attention. The minister has acknowledged the mistake and changed the practice.

I do want to say to the honourable member that she's absolutely right - I do a lot of verbal communication. I want to tell her for that we have the highest credit rating in the history of this province; I want to continue to remind her that we have grown our exports by \$2 billion; I want to continue to remind her that population growth is at an all-time high; I want to tell her we're on the back of three successful years of growing the tourism industry - and the work continues.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier - I'm kind of speechless actually - the Premier's disregard for the FOIPOP Commissioner is actually astounding, really. He says she doesn't need to be an independent officer of this House. Not only does he refuse to comply with her directions and skirt the rules for documentation, but his office directly interferes with the FOIPOP Commissioner's efforts.

According to the review report, the Premier's Office refused to make staff available for an interview. So, I will ask the Premier: Would the Premier interfere in similar requests by the Auditor General or the Ombudsman?

THE PREMIER: The request was made to the Clerk. As the honourable member knows, she stands in this House many times, and would know that the officer does not have the power to subpoena people as witnesses. She would also know, if she paid attention to the very fact, what was asked of the minister, the minister identified was the issue - we solved the problem and the case was closed.

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

PREM.: INFO. & PRIV. COMM'N. - GOV'T. INTERFERENCE

MR. GARY BURRILL: The email account of which my colleague speaks was under the oversight and care of the then Minister of Health and Wellness' executive assistant, and when the Information and Privacy Commissioner requested to be able to interview that person the response she received came from a deputy minister in the Premier's Office to say that interview was not going to take place. So, the Premier has been asked by my colleague for an explanation, but I don't believe we've heard it for this interference in this investigation.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it was not the Premier's Office as you're describing it from the political side. The Clerk, also the head of the Public Service requests, was going

in to ask for - the officer wanted to interview someone she does not have the authority to interview. The Clerk, upon looking at that, realized that the very thing she wanted to interview him on had already been dealt with.

We actually agreed with the FOIPOP officer that the minister should not be using his personal account. We fixed that problem; the minister acknowledged that. That is what the process was going through. That's what the decision was, made by the Clerk.

MR. BURRILL: The Information Commissioner has cautioned that it's possible for personal emails to be wrongly used to provide shield for material from legitimate Freedom of Information requests. Now the government, she says, failed in this case to make any efforts to comply with a legitimate Freedom of Information request for personal emails that had been used in the minister's public capacity and this, she says in her report, was offside and out of line.

Now the Premier is responsible for the tone, the standard of transparency and forthrightness of the entire administration. I want to ask: Does this behaviour meet the standard that he sets?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member for the question. What happened was there was a FOIPOP request coming in by an agency. They were looking for an entire year window, we went back to them, and said, can you narrow the scope? They narrowed the scope to three months.

All of the information and all of the requests that they were looking for were turned over to that applicant. I don't know the number of pages there were but they were turned over to the applicant who asked for the information, Mr. Speaker. That's how that process works. There was nothing hidden from the person who actually asked for the information, we turned it over to them.

MR. BURRILL: Commissioner Tully has made a number of recommendations flowing out of this investigation but none of these is binding because her office doesn't have the power to enforce them. Prior to the election, the Premier said that if elected he would expand the powers and mandate of the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, particularly through granting her order-making powers.

Earlier this week the Premier said this was no longer the view that he takes and that that previous view had been mistaken.

Does the Premier understand that his change of heart on this front gives every indication of a person who is being opportunistic about their integrity and selective about honouring their word?

THE PREMIER: I appreciate the honourable member's question, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud of my track record of dealing with Nova Scotians, communicating directly even when there's difficult information that's required to be handed out. I go and do that on behalf of our government. That is the role that I've accepted, that's the role I asked for, and I'll continue to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the honourable member that we go through the information, we require the information, we put it out. What the information officer is looking for, we replied to almost all the recommendations she put forward. We will look at those ones, we'll go through. We'll continue to make sure that we do that.

I want to go back, Mr. Speaker, to the very beginning of this particular situation. The information officer said to the former Minister of Health and Wellness, now Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage, you shouldn't be doing government work on your gmail account. He agreed. We accepted it, he moved on.

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

PREM. - DEPT. OF JUSTICE: DOCUMENTS - RELEASE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: My question is for the Premier. Just yesterday actually the Premier insisted the Privacy Commissioner has all the authority and independence she needs. Well, he said that reasonable governments fulfill the recommendations of the Privacy Commissioner so there is no need to make her an officer of the Legislature.

By the Premier's reasoning, the federal Liberal Government, the Liberal Government of Prince Edward Island and the Liberal Government in Quebec are not being reasonable. The FOIPOP Commissioner has determined that the Department of Justice lacks sufficient reason to keep secret the documents about the 2014 death of an inmate. She recommended that the documents be made available.

I will ask the Premier: Will he please be reasonable, release the documents the Privacy Commissioner says the Department of Justice has improperly kept a secret?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice continues to have these requests. We have the balance of the issue of how do we protect individual privacy, at the same time making information available to the people who request it. It's always a balance that we go through.

I'm very proud of the work the Minister of Justice has been doing on behalf of all Nova Scotians and he'll continue to do so.

MS. MACFARLANE: In 2013, the PC caucus office submitted a FOIPOP request to the Department of Community Services asking for information about the government's decision to cancel Phase 3 of the Riverview Adult Residential Facility in Pictou County. Our office received a heavily redacted document and we appealed the government's heavy-handed approach to keep that information secret.

The FOIPOP Commissioner agreed with us, saying that to automatically keep draft documents a secret is using the advice to minister exemption too broadly. Despite all of this, the department said it would not abide by the FOIPOP Commissioner's ruling, which is a shame, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Premier, once again, please be reasonable, abide by the Information and Privacy Commissioner's ruling, and ensure that the Department of Community Services releases all the information about Riverview facility?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, most Nova Scotians know that I'm reasonable all the time. The reality of it is, the fact of the matter is we have to strike the balance in making sure that the information that's allowed to go out can go out and information that's protecting personal privacy or issues around other aspects that should be kept private are done so following the regulations in and around the FOIPOP.

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

PREM. - C.B. HOSP. CLOSURES: PREV. STATEMENTS - RETRACT

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Last night, the CBRM Council passed a resolution reaffirming their support of maintaining rural and community hospitals and actually denouncing the pending closures of New Waterford Consolidated Hospital and Northside General Hospital. Does the Premier want to retract his previous statements characterizing opposition to his decision to close these hospitals as noise?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I'm very proud of the work that we've been doing going into communities to make sure that they have the appropriate health care infrastructure that meets the needs of that particular community today. We're going to continue to make sure we modernize health care infrastructure so that we continue to attract health care professionals into our communities across this province and we're going to continue to move forward on the work that we have started in Cape Breton.

MS. MARTIN: Sadly, progress is not closing facilities. The people of Cape Breton feel they have been abandoned by this government. We start by losing services, and then we lose whole hospitals. We lose doctors to better pay in Halifax. We're losing our kids who can't get treatment for mental health issues at home or with an injured eye. We have

to fight tooth and nail to keep anything we want and we're told that, for these hospitals, the decision has already been made. Will the Premier apologize to the residents of Cape Breton for his neglect in the health care system in Cape Breton?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, like her government and previous governments, I was not going to allow politics to interfere to do what was appropriate for the people of Cape Breton and ensure to provide them with the appropriate health care (Interruption) The easiest and simplest thing for me to have been doing would have been to ignore the problem that her Party did and her government did.

The reality of it is they need new health care infrastructure. We're going to deliver on that commitment. We're going to improve the regional hospital. We're going to ensure that we can recruit and retain health care providers to give Cape Bretoners the health care that they deserve just like every other Nova Scotian that have been ignored by that Party.

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

PREM. - INFO. & PRIV. COMM'N.: RPT. RECOMM. - ACCEPT

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, today the FOIPOP Commissioner made a report available regarding her investigation into the former Minister of Health and Wellness using private email addresses. In the end, the Information and Privacy Commissioner made six recommendations. All six are reasonable actions to increase government transparency.

Yesterday, the Premier said if a province has a reasonable government in place there is no need to give the Information and Privacy Commissioner independence or authority because a reasonable government will follow through with the commissioner's recommendation.

So, my question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Will the Minister of Health and Wellness act in a reasonable way and follow all six recommendations contained in the commissioner's report?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as the member would know, there was a report provided just yesterday I believe from the Office of the Information and Privacy officer. There will be a response provided to that report in the time frame allotted.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: So, Mr. Speaker, I'll pivot over to the Minister of Internal Services because some of the recommendations talked about her responsibilities. The commissioner's report detailed at least for occasions when IAP or information access and privacy officials who declined to answer questions or refused to carry out a request of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner investigators.

Now, the report says there is a don't-tell, don't-ask records management philosophy at IAP. That does not sound like the practices of a reasonable government. Will the Minister of Internal Services act immediately to fix the culture at IAP from don't-tell, don't-ask to one of transparency and openness?

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I really would like to thank the member for his question. I want to start off by assuring the member that our staff at IAP provide supports across all government departments. They're available at any time. They work with all departments to make sure that a request that gets put in is answered in the most appropriate fashion possible.

[2:15 p.m.]

As the Premier stated, and as the minister stated, we have the report. We will review the report and we will absolutely work to consider all the recommendations from the privacy officer.

I also would like to take the opportunity to talk about how, since our government has come into power, we have worked for and advocated for more transparency. We are the first government in the province's history to implement an open data portal where, without looking for information, data is there, available and accessible to the residents of Nova Scotia. I also would like to talk about how quick our FOIPOP request time has been.

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

JUSTICE - FOIPOP REQUEST: LEGAL SERV. - SECRECY

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: This is for the Minister of Justice. The province is now engaged in an ongoing court action against a former Department of Justice lawyer. A Toronto Bay Street lawyer is representing the government, as well as the Premier and the Attorney General. A FOIPOP request from the PC caucus office asking how much the Bay Street lawyer is being paid for part of his legal services was refused. I will table that request. The IAP administrator said her office was not entitled to that information.

The big city lawyer is getting paid in taxpayers' dollars. My question to the minister is: Why is the minister keeping his bills secret?

HON. MARK FUREY: Just to follow up on my colleague's comments, the complexity and volume of FOIPOP requests continue to grow. Over the period of this increase in demand on that service, we continue to hit our 80 per cent target within 30 days. The circumstances of this particular case - I just want to say as well that there are more applications being completed than previously. There is a higher compliance rate than previously. There's a lower rate of being refused. This is progress when it comes to freedom of information and protection of privacy.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: The refusal to give legal billing information sets a precedent in secrecy, even for this government. In the past, the PC caucus has requested and received billing information from this government's favourite lawyer, Mr. Jack Graham. The government didn't even put up a fight when we asked for that kind of information. They just handed over Jack's bills.

My question to the minister is: Why are the bills of local lawyers free for the taking while the government is keeping Bay Street legal bills secret?

MR. FUREY: As I indicated earlier, the work that is being undertaken within the FOIPOP policies and mandates are hitting our targets and we're actually exceeding those targets. We'll continue with efforts in that same vein, always with an open mind to try to improve this particular process.

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

H&W - HOME CARE: WAIT TIMES - REDUCTION

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: My question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Countless Nova Scotians are taking on the role of unpaid family caregiver. Caregivers Nova Scotia says that, on average, a caregiver spends 26 hours per week helping a loved one. If caregivers become unable to aid the person needing their help, in too many cases that patient would have no care at all. Caregivers Nova Scotia says the wait time for home care is still extremely high in this province. As a result, caregivers are getting burned out.

My question to the minister is: When can Nova Scotians expect this government to reduce home care wait times and give the caregivers the help they need and deserve?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: As the member would know, we've invested heavily in expanding home care services. In fact, we've made significant improvements in home care wait times for Nova Scotians who require these services. In some parts of the province, the wait-list virtually has been eliminated.

With respect to caregivers in the home - family members or community members providing care - we've actually expanded our supports through the Caregiver Benefit Program, and there's more to come.

MR. ORRELL: Perhaps he could do a ride-along with some home care workers in Cape Breton, because they're not feeling the same as we are hearing from this minister. Unpaid caregivers not only spend significant time aiding a loved one but also administer to a wide range of their needs, such as injections, medications, and wound care, to name a few. The problem is that a very large portion of caregivers are not professionally trained to take on these tasks. Caregivers Nova Scotia is flooded with calls looking for help, and it

can only do so much with very limited resources. Too many delicate procedures are being downloaded to family members who are just trying to look after their loved ones.

Will the minister commit to improving home care funding for those who are struggling, before an unintended accident happens?

MR. DELOREY: As I previously mentioned to the member, two important factors. Number one, we have expanded our investment significantly over the past number of years, each year, towards home care services. This is an important part because we've heard from Nova Scotians that they want to stay at home as long as they can and we need to make sure that we provide the services that are required.

We've seen in many parts of the province where the wait-list has been virtually eliminated and we continue to monitor and work with our partners in those services being provided.

As I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, earlier this year we expanded the benefit payment for caregivers in the province and we have a commitment to do even more.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

EECD - INCL. EDUC. COMM'N.: RPT. RECOMMEND. - IMPLEMENT

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. In March, the Commission on Inclusive Education released their final report, based on hundreds of hours of consultation with thousands of Nova Scotians.

The report included a well-researched implementation plan divided into five key stages. The timeline for stage one ended August 2018. Despite a significant budget allocation to hire some of the already badly-needed specialists, the government seems intent to follow its own agenda and has ignored the other 13 key actions for the first stage.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain why his government chose to ignore the recommendation to develop Cape Breton and Halifax intensive treatment programs?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's question. We're moving forward with the report recommendations of the Commission on Inclusive Education. I'm happy to say that we are now at about 95 per cent of our hirings that need to happen to have these additional supports in the system.

We're going to keep working at this, step by step, so that we have a system of education in Nova Scotia that's equitable, that ensures that every single student, no matter which part of the province they are being educated in, has the same chance of success, and

where special needs supports are delivered consistently in the way that will have the greatest impact on their well-being and achievement.

MS. CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, this government is following its own agenda and not any review or report. They like to answer every problem with a review or report but we don't see the implementation. We know from the commission on inclusion that our education system is not truly inclusive and it is not serving anyone as well as it should - not students, not parents, not teachers, not support staff.

This is a complex issue, and we now have a detailed road map and a policy framework, but sadly we know that the government has decided not to establish an institute for inclusive education, which would have overseen these efforts. We can't improve the state of inclusive education in this province if we skip stage one of the commission's implementation plan entirely.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain why he also chose not to develop an inclusive education policy framework, including new behaviour, mental health, and autism strategies and guidelines which are so badly needed?

MR. CHURCHILL: On the question of the institute, we are not following through with that recommendation because we want the \$1 million it would cost to establish that institute and continue it annually to actually go into the classroom, Mr. Speaker.

To be honest, Mr. Speaker, for that member to suggest we're not following through with the recommendations on the inclusive education report when it's that member, her Party, and all members of the Opposition who actually voted against the additional dollars that were required to be put in the system, I find completely astounding.

That member has voted against every single investment that we've made in education. That member has argued against pre-Primary, that member has defended the status quo of a system that she herself has said is failing. The fact is that no matter what that member says, no matter what those Parties try to do to prevent us from achieving our end goals in education, we're going to plow forward and do the very best that we can for our kids.

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

**FISH. & AQUACULTURE: INGONISH FERRY BREAKWATER -
CONCERNS ADDRESS**

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. Over the past while, and especially the last few days, I've received numerous calls from concerned constituents about the situation concerning the Ingonish Ferry breakwater.

The ocean water is now flowing into the harbour due to further erosion of the breakwater and is in desperate need of armour stone. If this issue is not addressed, a strong storm surge will most certainly threaten the 17 vessels that are docked there, as well as residential homes, a wetland, and the Cabot Trail connecting Ingonish Ferry to Ingonish Beach.

My question for the minister is: Has the minister been in contact with the local harbour authority and federal Small Craft Harbours officials to address this situation?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Thank you very much for the question and, indeed, I have not received correspondence from him at this point. We would be very interested in getting more information on that question.

MR. BAIN: This issue has been going on for the last five years but has reached a critical point given the harsher weather conditions our coastlines are experiencing. Fishers have become extremely frustrated navigating the back and forth between both levels of government. The federal government says it's a provincial issue, the provincial Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture said it's a TIR issue, and then it goes back to being a federal issue. Fishers and residents are left wondering who is responsible.

My question to the minister is: Will he commit to working with the local harbour authority as soon as possible to navigate the system and address this critical situation local fishers are experiencing?

MR. COLWELL: Thank you, again, very much for the question. It's a very important question all over Nova Scotia when the harbours are affected. Most of the time it's the responsibility of DFO and Small Craft Harbours, but I'd be willing to work with the member to address this issue and see who's really responsible, and see if we can help the fishermen in that regard.

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

TIR - OLD SACKVILLE/BEAVER BANK RDS.: INTERSEC. - REVIEW UPDATE

MR. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I have a local question today for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

On May 16, 2018, a terrible accident occurred at the intersection of Old Sackville and Beaver Bank Roads when a vehicle attempted to turn left. A 28-year-old woman who was a passenger in the car died at the scene. Subsequent to this fatal accident, there have been three other accidents in the same location, all involving vehicles turning left. Since this is a provincially controlled intersection, the minister and DOT staff did meet with me

in May; however, that was three months ago since our meeting and I've had no further updates.

Four accidents in four months is not acceptable, so my question is: Can the minister inform this House if his department has reviewed this intersection for a designated left-turning lane and a reduction for the speed limit in this location?

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. I was very pleased to meet with him and one of his other former council colleagues to discuss this matter. We really are appreciative of these situations when they're brought forward to the department because our concern, of course, number one, the priority of the safety of the people who are in the motoring public.

We have taken a look at that intersection. The issue of a left-turning lane is being reviewed. Sometimes when those happen, if we don't have enough ramp area up to it, it creates more danger than it solves, but I'll be happy to find out where that is at the present time.

MR. JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, some of the concerns about this intersection include that it's less than two kilometres away from two schools. There are students walking there, school buses drive by there and turn there daily. It's a high volume of vehicles - over 26,000 cars a day go through that intersection. The solutions here are neither financially or work-intensive - all they require is a reduction in the speed limit in this area and a flashing green light on an already signalized intersection.

It continues to be a disaster every day until this is resolved. Can the minister please tell me when his department will be installing a left-hand turn signal at this intersection and lowering the speed limit?

MR. HINES: Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the House that in our most recent budget we included a significant volume of dollars, \$30 million, to review specific safety issues in the province, one of which, in this year's allocation, is being deployed in the Cape Breton area, which has enabled us to look at particularly difficult circumstances that present themselves as growth occurs - that's what's happened in that particular area - and the ability of the highway system to accommodate the growth.

We will look at this particular intersection in view of that safety fund that we have.

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

[2:30 p.m.]

H&W - NORTH SYDNEY RALLY: MINISTER ATTEND - ANSWER

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question, again, is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. This government made a promise to Nova Scotians that they would have a family doctor. Sadly, the list continues to grow with each passing day, as this government demonstrates their inability to track doctors.

Many of my constituents without a family doctor rely on the emergency room for care, just like many other Nova Scotians across this province. My constituents who rely on the Northside General emergency room have been hit hardest, as the emergency room was closed for the entire month of August and five days of September so far.

My question to the minister: Will the minister come to North Sydney on September 23rd, share his plan for health care in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, and take direction from the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture? A reasonable minister would answer just yes or no.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, for the member opposite and for all the House, I'd like to highlight the important work that's ongoing. With the partners in the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK, as it relates to recruitment of primary health care professionals, in the last 18 months we've recruited about 170 physicians in the Province of Nova Scotia. This is in part supported by changes to our incentive programs and our compensation. As well, I defer to the member to take a look at a recent release today about the recent success just since April of this year on recruitment of physicians in Nova Scotia.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, this is ridiculous. A simple question, a yes or no answer, and we get that rambling on. The people I represent at home don't appreciate that. I don't appreciate that. Nobody on this side of the House appreciates that.

I asked a simple question of the minister: Will he come to North Sydney and attend a rally and tell the people what the plan is for health care in Cape Breton, especially on the Northside? It's a simple question: Yes or no? Please.

MR. DELOREY: What I can assure the member opposite is that the importance and the priority of this government, myself and the department, our partners in the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK and other front-line health care professionals, is providing the care that Nova Scotians need and deserve in this province - in all parts of the province.

What I can tell the member opposite, again, as he continues to ask the question, is that we're investing in his community. We're investing in new infrastructure and

expanding long-term care facilities. We're investing in the regional hospital to expand cancer care and to expand emergency department access. We're bringing new infrastructure that will continue the ongoing efforts for recruitment and retention of physicians in his community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

PREM. - LAND PROTECTION TARGETS - DELIVER

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Since 2013, our province has had a goal of designating at least 13 per cent of our landmass as protected areas. That is a goal the Premier affirmed and highlighted in mandate letters to the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Natural Resources. Advocates were assured that the Liberal Government would meet the goal during its first mandate, but the government has failed to deliver on that commitment. We are still sitting at 12.3 per cent, and there has been no action on this file since.

My question for the Premier: When will this government deliver on its commitment to protect 13 per cent of our landmass?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. She is right. We continue to move toward 13 per cent - I think it is 12.4 per cent now. We have a number of parcels that have been reviewed and are within the departments. Those will be brought forward after all the assessment is done on them to allow us to move toward and get to 13 per cent.

MS. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, 90 per cent of the plan's designated areas are just waiting for official protection, which could be done by an Order in Council. The land, as in the Wentworth Valley Wilderness Area, has already been purchased specifically for the purpose of protection. Why isn't the Premier taking that last step and living up to the commitments on land protection?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, parcels identified go through a process in the department. They're putting it through that process. There are a number of parcels of land that are going through that process right now. I expect to see some of them before the Executive Council in the not-too-distant future. They will then be reviewed and determined, but we are committed to making sure that we get to 13 per cent, and we will do so.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

H&W - DART. GEN. RENOS.: EMERG. PSYCH. CARE - ADDRESS

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. The Dartmouth General Hospital is currently undergoing millions of dollars in much needed renovations. I, along with everyone who uses the Dartmouth General Hospital, am excited about the renovations taking place, and can't wait to see the completed improvements.

However, earlier this year, staff told me that none of the millions of dollars allotted to the project will help provide emergency psychiatric care. It remains the only regional hospital in the province without emergency psychiatric care. My question to the minister is: Why is the government putting off providing the people of Dartmouth with badly-needed emergency psychiatric care?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I assure you and the members opposite that mental health is one of our key priority areas in the province. It's one of the key items within my mandate. We continue to invest heavily in expanding mental health care and supports across the province - in the central zone and all other parts of the province.

Indeed, as the member would know, a lot of our efforts have been focused at youth services within communities. We know that the benefits of investing there - particularly in mental health - will pay dividends and reduce the demands on the more acute areas of our system.

MR. HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, many hospitals in this province have their emergency departments closed on a regular basis due to a lack of physicians. The Dartmouth General emergency department stays open, but they still don't have the capacity to provide the emergency mental health care that patients desperately need.

Stop and think, Mr. Speaker, what does it say about the state of our health care that my constituents lack proper access to emergency mental health services, and yet I feel fortunate because our ER doesn't close? I'm sure there are members on both sides of this House that would rather have my problems than the problems facing their communities.

Is crossing the harbour the only option to Dartmouth residents in need of emergency mental health care?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as the member would know, depending on the nature of mental health, as with our physical health, there are a variety of conditions that one may present with that are more or less acute. Presenting and being assessed for mental health conditions in an emergency room like in Dartmouth General, individuals can receive care, support and counselling, and directed to appropriate resources and follow-up, as would be the case for certain physical ailments.

When in a crisis, however, all Nova Scotians have access to our crisis line to receive the care and supports that are needed. People can actually assess and work with them over the phone and make sure the necessary resources are brought to them in those more acute situations as well.

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

H&W - CAPE BRETON RALLY: MINISTER ATTEND - ANSWER

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. I hear him talking about how all the investment is being made in Cape Breton Island, how they're going to increase the size of the hospital, how they're going to make more use of the facilities that are there. (Applause) I see where the minister himself had to start the clapping because nobody else thinks it's the appropriate way to go forward. (Applause)

I want to say this to that minister: I want to know if he will join the member for Cape Breton Centre, the member for Victoria-The Lakes, the member for Northside-Westmount, and me at a rally this Sunday in North Sydney at 2:00 p.m.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's recognition and acknowledgement of the investments being made in Cape Breton for the health care services. What I assure that member, and all members of Cape Breton and across the province, is that we do take the care of Nova Scotians, the health care needs, very seriously. That's why we look for opportunities to invest.

We're looking forward. We're looking at the health care needs in these communities - not just for today, but into the future. We're investing for the future of health care of these communities, providing those needs that will be met, because for far too long political Parties of all stripes have ignored the needs and the recommendations to deliver the health care that they deserve.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, if anybody has ignored the needs of the people of this province, it's that Health and Wellness Minister that's over there.

One hundred and thirty-plus doctors are needed, and yet he's standing up and talking about all the doctors they've already recruited. What about all the doctors who have left? What about the 100,000 Nova Scotians who don't have a family doctor, Mr. Speaker? What about them?

This minister can come to Cape Breton and tell the people what his plan is, how it's working, and how famous and great he is for what he is not doing for them.

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, the member would know that as of September, over 8,000 Nova Scotians from the Eastern Zone now have primary care access. They are attached to a family physician and a family care practice. That's 8,000 more people who have family care than previously did.

These people appreciate the investments we've been making. They appreciate the recruitment efforts by the Nova Scotia Health Authority (Interruption)

Cape Bretoners and all Nova Scotians appreciate the investments we are making in our program's mental health services. They will appreciate the investments in our infrastructure and, as I know, the recruitment initiatives, when primary health care providers have access to the new infrastructure.

We know we've heard from the front line that this will be helpful in recruiting and retaining other health care professionals, as well.

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

EECD - ÉCOLE WEDGEPORT: CONST. PROCESS - UPDATE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I will switch over to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development where I know I am probably going to get a great answer.

I've asked about the École Wedgeport a number of times. École Wedgeport is a school of about 100 students in a small Francophone community in my constituency. The community is very pleased that a new school has been announced to replace the current one.

My question to the minister is: Could the minister give us a little update on where it sits in the construction process?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, in the first ever multi-year capital plan that the province is engaged with, Wedgeport is on that and we are very happy for that. I know in our community of Yarmouth and I know that in the member's community, people are very excited about this.

We are on schedule to have construction begin in 2019-2020, with the school opening in 2021. As we enter into this year, the site selection process will begin, and the community will be directly involved in that process and have a chance to express their opinions on best sites possible.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: The community is chomping at the bit. They really want to get to discussing this, to find out what is going to be included and not included in their

new school, and there are a number of interested community members who would sit on - I guess we used to call them school construction committees, but I know we are not necessarily doing that anymore.

My question to the minister is: Can the minister give us an idea of where that process is and how confident he is that it's going to meet the 2019-2020 construction start date as outlined in the capital plan?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, we have had a site selection process that has created delays of up to three years, so we do have some work to do in terms of improving that process because we want these schools to be built on time, unlike past projects that were not delivered on time to these communities.

We are in the process of finalizing what that is going to look like now and the community will be involved once we get going with that, but right now we think we have a five-year capital plan with 13 schools on there and we feel very positive about meeting the start and deadlines for each one of those. I know this is going to be very exciting and important to all the communities that will be impacted.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

E&M - OIL SPILLS: PREVENTION PLAN - UPDATE

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy and Mines.

On Tuesday I asked the Minister of Environment how her department will make sure that Nova Scotia Power is not responsible for another spill like the one in Tuft's Cove. She responded that her department leaves that up to the company and only steps in after a spill occurs. This is not a very strong regulatory standard and it's not reassuring,

My question to the minister is: If the Department of Environment feels it has no responsibility to prevent further spills, is his department or any branch of government doing anything to make sure that Nova Scotia Power does not leak thousands of litres of oil into the Halifax Harbour again?

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for the question. We do keep a very close relationship with Nova Scotia Power and other partners in the energy sector.

Specific to this situation, we were well aware, Nova Scotia Power informed us immediately. They're taking all the necessary steps.

[2:45 p.m.]

As for the Department of Environment, I'm expecting an update from them later today.

MS. LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I also asked the Minister of Environment if she could provide further information on why the oil cleanup is going slower than expected, she could not. I asked the Minister of Environment if she could give us a new timeline for when she expects the cleanup to be complete, and she could not. The department seems to be leaving everything to Nova Scotia Power. Maybe we'll hear something more this afternoon.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Energy and Mines, can he, or anyone in the government, update us on why the cleanup is going slowly and when it will be complete?

MR. MOMBOURQUETTE: This situation, of course, the Department of Environment is the lead, but from the beginning Nova Scotia Power has been very forthright with information to my department. We work very closely with the Department of Environment and there are a number of steps Nova Scotia Power needs to take in this situation to ensure that the cleanup is done.

As I've said, they've been very forthright with information and we're expecting an update on that cleanup later today.

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

EMO - PICTOU W.: 911 CALLS - P.E.I.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for EMO. In a safety or medical emergency Nova Scotians have been trained to call 911 and we are very lucky to have this service in Nova Scotia, but what happens when there isn't help on the other end of the line?

For significant portions of Pictou West, the constituency that I represent, when people use their cellphones to call 911 the call is actually bounced to operators in P.E.I. I'm sure everyone can see where there's unintended consequences that can result.

Is the minister aware of this problem and does he know how many Nova Scotians may be affected?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: I have heard in the past that this has happened. I'm not sure how many people are affected by that bounce occurring between towers, but we'll certainly commit to looking at how many that might be, but I've not been made aware, since I became minister, that there have been any problems to date.

MS. MACFARLANE: Well I'm glad I'm able to address this today because in these situations we all know that minutes count, indeed, actually seconds. I saw that and witnessed it this summer. To have a call routed across the Northumberland Strait to people who can't help on the other end creates us losing valuable time in order to save someone. It takes long enough, as we know, for help to arrive in such areas as mine and rural areas.

I'd like to know if the minister plans to create a plan to fix this gap in the 911 system and if the minister can tell the House how long it will be until all 911 calls in Nova Scotia are answered actually in Nova Scotia?

MR. PORTER: Having worked previously in the EMS world, I know what that feels like to be responding and to take those calls, having worked in a centre where that happens. I do know that the good folks at 911 are working hard, they bounce those calls quickly.

Again, to the point of the member's question, we're certainly committed to look at this issue and around time frames. I'll let her know as soon as I possibly can, as well as all members in this House, what the end result of that review might be and we'll certainly commit today and forward to having a look at that as soon as we possibly can.

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

H&W - C.B. (NORTHSIDE): MEETING - MIN. ATTEND

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. So many times we sit here and go around and around with never an end in sight to an answer. The people in Cape Breton are desperate. I can't implore upon the minister enough and regardless of what we're being told about how wonderful things are over the Sunny Bridge, people in Cape Breton need to hear that directly.

I implore upon you the importance of your attendance at this meeting and another one will be coming up. I will ask the minister again: the meeting is Sunday in the Northside. Will the minister attend this meeting, as my colleagues on the PC side, please just yes or no?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the Premier and I, as well as my colleagues from Cape Breton, were in Cape Breton in June. We explained to the representatives there what was going to be taking place; that includes investment in.

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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 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. 38.

Bill No. 38 - Residential Tenancies Act.

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

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 38 - an Act to Amend Chapter 401 of the Revised Statutes of 1989, the Residential Tenancies Act - be read for a second time.

We know that many Nova Scotians are renters and landlords. In fact, there are over 300,000 Nova Scotians living in over 110,000 rental properties. Therefore, it is essential that landlords and tenants have easy-to-use, modern processes that balance their rights and obligations to each other and are free of unnecessary red tape. Our goal is to make the Act more inclusive, accessible, and balanced for tenants and landlords.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that with the amendments we are bringing forward here today, they are largely based on consultations with both tenants and landlord groups. The value of these consultations brought to the table was incredible. We were able to gain insight from those who adhere to the Act, and their feedback helped inform our changes.

I'd like to thank our key stakeholders for their contributions to the consultations and also staff for their hard work in bringing these changes to light.

One of the most prominent issues that emerged during consultation was the need for clear information and common understanding of the Act. Landlords and tenants deserve to have access to clear, easy-to-use, modern processes. Clarifying terms such as tenant, and providing additional methods to serve documents, such as electronically, will help achieve those goals.

In addition, the following amendments will improve clarity and consistency in the Act and increase efficiency and balance for all parties involved. Currently landlords must inventory and store abandoned property for 60 days. The time frame will now be reduced

to 30 days. Currently, home-buyers who do not wish to be landlords may only make application to evict the tenant after a home is purchased and in their possession. This change will allow the seller to initiate the eviction upon proof of sale.

Allowing tenants to give notice to change their yearly tenancy to month-to-month instead of asking for a landlord's permission. Providing landlords with entry times to show an apartment to a prospective tenant or purchaser where there is a fixed-term lease in place. Terminating a lease the next month after a single tenant dies to eliminate unnecessary financial hardship for the family of the deceased. Currently the family of a deceased tenant must give one month's formal notice to the end of the tenancy and pay the rent and could be responsible for up to two months rent, depending on when the notice is given. We find this very difficult and unfair, Mr. Speaker.

While we are pleased with these amendments, we do appreciate there is more work to be done and we'll continue to work with these groups on other opportunities for that very important improvement. We recently introduced telephone hearings to the Residential Tenancies Dispute Resolution process to reduce wait-times for tenants and landlords, increase accessibility for clients, and make the process faster, more efficient, and cost-effective for all involved. Mr. Speaker, this means that tenants and landlords will no longer have to travel to an Access Centre to participate in an in-person hearing. Tenants that live out of province can now participate in hearings from afar. Telephone hearings will be a better use of participants' time. This is just another step we are taking to enhance services for tenants and landlords and make our processes more convenient and balanced.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the direction we are taking with these amendments here today. The team at Service Nova Scotia is continuously working to cut red tape for businesses and for citizens, modernized legislation, and make government services more accessible and efficient for Nova Scotians. These changes support that valuable work. I conclude my remarks now and look forward to the comments from my colleagues opposite.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, the Residential Tenancies Act is such an important piece of legislation. Think of the number of people in the province that it affects - thousands of people. If it's good legislation, it helps to ensure people have the opportunity to rent the type of accommodations they want, but it's always going to be about a balance of power between the tenant and the landlord.

I think it's important that in that balance of powers, at the end of the day, everyone is served fairly and in the best interest of what we can believe to be true, Mr. Speaker. And I think about some changes made in the not-so-recent past where landlords felt that the type of risk they might be taking on in some cases was no longer worth it to them and, of course, in such a scenario, then you will see the actual reduction of properties available for rent. So, we don't want to see that.

There are quite a number of changes in this bill. We do look forward to hearing from tenant representatives and from landlords about their thoughts on it. I've looked at a number of the items in here and I think there are good measures. I think about a couple, just to mention would be when people have a property and they're renting it and for some reason they're choosing to sell the asset; currently, if you wish to sell your property and it's being rented, you are restricted by the wishes of the tenant.

That is an awful lot to ask of somebody who has made an investment in a property, perhaps tying up a significant amount of their personal capital and they want to move on and perhaps do something else with those funds. For them to be restricted as they are now, I don't think that's fair and I also don't think it's in the best interest of renters either, because if there are these kinds of restrictions it will discourage people from renting properties.

The fewer properties, the higher the price for rent especially in dense, urban areas, but also in rural areas, too. I think of the community of Inverness - significant change in the last number of years with the construction of the golf courses. Real estate has become at a premium price. Also, the advent of Airbnb we have many people instead of choosing to rent to local residents they wish to rent to people who are visiting the area for more money.

So it's important to achieve the right balance and I'm looking forward to listening to the Law Amendments Committee hearings and to see what people have to say but I do think there are some good measures in this bill.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I know many Nova Scotians are impacted by the Residential Tenancies Act and I know as an MLA and I'm sure members across the floor in other caucuses hear often from constituents with issues around residential tenancy. Often, it's usually the tenant themselves, but over the years I definitely have heard from those who own rental properties. But, for the most part, most of the issues that I have had to deal with over the years are geared towards the renters and those who are renting spaces.

It's important, I think, that government continue to modernize the Residential Tenancies Act and continue to look at how we improve the situation for both the renters and those who own the properties but, more importantly, to address some of the issues we see currently in the rental market here in Nova Scotia.

My colleague mentioned we're seeing jurisdictions now where it's very expensive and the selection is being limited for those local residents who want to rent, for example. Many seniors who decide that they want to downsize and get rid of their ownership of a home look towards the rental market and it's going to be a challenge into the future. Airbnb has really, I think, put another layer of concern on local residents who want to rent. We see

demonstrations around the globe in major cities that it's very hard for local residents to find rental properties because there is more money in the vacation kind of sector, Airbnb sector.

I'm pleased the government seems to have done some consultation with stakeholders in developing this bill and we do as a caucus look forward to hearing from those who may want to go to Law Amendments Committee to voice their concerns either supporting this or concerns with the bill. So we look forward to it going through the process.

[3:00 p.m.]

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, very briefly, I do truly appreciate the comments from the members opposite: the member for Inverness and the member for Sackville-Cobequid, the NDP House Leader. I certainly feel the same way very much with respect to Law Amendments Committee, who come on behalf of the tenants and landlords. I think it will be much of the same group. There were six representatives, IPOANS, the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia, Dal Legal Aid, Nova Scotia Legal Aid, ACORN, and the Manufacturing Housing Association of Atlantic Canada.

The stakeholders, I think there were about 26 attendees, so both sides. There were about 14 issues identified; nine were agreed upon on both sides, very much equally. There were two that we've advanced here that were a compromise, that I think both sides will be okay with, and three more that we'll bring back that just need more work and homework and diligence on behalf of Service Nova Scotia. We'll get those ready.

It's going to be a continuing dialogue. There is always more work to do, as we say, but this is certainly a good start. I do appreciate those comments. With that, I move closing for second reading on this bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 38. 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. 42.

Bill No. 42 - Vital Statistics Act.

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

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 42 be now read a second time.

Last week, our Minister of Justice introduced the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Protection Act. At the time of the introduction, he said a person's sexual orientation is to be respected, especially in a province that is proud to be diverse and inclusive. I couldn't agree more, and I know that all members of this House agree as well.

Staff from Vital Statistics have been aware of some challenges facing the 2SLGBTQIA+ community regarding gender identity on the birth certificate. In-person and online consultations were held over the summer to learn more. It is all part of our work to modernize the Vital Statistics Act.

Some of the groups consulted were the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project, Cape Breton Youth Project, PRIDE Nova Scotia, PRIDE Nova Scotia Government Employee Network, Halifax PRIDE, as well as many other 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations and groups. I am very grateful for their time, input, guidance, and in many instances, sharing their personal stories.

The consultations told us some people who identify as non-binary feel their gender would be better represented on the birth certificate by having the option to select an X as a gender marker in the sex-field indicator. They feel the male or female binary on a birth certificate does not and cannot accurately reflect their gender. This is a step that has already been taken by many other jurisdictions, including the federal government that now uses an X on the passport.

The consultations also told us that the requirement to have a letter of support from a health care professional to change their sex indicator with Vital Statistics is overly burdensome, expensive, and uncomfortable, and treats their gender identity as an illness.

In response to these concerns, we are introducing the following amendments to the Vital Statistics Act. "X" is being added as an option for gender identity in the sex indicator field on the Nova Scotia birth certificate for anyone who doesn't identify exclusively as male or female. There will still be an option for male and female on the certificate. There will also be an option to obtain a birth certificate that does not display the sex field or indicator. I am also pleased to announce the fee to change the sex indicator on a birth certificate will be waived at the same time these changes come into effect.

In addition, we are removing the requirement for anyone 16 years of age or older to get a statement from a professional to change their sex indicator on their birth certificate,

and we are providing Nova Scotia residents born outside the province to apply for a change of sex indicator. This is an important step as in many cases it may be unsafe or not possible for them to contact their country of birth to obtain documentation that reflects their updated sex indicator or gender identity.

I'm very proud to say that Nova Scotia is the first province in Canada to offer all of these services together. It is a tremendous accomplishment and one that I am so pleased to say has been receiving tremendous support and is very widespread and positive.

Mr. Speaker, since our announcement yesterday there has been an incredible amount of activity on social media. We have received support from Jessica Durling, the Canadian Bar Association, Nova Scotia Chapter, Chair of Halifax Pride, the Youth Project, Halifax Pride, and Nova Scotia Human Rights. Shae Morse, a nonbinary teacher and community advocate was very kind to lend their support to our announcement yesterday. Shae said the proposed changes take many important steps towards meeting the needs of Nova Scotians who do not wish to be identified by sex. Providing Nova Scotians with additional options to identify themselves, or their children, removes a significant barrier facing the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

While there is work left to do to remove barriers for our community, Mr. Speaker, passage of this legislation will truly be worth celebrating. The positive feedback and supportive words certainly validate the amendments and are the right thing to do.

Yesterday was an important day for Nova Scotia and what we stand for as a province. I want to take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge the passion and hard work of our Deputy Registrar of Vital Statistics, Krista Dewey, and her staff who were determined to see this day come. I also want to thank the Human Rights Commission who worked arm-in-arm with our Vital Statistics team; their insight was invaluable.

In addition to consulting with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, staff have also been working closely with other government departments through a new committee called the community of practice on identity. This brings together 11 provincial government departments and offices that are working together to look at matters dealing with identity that can affect more than one department and more than one program.

Nova Scotians expect our government to collaborate and consult to ensure that, where possible, our practices in one department align with others. The community of practice creates the important opportunity to share information and discuss and prepare for changes with cross-government implications.

Other amendments we are making to the Vital Statistics Act include giving all parents the same right to register the birth of their child with the surname of their choice. Currently where only the mother is on the birth record, the mother may register the child

with her current surname. Parents who are married or who are both acknowledged on the birth registration can give their child any surname they wish.

We're also providing Nova Scotians with the most secure and cost-effective access to online birth, marriage, and death certificates by creating the ability to restrict third-party vendors from selling these services online.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in what we are doing. I believe these amendments are the right steps to take for our province.

With that, I look forward to the comments from my colleagues.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the minister for introducing this very important piece of legislation. I want to first applaud the government and the minister and his department for the lengthy consultation they did on this. I think it's really important that we listen to the people whom these kinds of changes affect most. It sounds like they did a good job at that, so thank you very much for that.

I want to voice my support for these changes. I really hope that this is the first step towards actually making gender-neutral IDs available and fully updating the legislation to reflect our modern understanding of sex and gender. It's great steps - I think there's more to be done and we can talk further about that later.

I also want to echo what the minister said about people in the LGBTQ+ community face barriers that those who are not in that community may not have any sense of, and barriers that we just can't imagine that exist for that community that don't for others. So, anything that removes barriers to being able to live a full life, protected fully, is important. So, thank you for that.

The government has the ability to remove the barriers, fully remove the barriers, that exist for people and to make the concrete changes that we need to make our communities safer and more accepting for every person.

That's all I'll say for now, but I look forward to hearing further discussion at Law Amendments Committee and, hopefully, in third reading.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for her comments. Obviously, we're in lock-step in terms of what this means

today. There's always more work to be done and the Law Amendments Committee process and the opportunity for Nova Scotians to come and share their opinions and perspectives in support or request changes on this is always critical. I look forward to that as well.

Quite frankly, this is a pretty proud day for me, being part of this. It is one of those things that only affects certain people, but it's just the right thing to do. It's the type of legislation, policy, and direction we strive for as legislators and as all Nova Scotians. It's a good thing. Again, these opportunities come once in a while to really affect lives and make people feel like they see themselves in this province. I'm happy to be here.

Again, I do thank the member opposite for her comments and we'll see what happens during the next step of the way, but there's more work to be done and we'll get there for sure.

With that, I would like to close debate on Bill No. 42.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 42. 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. 44.

Bill No. 44 - Change of Name Act.

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

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I move that Bill No. 44 be now read a second time.

The amendment we are making will reduce the residency period for a person not born in Nova Scotia to seek a legal change of name. We are going from one year currently to three months. This amendment will allow Nova Scotia to align with other jurisdictions. Mr. Speaker, because a change of name sometimes accompanies or follows the change-of-sex indicator, it is important that the residency requirements for both applications are aligned.

This will make it easier for applicants who seek both changes, as well as for those just seeking a legal change of name. It is important that the Change of Name Act support the current-day society and provide comfort and convenience for all Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: I just want to say that I am happy with these changes. It makes sense that we're bringing these two bills in at the same time to align with each other and, yes, I think making the change from one year to three months for a name change is an important and barrier-removing step for many people.

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 thank the member opposite for her comments and for her support on this. Again, we'll work through the Law Amendments Committee process to see what feedback we get from the public and, with that, I'd like to close second reading on Bill No. 44.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 44. 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, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will now recess for a few minutes while we resolve ourselves into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

[3:23 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft in the Chair.]

[4:01 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

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

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

Bill No. 2 - Develop Nova Scotia Act

Bill No. 4 - Corporations Registration Act

Bill No. 10 - Liquor Control Act**Bill No. 13 - Day Care Act****Bill No. 16 - Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Protection Act****Bill No. 23 - Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act**

and the chairman has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, without amendments.

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

The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House now rise to meet again tomorrow, Friday, September 21st between the hours of 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Following the daily routine and question period, business will include second reading for public bills No. 39, No. 45 and No. 48 and, with time permitting, private and local Bill No. 17.

Mr. SPEAKER: The motion is for the House to rise and meet again tomorrow, September 21st, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

The House now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

[The House rose at 4:03 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 144**

By: Ms. Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas Arthur Gaudreau and Allyson Marsh are active and valuable members of the Dartmouth Community; and

Whereas they have both contributed immeasurably to public life in Nova Scotia, Allyson through her work with the community and in the fields of politics and education, and Arthur through his work with Halifax ReTales, letting us know about all things opening and closing in HRM; and

Whereas this week is the occasion of their wedding;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in offering sincere congratulations to the new couple on their marriage, and wishing them many years of happiness to come.

RESOLUTION NO. 145

By: Hon. David Wilson (Sackville-Cobequid)

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

Whereas the Sackville Rivers Association was founded by volunteers in 1988 with a vision to create an active trail system running along the Sackville River, connecting communities in Sackville and Bedford, with the ultimate goal being a 40km trail running along the full length of the Little Sackville River from Fultz House to Little Lake; and

Whereas 30 years later, many residents enjoy walking and biking on the Fort Sackville Walkway in Bedford beginning at Scott Manor House to Range Park, continuing on to the Bedford Sackville Connector Greenway linking to Fultz House; and

Whereas on September 29, 2018, the Sackville Rivers Association, in line with their 30th Anniversary, will celebrate the grand opening of Phase 1 of the Sackville Greenway, connecting Sackville Drive to Glendale Drive;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Sackville Rivers Association on 30 years of service to the preservation and enhancement of our waterways and trails and for the promotion of active living in the community.

RESOLUTION NO. 146

By: Hon. David Wilson (Sackville-Cobequid)

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

Whereas Charles Fenerty is an important part of Sackville's history through his work in the papermaking industry, as a poet, and a community member; and

Whereas the grand opening of the Charles Fenerty Bandstand was held on Saturday, September 8, 2018, where attendees enjoyed a barbecue, guest speakers from the community and three levels of government, as well as a ribbon-cutting ceremony; and

Whereas this event was another great endeavour by the tireless volunteers of the Acadia Recreation Club;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Acadia Recreation Club on the grand opening of the Charles Fenerty Bandstand, and acknowledge their continuing efforts to make Sackville a wonderful place to live.