



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2018

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2018

Sixty-third General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee on Law Amendments, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 79 - Motor Vehicle Act.

Bill No. 80 - Traffic Safety Act.

and the committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, each without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that these bills be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee on Private and Local Bills, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bill:

Bill No. 17 - An Act to Incorporate the Kenzieville Cemetery Company.

and the committee recommends this bill to the favourable consideration of the House, with amendments.

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, permission to make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, in the East Gallery today we are joined by the 2018 recipients of the Premier's Award of Excellence for the Graduate to Opportunity program. I would ask them to please stand: Wayne Sumarah, Rick Alexander, Deborah Fleetham, Carolyne Corkum, Andrea Maxwell, Natalie Miller, and Tracy Parks. Angela Jackson is not here with us today.

Mr. Speaker, if we could please give them the warm welcome of the House.
(Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 510

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

Whereas the Graduate to Opportunity program is helping to build a stronger workforce and retain well-educated young people in Nova Scotia, with a salary incentive and diversity bonus that makes it easier to hire recent graduates; and

Whereas this valuable program has helped more than 650 young people secure full-time, well-paying jobs in their chosen career since 2015; and

Whereas team members received the Premier's Award of Excellence and are being recognized for going above and beyond in delivering the Graduate to Opportunity program to our talented and well-educated university and college graduates in Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in congratulating Wayne Sumarah, Rick Alexander, Deborah Fleetham, Carlyne Corkum, Angela Jackson, Andrea Maxwell, Natalie Miller, and Tracy Parks for supporting the economic growth of our province and for making it easier for young people to live and work in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Lunenburg on an introduction.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make this introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. LOHNES-CROFT: I'd like to point out the East Gallery to members of the House. I would like to introduce a constituent of mine, Kevin Johnson, his service dog Maggie, his partner Julie Berkshire, and his parents. If you would please give a warm round of applause. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 511

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

Whereas retired Halifax Police Constable Kevin Johnson is well-known in our community as a selfless volunteer who, as an off-duty police officer, helped save several residents from the wildfire that swept through parts of Spryfield, destroying eight homes in April 2009; and

Whereas Kevin has spoken openly at Province House and elsewhere about the permanent physical injuries and severe clinical post-traumatic stress disorder he experienced; and

Whereas Kevin and his service dog Maggie together carry on their public service and advocacy, most recently through the opening of the Canadian Intervention and Assistance Dogs, which trains service dogs free of charge to injured first responders, for which he was recently recognized with a knighthood by the Order of St. George;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Kevin on his knighthood and to wish him continued success in training service dogs and his many other public service endeavours.

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. 512

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 October 8th to October 14th is National Citizenship Week, a time to celebrate our citizenship, our pride in being Canadians, and our country; and

Whereas this week in October, we reflect on and celebrate the rights and responsibilities that all Canadian citizens share; and

Whereas over the past two years, Nova Scotia has welcomed record numbers of newcomers, the highest in our province's history and that of the Atlantic Provinces, all of whom are candidates for Canadian citizenship;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in celebrating Citizenship Week by congratulating all of our new citizens and encouraging Nova Scotians to attend a citizenship ceremony or organizing reaffirmation ceremonies in our communities.

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

SERVING SENIORS ALLIANCE: EDUC. & ADVOCACY - CONGRATS.

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the Serving Seniors Alliance. Serving Seniors is a large dedicated group composed of many not-for-profit organizations and business owners. The co-chairs currently are Gregg Yeadon from Casey Rodgers Chisholm Penny Duggan, a lawyer who makes house calls; and Bill Cossitt from Centum Mortgage, who's a mortgage broker. The former chair, who just stepped down, is Robin Carter from Carter Senior Care.

The group provides lectures for seniors that are enlightening and cost nothing for individuals to attend. The lectures vary and are held within the Halifax Regional Municipality; all you have to do is call them up. Serving Seniors Alliance members offer

services, act as advocates, and offer presentations for Serving Seniors' members and the public. It began in 2005, providing seniors with a resource of trusted professionals. The group only continues to grow.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in acknowledging the Serving Seniors Alliance for their dedicated hard work for our community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MELANSON, PATTI ANN: ORDER OF N.S. - CONGRATS.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to take a moment to thank a very special individual: Patti Ann Melanson. Patti has been a practising nurse for over 25 years. Patti has helped countless youth in her role as a nurse coordinator at the J.L. Ilsley High School Teen Health Centre. Patti has positively impacted many youths' lives through her work with Phoenix House. Her remarkable career has taken her to help create the Mobile Outreach Street Health team and working on the Housing First strategy.

Patti's impact on our youth in our communities is quite frankly incredible. As an alumnus of J.L. Ilsley High, and of Phoenix House youth, I can't think of a better person than Patti Melanson to be awarded the Order of Nova Scotia. Congratulations, Patti, on this well-deserved award.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

CARPENTER, BRUCE AND DEBBI: 50th WEDDING ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place today to acknowledge a couple that recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Bruce and Debbi Carpenter built a legacy that cannot be measured in material possessions, but rather the lives they have touched through their years together.

Their family recently had a surprise party for the popular couple. Any couple reaching an incredible 50 years of marriage is always cause for a big celebration. Five decades of love and commitment, meeting major milestones, and embracing everyday life together is definitely a success story.

The Carpenters can pause and look back at their life and cherish all the beautiful memories and the years to come with their children and grandchildren.

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

JESSOP, LEAH: PARACANOE INITIATIVE - COMMEND

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I want to celebrate a bright young woman from my riding who gives back through volunteerism. Leah Jessop is an assistant coach at the Maskwa Aquatic Club. She teaches canoeing and kayaking to those under 15.

This year, Leah has worked hard to launch a paracanoes program to teach the sport to those with physical disabilities. Leah started this initiative because she enjoys making a difference in the lives of the athletes she coaches, especially the disabled youth. She believes the skills they learn will carry them throughout their lives in terms of self-esteem, confidence, and independence.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the members of this House of Assembly join me in applauding Leah for her effort to make a difference in her community. She is a great role model for those around her.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

ST. THOS. MORE CHILDREN'S CHOIR: SHARING JOY - RECOG.

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize some outstanding young people. If you attend the 9:00 a.m. service at Saint Thomas More Parish, you are in for a musical experience that will stir your soul and put a smile on your face.

The children's choir at Saint Thomas More have been together for two years, and in that time they have built some amazing friendships and learned a lot about music and service to their parish and community. The children's choir practices every Tuesday night, and it's amazing to see their dedication to learning music and working very hard together to ensure they are ready to sing their hearts out every Sunday morning. I commend these young people for their dedication to learn music and share their joy with others.

The children's choir would not be what it is without some great adults volunteering their time. The children's choir is very lucky to be led by music director Debbie Hartlen. Debbie is an amazing music teacher and provides great mentorship to the youth. Along with Debbie, the children's choir has benefitted from the great work of Darlene Morrison and John Woods. I want to thank Darlene and John for their great contribution to the choir.

I ask all members of the House to recognize the great work being done by the children's choir at Saint Thomas More Parish.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

WOLFVILLE AREA FOOD BANK: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, the Wolfville Area Food Bank in partnership with the Wolfville Area Inter-Church Council has been addressing the issues of hunger and poverty in the Wolfville area since 1970.

Co-chairpersons Diana Shelley and Mary Carter lead a large team of volunteers who assist over 100 families each month. Their work is complemented with ongoing and much-needed donations from the community. These 75 regular volunteers take on specific roles in making sure those in need receive healthy food once a month. Volunteers receive donations, carefully plan shopping, stack shelves, make appointments for food-bank clients, pack food boxes, and greet clients with warm smiles.

I would like the members of Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in recognizing the many volunteers of the Wolfville Area Food Bank and thank them for their hard work, commitment to community, and compassion in making a family feel a little bit better each month.

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

COOKE, MITCHELL: MOTORSPORTS HALL OF FAME - CONGRATS.

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Once again, Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the accomplishments of a sportsman in my constituency.

On November 17, Mitchell Cooke will be inducted into the Maritime Motorsports Hall of Fame in Truro. Mitchell has raced professionally for more than a decade, having signed on with Canada's largest MX team, Two Wheel Motorsport, in 1999 and collected a total of 14 podium finishes.

Mitchell will be joining his sister Heidi, Canada's most successful motocross racer, in the Hall of Fame. Despite their national recognition, this brother and sister have not lost sight of community values and supports systems. Both Mitchell and Heidi continue to offer stability and continuity through their ownership and operation of several local businesses.

I'm pleased to recognize Mitchell Cooke and congratulate him on this great achievement.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

CLIMATE CHANGE: ACTION REQUIRED NOW - RESPOND

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change informed the world yesterday that urgent and unprecedented action is required now to prevent global warming beyond two degrees Celsius.

Happily, Halifax Regional Municipality is now exploring how the city can achieve zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040; Bridgewater is working towards an 80 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 over 2011 levels while also addressing housing needs and energy poverty; and a diverse array of civil society actors have come together with a proposal for the province to move to 50 per cent below 1990 levels by 2030.

As a citizen of this province and as a mom of two children who will experience with billions of others the consequences of our action or inaction, I implore the government to feel the urgency and respond.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

LONG, GORDON - LT.: DEDICATION TO FIREFIGHTING - THANKS

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to tell the House about one of our most devoted Bedford volunteer firefighters.

Lieutenant Gordon Long has served in our volunteer firefighting services for 34 years, so his service actually predates the creation of the municipality.

In May, Gordon was recognized at the Bedford Volunteer Recognition reception for over three decades of service, and this is how he was described: "Gordie always has time and patience for training and mentoring new firefighters, as well as for sharing knowledge with new officers. He has a kind and gentle demeanor that allows him to offer advice and constructive criticism without malice. And he is always willing to help out with community events. Most importantly - he is always there when the fire call comes in."

That is so true. He is a great guy and he is always there. I want to thank Gordie Long for always stepping up, for being the kind of volunteer we can count on. His work has made Bedford a safer place to live in, and we thank him.

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

DAUGHTER, JENNA - BIRTHDAY WISHES

MR. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, 12 years ago today on October 9, 2006, at approximately 10:00 a.m. my life changed forever, significantly for the better with the birth of my oldest daughter Jenna Helen Johns.

Jenna has probably one of the best senses of humour of anyone I know and not only is she my daughter, but she becomes more and more my friend every day. I am very proud of her and I would like to ask all members of the Nova Scotia Assembly to join me today as I take this opportunity to wish Jenna a wonderful 12th birthday - and I promise, Jenna, I won't forget to get the cake and ice cream on the way home.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

EWING, KAREN - PHYSICIAN: COM. SERV. - CONGRATS.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, after returning from the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial site in France, Dr. Karen Ewing began her quest to build a memorial park in Bass River, Colchester North, to honour and remember all those who sacrificed their lives in the service to others. Today that park is a source of pride to the community, the province, and for all those who have served and who continue to serve.

Dr. Ewing has received a Veterans Affairs Commendation, the Outstanding Service Award from the Retired United Nations Veterans Association, and the YMCA Peace Medal. On March 2018, the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace presented Dr. Ewing with the award for peace writings. The award was in recognition of the speeches highlighting the value of peace that Dr. Ewing has written for events at the veterans' park.

In addition, the College of Family Physicians of Canada awards a designation of fellowship to those who have been awarded certification in the College of Family Physicians and who distinguish themselves through outstanding contribution to their community, their colleagues, and the discipline of family medicine. In November, this highly-regarded fellowship status will be awarded to Dr. Ewing.

Let's all congratulate and thank Dr. Ewing for her many and varied contributions to Nova Scotia and its citizens.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

WILKIE, LUCY: OCEAN BRIDGE PROG. - CONGRATS.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, a Port Williams resident is doing her part to help ensure that our oceans remain healthy for generations to come.

Nineteen-year-old Lucy Wilkie is part of Ocean Bridge, a year-long program which is bringing together 40 youth leaders aged 18 to 30 from across Canada in the name of ocean health and conservation. The Ocean Bridge program is an Ocean Wise initiative funded by the Canada Service Corps. Lucy urges community members to get involved as much as possible in Ocean Bridge initiatives and with ocean health in general.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Legislature to join me in acknowledging and congratulating Lucy's efforts to improve ocean health.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

TALBOT, CATHERINE: ATHL., BADMINTON - CONGRATS.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Catherine Talbot from Bridgewater, who is a member of the Bridgewater Junior Badminton Club and Team Nova Scotia. Catherine and her partner claimed the gold medal in the under-17 girls doubles at the 2018 Nova Scotia Provincial Badminton Championships held last April.

Catherine was also selected as a member of Badminton Nova Scotia's Provincial High Performance Team for the fourth consecutive year. In addition to this, she represented Nova Scotia in the Atlantic Badminton Championships in Moncton last May, Team Nova Scotia's Under-17 Team which she was part of, won the under-17 team event, and she also won silver in the girl's doubles, and bronze in mixed doubles. What makes these accomplishments truly special is that Catherine is a strong athlete despite living with juvenile arthritis and the pain that accompanies this condition.

I ask the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Catherine Talbot, an exceptional athlete who has succeeded in sport due to her strength, determination, and perseverance.

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

LIVERPOOL BASEBALL CLUB: 60th ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Liverpool Baseball Club on their 60th anniversary, which was celebrated on September 16th.

This remarkable ball club, home to Nova Scotia Sports Hall of Famer Danny Seaman, is held dear in the memories of so many. It lives on strongly, providing an opportunity for people of all ages to participate in an athletic summer sport, outside in the sun, competing, building friendships and being part of a team.

Mr. Speaker, the Liverpool Baseball Club volunteers and participants are to be congratulated on achieving this milestone of 60 years. We thank them for their contribution to sport over the past 60 years and wish them many more successful years.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

**RICHARD, KRISTINA:
SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD GAMES - BEST WISHES**

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, in March 2019, six athletes from Nova Scotia will travel to Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates to compete in the 2019 Special Olympics World Games. One of those athletes is Kristina Richard from Antigonish.

Kristina is a track-and-field athlete who won a gold and two silver medals at the Special Olympics national games that were held in Antigonish this summer. It will be her first time competing at a World Games, which will see more than 7,000 athletes from over 170 countries compete in 24 individual and team sports. Kristina will be travelling to Toronto to participate in a training camp. There, she'll meet and train with more than 100 Canadian athletes who will join her in Abu Dhabi.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in wishing Kristina and her fellow athletes from Nova Scotia and across Canada the best of luck at the 2019 Special Olympics World Games.

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

ST. PETERS CANAL SWIM: GROWING SUCCESS - COMMEND

MS. ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker the fifth annual Swim the Canal festivities were held on August 5th in St. Peters as part of Nicholas Denys Days. Swim the Canal provides people a chance to swim the Bras d'Or Lake to the Atlantic Ocean through the community's historic 800-metre canal.

The first canal swim in 2014 attracted 77 participants while the 2018 count was about 270. The event came into being based on an idea inspired from the childhood experience of St. Peters native Ann Marie Kerr, who recalls jumping off the canal bridge and swimming through the canal.

Mr. Speaker, Swim the Canal was a very successful and enjoyable event. I commend the organizers of Nicholas Denys Days, as well as the participants in this year's event.

MR. SPEAKER: The honorable member for Hants East.

HOPEWELL, CHRIS: COACH OF THE YEAR - CONGRATS.

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, deciding to become a coach on a sports team is a serious commitment. These individuals give generously of their time and spirit. Chris Hopewell is a perfect example of this. He was recently named Coach of the Year at the East Hants Sports Awards Gala and has been coaching the East Hants Mastodon

Softball team for the past five years and led them to win the Canadian Senior Men's Championship in 2017.

Chris also manages a local fast pitch team and took the initiative to bring in Canada Games team members to help establish Timbit softball in the area for youth players. His mentorship has led to a huge increase in the number of youngsters now hitting the fields at East Hants Minor Softball Association.

I ask all members of this House to please join me in congratulating Chris Hopewell on this award. We offer him our gratitude for dedicating his time and spirit to coach fast ball and softball and for encouraging young players to take part in the sports.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

PARTRIDGE, SANDI: OPIOID ABUSE AWARENESS - THANKS

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Sandi Partridge of the Cumberland Opioid Council. Sandy and her team helped bring awareness to this crisis in the community with the assistance from the Northern Healthy Connections Society. The team provided training and take-home kits for those in need, as well as support for family members.

Opioid abuse is a growing concern in many communities and we need more people like Sandy to help bring awareness to this issue, so we can help prevent tragedies. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to Sandi and her team for working so hard to raise awareness and safety in our communities.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE: REMEDIES - CONSIDER

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Further to my last member statement regarding the challenge of averting catastrophic climate change, I want to make the point, again, that there are many ways for the Government of Nova Scotia to rise to this challenge.

There is reinvigorating the COMFIT program, adjusting the work plans of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to accomplish greenhouse gas reduction goals, committing to ecological forestry and salt marsh restoration in order to actually sequester carbon. Many of these initiatives could achieve multiple goals including improved health outcomes, community economic development and employment. Respectfully, anyone who does not want to lead on the climate change file at this time ought not to be in leadership at all.

[1:30 p.m.]

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

CONWAY WORKSHOP ASSOC.: NEW BUS. VENTURE - THANKS

MR. GORDON WILSON: I want to recognize the continuing positive role Conway Workshop Association has on the lives of individuals with disabilities from my community. The workshop is committed to providing quality residential and training programs for their clients and is always trying to find innovative ways to help this community.

Recently, with the financial support of the Department of Community Services, the workshop opened a store on Water Street in Digby, where they are appropriately named Water Street Creations & Consignment. The store is a social enterprise where the workshop's clients can display their creations as well as have hands-on experience that may help them transition into the workforce. This store also sells on a consignment basis the artworks and crafts of local artisans as well as from other workshops.

During their shift in the store, participants may deal with the public, stock the store shelves, and do inventory. The job skills and confidence the participants acquire at the store will help them in some way to one day work in their own business. For many, this will be their first real work experience. Thank you very much to the Conway Workshop Association.

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

KIWANIS CLUB BEACH & PARK: COM. SERV. - DEDICATION

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize the Kiwanis Club Beach and Park in Cole Harbour.

The members of the Kiwanis Club contribute many volunteer hours to keep the park clean, safe, and beautiful. The beach area is great for swimming and is adjacent to a long dock for activities like fishing. There is a boat launch available during open hours, and kayaks and canoes are a daily sight during the summer months. A walk through the well-maintained trail is where you'll find beautiful flowering trees and unique perennials.

Kiwanis members include my amazing constituency assistant, Lisa Rochon, and her husband, Shawn, who volunteered all summer long to both open and close the park gates, allowing others to enjoy the park.

I ask all the members of the Legislature to join me in thanking the small but mighty Kiwanis Club Beach and Park members for their dedication and countless hours of volunteer work in our community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

BORDEN, JANICE: FREE COM. THANKSGIVING MEAL - THANKS

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Janice Borden and her Thanksgiving gift to the community of Dartmouth North. Janice works at the front desk of the Dartmouth North Community Centre and is a warm and welcoming presence there.

For the fourth year in a row, completely on her own steam, Janice obtained a community grant from Between the Bridges and assembled a wonderful team of volunteers to prepare a delicious, free Thanksgiving meal for the people in our community. This weekend, there was a flurry of activity as volunteers gathered to prepare the food. Even the Parkside Pub got involved by lending an oven to cook one of the turkeys. There was turkey and ham, lots of vegetables, and a variety of desserts, all lovingly prepared by Janice and her team. On Sunday afternoon, about 125 people were served this beautiful meal and enjoyed a time of community and fellowship.

On this day after Thanksgiving, I am very grateful to Janice for her generosity and commitment to Dartmouth North. I ask all members of this House to join me in thanking her for her gift to our community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. METLEGE DIAB: With us today in the East Gallery are two key individuals from the Nature Conservancy of Canada: Craig Smith, who is the Nova Scotia Program Director and a constituent of Halifax Armdale; and Kathryn Morse, who is the Atlantic Director of Communications. I ask both Craig and Kathryn to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

NAT. CONSERVANCY: HFX. WILDERNESS PARK - RECOG.

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, last month I was pleased to attend the Nature Conservancy of Canada's fundraising campaign launch for the Halifax Wilderness Park at Williams Lake, where I was proud to see the Province of Nova Scotia announce a \$1 million contribution.

The NCC, in partnership with the municipality and the Shaw Group, worked together to secure 379 acres of rugged wilderness as Halifax's newest natural destination and launched the Keep Halifax Wild campaign to ensure this vision becomes a reality. Whether you enjoy family hikes, birdwatching or geocaching, this new wilderness park will have something to offer.

Mr. Speaker, it's my hope that this natural landscape, in the words of the NCC, will keep connecting us, grounding us, and making our world a better place to live. I ask that members of the House of Assembly join me in thanking Craig, Kathryn, and all partners and donors for leading this campaign.

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

FIREFIIGHTERS: FIRE SAFETY INITIATIVES - THANKS

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Fire Prevention Week to honour all those who voluntarily risk their lives to fight fires and tackle other hazardous situations in our communities. These people selflessly devote their time and energy to train, fundraise, and educate the public on fire safety. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

Mr. Speaker, fire safety saves lives and this week serves as a reminder to make it a year-round priority to educate ourselves on potential fire hazards and take action to protect our properties and the lives of our loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to say how proud I am of my son-in-law, Constable Adam Robar, who while on duty in the Northwest Territories last week was called to a burning apartment building. First on site, he entered the building, rescuing all the residents. Thank you for all you do.

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

TIMBERLEA BAPTIST CHURCH: WELCOME SARFRAZ FAM. - THANKS

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the Timberlea Baptist Church. The Timberlea Baptist Church has been a cornerstone of the community since 1953 and endeavours to care for the community one family at a time. In keeping with this important mission, the TBC welcomed the Sarfraz family to Halifax and to their family.

Every family is different and unique and when a new family arrives in Canada they face an extensive array of challenges and obstacles. The Timberlea Baptist Church family has opened their hearts and church to provide comfort, support, and guidance to the Sarfraz family as they adjust to a new culture, language, and traditions.

I would like the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating the Timberlea Baptist Church on their generous offer to embrace the Sarfraz family as they make the transition to a new community, home, and life in Canada.

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

REPKO, SASHA/CLANNON, CAREY: SPECIAL OLYMPIANS - CONGRATS.

MS. ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, the 2018 Special Olympics was recently hosted in Antigonish with approximately 1,000 athletes and hundreds of volunteers. I had the pleasure of attending the event and seeing first-hand the joy in the eyes of the athletes. It was truly inspiring.

I rise today to congratulate two very special athletes from Cape Breton-Richmond who participated in the games. Ms. Sasha Repko ran to win two silver medals, one for the 4x100 relay and the other for the 400-metre. She also won one bronze medal for the 100-metre. Mr. Carey Clannon successfully captured three bronze medals, one for the 100-metre, one for the 200-metre, and the other for the M1 standing long jump event.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Sasha and Carey and all the athletes, their families, coaches, and volunteers, as well as the organizers who made the 2018 Special Olympics an outstanding event.

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

ELECTIONS OF MLAs: 5th ANNIV. - THANKS

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, October 8, 2013, was an extremely important date for a number of us in this Chamber; it was the first time we were elected. As of yesterday - there are a few who weren't and a few who had their redemption later on. Yesterday marked our fifth anniversary from our first election.

I wanted to take a moment to wish yourself and those of us who were elected on October 8, 2013, a very happy anniversary. A special thank you to all our families and friends who have stood by us through the tumult of life in politics.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

CADET DAY IN N.S.: LDRS. OF TOMORROW - CONGRATS.

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, Saturday our local cadets in Cumberland North celebrated Cadet Day in Nova Scotia. In Amherst we celebrated our sea, army, and navy cadets, volunteers, and supporters of the cadet program.

The cadet program is a tremendous way for young people to engage in a variety of fun, challenging and rewarding activities. I am so proud of the cadets in our community, our leaders of tomorrow.

I invite all my colleagues to join me in congratulating all cadets across this great province.

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

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, through you I'd like to introduce the House to a man who joins us from Victoria, B.C. He arrived here in Nova Scotia. I'd like him to stand when I introduce him here. His name is Chief Petty Officer First Class Tim Blonde. He is our Canadian Fleet Atlantic Chief, again new to the province, so he is here today. He is continuing his studies and advancing his career through Algonquin College. I know we'll all join one another in welcoming him to the House today. (Applause)

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

BLOOD DRIVE: SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVE - THANKS

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, on July 9th the volunteer firefighters from Station 50 in Hammonds Plains teamed up with Canadian Blood Services to hold a blood drive. Summer is the time of year when blood supplies are low. The blood drive was a great success. All appointment times were filled, and people dropped in to donate.

They also hosted an open house at the same time, which gave community members the opportunity to see what it is to be a volunteer firefighter. Many from Station 50 were available to answer questions and give a tour of the station.

Volunteering as a firefighter is a great and rewarding way to give back to our communities. Donating blood and being a volunteer firefighter are important to our communities, and we all need to do our part in this House in promoting both of these activities.

I'd ask all members of the House of Assembly to please join me in thanking both Blood Services and Station 50 for their dedication to the community and to all of their peers around the province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

FIRE PREVENTION WK.: PROV. FIRE SERV. - THANKS

MR. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, in sticking with the theme of the fire service today, I'd like to stand here today and recognize all my past colleagues and more in the fire service, as this week, October 7th - 13th, recognizes Fire Prevention Week all over North America. The campaign this year is: Look. Listen. Learn. Be Aware. Fire can happen anywhere.

Fire service members will visit schools, community groups, open houses, seniors' homes, and many more to boost their fire-prevention message.

Please join me in thanking our provincial fire services this week and every week of this year as they dedicate their lives and time to public safety and service.

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

S. SHORE LOBSTER CRAWL: CULINARY FEST. - CONGRATS.

MR. HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the South Shore Tourism Co-operative on the successful South Shore Lobster Crawl, which was held for the first time last February in communities along the South Shore from Peggy's Cove to Barrington. This is an important new initiative to expand the area as a year-round destination for tourism.

Our South Shore lobster fishery opens in November and runs through May, and so Nova Scotia's latest culinary festival, the South Shore Lobster Crawl, was born. Last February the lobster crawl was a feast of lobster in all variations, including a lobster roll competition and lobster poutine. There were weekend getaway specials, lobster-infused beer, lobster-inspired art, special events, and more.

In 2019 the event will be held from February 1st - 9th, and I ask the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to congratulate the South Shore Tourism Co-operative on this exciting new initiative, the South Shore Lobster Crawl.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

WHITMAN, MAURA: PERF., N.S. MUSIC WK. - CONGRATS.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge the extremely talented Maura Whitman from Herring Cove. Maura is a 17-year-old singer/songwriter who was recently selected to perform at the upcoming Nova Scotia Music Week in Truro.

Maura has had a big year, being featured as part of the 2017 Top 100 chart for East Coast music. She released her fourth original single, “Extraordinary,” and attended the prestigious Grammy Award winner Gordie Sampson’s Songcamp.

I would like to congratulate Maura on all her success, past and present, and I look forward to watching and listening to all the success her future will bring.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

HALL FAM.: ORIENTEERING CHAMPS. - CONGRATS.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Hall family, who recently competed in the North American Orienteering Championships in Whitehorse, Yukon. Kara Turner, her husband Matt, and three children, Evie, Milo, and Lily, all competed in their respective age categories.

Orienteering is a sport where participants run through a pre-marked course in the woods, using a map to navigate the location of checkpoints. The participant with the fastest time and most checkpoints wins.

Ten-year-old Evie Hall has been nominated for Sport Nova Scotia Athlete of the Month for winning five gold medals at the North American championships.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you and all members of this House of Assembly please join me in congratulating the Hall family on their accomplishments at the North American Orienteering Championships and wish them all the luck in the future.

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

RODRIGUES, JENNY: NEW SOBEYS EXPRESS - CONGRATS.

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Jenny Rodrigues on the opening of her new convenience store. Jenny opened a Sobeys Express this summer in the new Rockingham South subdivision in Clayton Park West. The store is located on the corner of Ruth Goldbloom Drive and Dunbrack Street. She also owns a Sobeys Express in Dartmouth Crossing, and previously operated a Needs Fast Fuel on Portland Street.

Entrepreneurship comes with many obstacles and difficulties, but Jenny has proven that hard work and perseverance pay off. She now owns a store that is sure to be a staple in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of this House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Jenny on the opening of her new store. We wish her nothing but success in the future.

[1:45 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

WESTCOTE BELL POTTERY: 35 YRS. IN BUS. - CONGRATS.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Westcote Bell Pottery of LaHave, Lunenburg County. Westcote Bell Pottery was established in 1983 in a small village south of London by husband and wife artists Vaughan Smith and Jacqueline Cohen. The two soon later moved to Ohio and then New York before moving their thriving business to Nova Scotia in 2011, where they renovated a 120-year-old boathouse on the LaHave River.

The pottery studio is filled with a full line of pottery, paintings, and prints. After 35 years of operation, Jackie and Vaughan have retained their energy and passion for what they do. Their creative minds are always thinking ahead to the next project. Vaughan and Jackie say they are inspired by the local scenery, landscapes, stories, activities, wildflowers, shoreline, wildlife, and architecture.

Last May, Vaughan and Jackie built a showroom that displays over 100 framed and sculptured pieces that they have created, in a building that is an historical reconstruction of an old country store.

Congratulations to Vaughan Smith and Jacqueline Cohen on the 35th anniversary of Westcote Bell Pottery and for the opening of their new showroom.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

VAN DIJK, HOLLAND: ANGAD HUNDAL MEM. AWARD - RECOG.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to tell you about a Bedford family that suffered a tragic loss but used that loss to help young people begin their post-secondary studies. Seventeen-year-old Angad Hundal was a compassionate, kind, responsible, and thoughtful young man. He was just about to enter Dalhousie University when he died in a motorcycle accident in August 2013. Three years ago, the Hundal family created the Angad Hundal Memorial Award, giving a \$5,000 prize to the Nova Scotian student who most exemplified Angad's qualities.

This year about 150 16- to 18-year-olds applied by writing essays. This year's award winner was Holland Van Dijk of Dartmouth; she is so grateful for this award.

Angad's parents, Jagdeep and Simardeep, announced at this year's ceremony that they are also creating another award to help more students with their education.

I'd like to thank the Hundal family for this very thoughtful tribute to their son Angad, whose name will live on helping other young people achieve their dreams.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

CRAM THE CRUISER FOOD DRIVE: SUCCESS - THANKS

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the success of the fourth annual Cram the Cruiser food drive in support of the Upper Room Food Bank in Kingston, on Friday, October 5th. The event was hosted by the Kings District RCMP and the Kings County Senior Safety Program.

In a few short hours, the community contributed over \$400 in cash donations and more than 2,000 pounds of food for those who are in need.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia, I'd like to extend my sincerest thanks to Constable Kelli Gaudet of the Kings District RCMP, Michelle Parker of the Kings County Senior Safety Program, the Upper Room Food Bank, and the community at large for their generosity and for their support leading into the Thanksgiving weekend.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

PROSPER, KERRY: ST. F.X. KNOWLEDGE KEEPER - CONGRATS.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand today to recognize Mr. Kerry Prosper, a Band Council member from Paqtnkek First Nation. Mr. Prosper, a respected Mi'kmaq elder and published author, has been named the inaugural Knowledge Keeper at St. Francis Xavier University. In his role, Mr. Prosper will teach and share traditional Indigenous wisdom to interested students, staff, and faculty. He will be leading programs like monthly Learning Lodges that feature Indigenous-centred content that is driven by the students themselves.

The announcement was made at an event held at St. F.X. to commemorate Treaty Day on October 1st. During the event, Mr. Prosper was presented with an eagle feather, a tremendous sign of respect and appreciation as it represents wisdom, honour, strength, and trust.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my fellow colleagues in this House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Mr. Kerry Prosper on his new position of Knowledge Keeper at St. F.X. It's

a position well-earned, given his commitment to the Paqtnkek community. He is undoubtedly a great addition to the St. F.X. community.

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

SMITH, WADE: ORDER OF N.S. - RECOG.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Wade Smith who received the Order of Nova Scotia posthumously. Admired coach, mentor, teacher, and principal of Citadel High School, Wade believed positive change could be accomplished by ordinary people doing something.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to send warm regards to his wife Sherry, and kids Jaydan and Jaxon, on this wonderful achievement for their family member.

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

T-SHIRT KIDS TOYS: CORP. CITIZENSHIP - THANKS

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize T-Shirt Kids Toys, a cool, unique family-owned and -operated company based in Weymouth whose toys encourage children to be healthy, active, and fit. Their toys, which include plush dolls, books, colouring books, and teddy bears, include a membership card to T-Shirt Kids Club.

After signing up, the children get daily updates with suggestions on something special to do that day. This can be an educational or physical activity, and ranges from an insect scavenger hunt to playing dodge ball. They also encourage the children to consider children less fortunate than themselves and to give back, as the company does to the IWK Health Centre. Weekly, the operators have a healthy-treat sale in Weymouth and contribute the amount collected to the children's hospital. Because of this, they were asked to participate in the IWK Telethon last June. In addition, they try to cheer up the children in the hospital by sending them cheer cards.

They not only encourage children to think of others but serve as an example. They are a unique company and a good corporate citizen, a good addition to our community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

RAVEN ESPRESSO BOUTIQUE: NEW BUS. - CONGRATS.

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, thanks to a new small business, residents of Armdale and Spryfield have a great new spot to grab their morning espresso. Having soft launched at the end of May, the Raven Espresso Boutique has become quite an unmissable fixture in the community. Working out of a bright turquoise vintage trailer

with a unique Italian propane-powered espresso machine, its team serves up delicious espresso and coffee using Java Blend beans. The Raven Espresso Boutique also offers a host of great local products including World Tea House tea blends, tasty treats from Tart and Soul, and yummy cupcakes.

Residents can find the boutique conveniently on the Herring Cove Road at McMullen Road every weekday morning, and it has also become quite a fixture at our local farmers' markets. Indeed, owner Chantelle Buote also sells her handmade clothing crafts and keychains out of the boutique.

I ask members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Chantelle Buote on the launch of her new the Raven Espresso Boutique.

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

JONES, NICO: ANCESTRAL ROOTS AWARD - CONGRATS.

MR. BEN JESSOME: I'd like to recognize Nico Jones of Upper Hammonds Plains, Mr. Speaker. Nico is a recent graduate in the class of 2018 from Dalhousie University's Schulich School of Law and was part of Dal's Indigenous Blacks & Mi'kmaq Initiative.

Nico credits his family, especially his mother Gina, for supporting, motivating, and encouraging him throughout law school. He had great friends who not only spent many hours studying in the library, but also socialized and supported one another. Nico was recently recognized by the Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute, DBDLI, with an Ancestral Roots Award. These were presented for the first time this summer. These are awards that go to upcoming community-rooted African Nova Scotian leaders.

I'd ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating Nico Jones and wish him well in his future endeavours.

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

STN. 20: LOCAL CRAFTWORK - CONGRATS.

MR. HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Chester Municipal Heritage Society on its most recent initiative, opening the Station 20 Handicraft Shoppe housed in and named after the historic Chester train station. When this beautiful old building was in danger of falling into disuse, society members proposed a retail operation to showcase the talent and heritage of the area.

The store features a wide assortment of work by local artisans and crafts people including hooked rugs, felted and knitted items, carving, woodworking, jewellery, home décor, and beach-glass art. Artisans also hold craft demonstrations for the public each week

throughout the summer months, including a boat-building display and wrought iron works from the first female farrier in Nova Scotia.

I ask the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating the Chester Municipal Heritage Society on the Station 20 Handicraft Shoppe and to wish the society continuing good fortune in all the excellent work it does.

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

DENT-FLYNN, RACHAEL: FLAR EQUINE EXPERIENCE - CONGRATS.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Rachael Dent-Flynn, an outstanding young woman who is the owner of seven horses in Hubley and has developed a unique horse academy in the Hubley community.

Through her experience working with children with disabilities and her certification in horse-assisted learning, Rachael understands how working with horses can be therapeutic. This understanding became the driving force behind her development of the FLAR Equine Experience program.

This program does not provide equestrian training but rather uses horses to teach adults and children skills and character traits that can be used in school, at home, or in the workplace. Her seven horses are both the subject and the teachers of the programs under her direction.

Some of the participants in the FLAR Equine Experience program are children who have autism or who have dealt with bullying in school. With focus on the horses, the program teaches these participants self-confidence, co-operation, teamwork, and responsibility. Other programs are for adults and focus on leadership, team building, and problem solving in the workplace.

I'd ask the members of the House of Assembly to join me in acknowledging the work of Rachel Dent-Flynn and congratulating her on her contribution to the Hubley community.

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

HOSPICE HFX.: EXCEPTIONAL END-OF-LIFE CARE - COMMEND

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge a group of community leaders who are providing invaluable care to some of our province's most vulnerable.

Hospice Halifax provides compassionate end-of-life care through support groups, engagement activities, and events. They have a network of dedicated staff and volunteers who make up this cornerstone of our community, and give a sense of comfort and joy to those nearing the end of their lives.

A new hospice residence site in the South End is currently undergoing construction and is scheduled to start welcoming patients in early 2019.

I'd like to commend the board of Hospice Halifax and its staff and volunteers for the exceptional, selfless work that they do.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

BECCA'S BAYPORT PUB: NEW BUS. VENTURE - CONGRATS.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Rebecca South, an entrepreneur who has been successfully operating Rebecca's Restaurant in the Town of Mahone Bay for the past five years.

Rebecca has recently embarked on another business venture by opening a second restaurant in Bayport this past June. Becca's Bayport Pub is an 1,800-square-foot restaurant that serves both traditional pub food and food with a German flair. The energetic entrepreneur also has plans to build six eco-cottages on-site so guests can enjoy 500 feet of waterfront that borders her property.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you and the members of this House of Assembly please join me in congratulating Rebecca South on the opening of Becca's Bayport Pub, and wish her all the success in her future business ventures.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. HALMAN: In the West Gallery, we have a former student of mine, a graduate of Prince Andrew High School, and a great Dartmouth East resident. I'll ask Neil to please stand, and ask the House to give Neil McKenna a warm welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: In the absence of more Statements by Members, the House will now recess until the beginning of Question Period.

[1:57 p.m. The House recessed.]

[2:00 p.m. The House reconvened.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - LEGAL CANNABIS: INVENTORY SHORTAGE - EXPLAIN

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Last week we learned that Nova Scotians will have significantly less access to legalized cannabis than they were promised. NSLC admitted that because of production delays, Nova Scotians should expect less than what we ordered, with inventory shortages becoming the norm after legalization on October 17th - I'll table that. This comment came only days after the same spokesperson said it didn't anticipate any problems with supply, and that's tabled as well.

In April, the Minister of Justice promised that the NSLC was "quite satisfied and comfortable" they have enough supply. We are about a week away from legalization and it looks like this government's pot-selling plans are still in a haze. How does this government intend to manage the demand for legalized cannabis that far exceeds the supply it planned on?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. As she would know, the national government has legalized cannabis across the country. She would also know the supply issue is not unique to Nova Scotia.

As you know, there are a number of operations in Nova Scotia that have been permitted by the Department of Health and Wellness to be able to continue to grow this product. We look forward to them continuing to build their businesses and the supply issue will be dealt with as we continue to roll out this new product that Nova Scotians will have access to in a legal way.

MS. MACFARLANE: This is what Nova Scotians know from past comments made by this government. This government was confident only a few short months ago that cannabis sales would put the books back in the black. The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board declared that the tax revenue from recreational cannabis would ring in at over \$20 million this fiscal year. That number was revised though, down by \$5.9 million as

legalization set for July 1st went, of course, up in smoke. Now we have the provincial cannabis retailer casting doubt on its ability to secure supply for Nova Scotians.

Will the Premier admit that his estimates for cannabis tax revenue were never grounded in reality, and has he factored the supply issue into these estimates?

THE PREMIER: I thank the honourable member for her question. I have all the confidence in the world in the budgets that we've presented to this House and so do Nova Scotians. We continue to operate in the fiscal reality of this great province of ours.

The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, the chair of Treasury and Policy Board, continues to make projections to what she believes the revenue will be. We'll continue to work with that. She would also know the cost associated with this product will be borne by taxpayers, whether it's extra policing, extra services required in terms of support to help them do their job on the street. All of those will be borne by the province and we still live by that statement.

We don't see this as a big revenue windfall for the Province of Nova Scotia. We are meeting our obligation to ensure that this product is administered in a safe way to the people of this province.

MS. MACFARLANE: I think the problem is that the numbers keep changing. From the beginning, this government's made-in-Nova Scotia approach to co-locate has been nothing but a fiasco. They were told not to co-locate alcohol and cannabis and they decided to ignore that professional advice. They saw other provinces taking the lead on industry development and helping their municipalities while they remained idle.

The result: Nova Scotia's behind the rest of this country when it comes to federally-licensed producers and now we're facing a cannabis shortage that will drive people right back to the illicit market - something this government said they didn't want to see happen. If this Liberal Government is so inept at the administration of recreational cannabis, how inept will it be when it comes to enforcement?

THE PREMIER: Again, I want to thank the honourable member. She should go back with the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board to sit in her place.

The national government had a position of July 1st that was changed to October 17th. Any prudent government would then change what they believe the income would be. Anyone who actually manages any type of budget would meet and change based on any new circumstances they would have. The honourable member should also know we have an obligation to make those adjustments to notify Nova Scotians based on the fact that the dates had been changed by another level of government.

We're going to continue to work and ensure that this product, when it becomes legalized on October 17th, that we're doing it in a safe way to administer to the people of this province. We'll continue to look for supply like all other Canadian jurisdictions, and we'll continue to make sure that the product will be made available in a safe way to the people of Nova Scotia.

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

PREM. - QEII REDEVELOP.: P3 MODEL RISK - CONFIRM

MR. GARY BURRILL: The Premier continues to refer to the urgency of action as an argument in favour of redeveloping the hospital on a P3 model. We agree that the hospital replacement is an urgent matter and that's why we brought forward the jobs and building plan for upgrades in Capital Health in 2011. The plan provided for the taking down of the Centennial Building and the completion by 2020 of the QEII.

Dr. Drew Bethune, the provincial cancer care medical director who spoke at last week's announcement, spoke in favour of the plan in 2011, calling it a well thought out plan for buildings that meet our patients' needs while using our tax dollars wisely. This plan was on the Premier's desk the moment that he came to office.

Can the Premier explain why it took five full years for this government to bring forward a plan for the redevelopment of the QEII?

THE PREMIER: Because the plan did not meet the needs of Nova Scotians. On top of that, Mr. Speaker, like everything else fiscal when it comes to the NDP, it was nowhere near reality.

MR. BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier's arguments in favour of the P3 redevelopment of the QEII are specious and spurious. It is simply not possible for a private company to develop the hospital as cheaply as the government can. A private company can't borrow money at interest rates that the government can. It will be enormously expensive for us to mitigate the 30-year risks of a private sector health care firm. There is a line in every P3 development for profit that doesn't exist in the contracts for any other building mode.

Why will the Premier just not admit the plain fact that what the government has chosen as a mode for redeveloping our hospital is a more expensive option?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I don't agree with the honourable member's question at all. We continue to go through this process. I have laid out for him the challenges that we have been able to face from neglect. We have a physical piece of infrastructure that has been neglected by successive governments when it came to the investment required. We took this opportunity to work with Nova Scotians to ensure that

we continue to move forward, to ensure that we're providing services to Nova Scotians from one of this province to the other. Only the New Democrats would believe that we should continue to build what we currently have.

The reality of it is the investments we're making in Dartmouth are positive investments, not only for the citizens in the Dartmouth region but also those who live outside of it. The investments that we're making in the Clayton Park and Bayers Lake area are positive investments. We're going to continue to make those. We're going to continue to make sure that we then make an investment at the HI site. Part of that will be done in our traditional build.

But we also know, Mr. Speaker, that when we go through the proper way of scoping out, ensuring that we get the right plan in place - that's why we're taking the next 12 months working with health care providers to ensure that we have the right plan in place - we can do this project on time, on budget, in a P3 model that Nova Scotian taxpayers will own at the end of this deal. We'll continue to put in our suite of infrastructure.

MR. BURRILL: A great range of voices weighed in on this debate when it was held 21 years ago in Nova Scotia, when the Liberals proposed to redevelop our new schools then on a P3 basis. One of the voices that was prominent in that debate was that of John Hamm. John Hamm said at the time that P3 ought to stand for paid the premium price. He warned at the time that in 20 years when those leases expired there would be a price to pay. He was right. The leases expired after 20 years, and we had to pay \$228 million in order to buy our own schools back.

Mr. Speaker, what part of once bitten twice shy does the Premier not understand?

THE PREMIER: Again, I want to go through the process of a P3 model. We're looking forward to continuing to work with consortiums around the world. We want to make investments and try to make sure that we get the right price for the taxpayers of this province. Part of this provision will be to ensure that when this gets handed back to the ownership of the people of this province, it will be in the same condition as the day it opens.

I want to go back to quoting a former Premier, Mr. Speaker. He didn't call me up and ask me to take the P3 school that was in Pictou County, I can tell you that.

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

LAE - N.S. CAMPUSES: SEXUAL VIOLENCE STRATEGY - ENFORCE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: On September 11th, I asked the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education about sexual violence strategies on Nova Scotia campuses. He said each university must have a sexual violence strategy in place and, if they don't, there

will be financial consequences. He didn't say what the penalty would be if universities failed to follow their sexual violence policy.

Is it enough for the minister that our post-secondary institutions submit a plan to his office, or are there penalties for schools that don't comply with their own policies?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for the question. The Department of Labour and Advanced Education works very closely with all the universities in the province. As I did mention before, the penalties that are in place are the increases, and that's if the schools do not have a stand-alone sexual violence strategy. But what we also have to do is, as those strategies are put in place, we work together with the universities as we gain more experience and we tweak them and we try to make them better for the students and to ensure the safety of all students on campus.

MS. MACFARLANE: It is with sadness and frustration this weekend that we read news stories about a young woman at St. Francis Xavier University who recorded a sexual assault, followed on the rules set out by the university, and still felt unsafe at campus. The individual the university judged to be responsible for the assault continues to attend St. F.X. Meanwhile, the young woman who was not told that her assailant would be returning to campus, felt it necessary that she had to transfer to another university.

There seems to be no justice whatsoever in this situation, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the minister: Is he satisfied with how St. F.X. handled this situation and, if not, what is he going to do about it?

MR. KOUSOULIS: I have spoken with St. F.X. in terms of this case because I was very shocked to see it in the news and I was disappointed, as all Nova Scotians would be. St. F.X. did acknowledge that they did not put the victim first, Mr. Speaker. And that's what we do want. We want to put the victim first. We want to protect them and we want them to come forward.

St. F.X. has given an apology to the family. They have refunded all the student's tuition, room-and-board, and all expenses paid for the year. I also asked the department to explore how we can expel students who are accused of sexual violence and who are going through a core process. That's something we're looking into because the victims should feel safe coming forward. We also should have the victims not be at school and have the person they are accusing be there as well.

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

**LAE - SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON CAMPUS :
MIN. RESPONSE - RECONSIDER**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. This week, there have been disturbing reminders in the news that sexual violence continues to be a major challenge on campuses in Nova Scotia. For many of us, it's a reminder of how disappointing and frustrating the minister's response regarding sexual violence on campus has been. Student leaders and both Opposition Parties have called upon the minister to use his legislative powers to insist that universities do more, but the minister has deflected the criticisms and assured us that universities are doing enough.

My question to the minister is this: Will he please reconsider his position and bring legislative changes to ensure that Nova Scotia campuses become safer for students, in particular, for young women who are disproportionately victims of sexualized violence?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, if I thought that legislation alone would solve sexual violence on campuses or in our society, I would bring it forward. But we have legislation in place, the Criminal Code of Canada, and sexual violence still happens.

What we did was embark on a process with all of our universities - changing the culture on campus, urging victims to come forward, teaching what sexual violence is, what consent is. I have committed to student groups, I'll commit to this House that if this does not work, then I will lobby my government and I'm sure my government will be very open to bringing legislative changes forward in terms of sexual violence on university campuses.

MS. ZANN: Well, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, this recent case at St. Francis Xavier University isn't the only one. I've actually spoken personally to a young sexual assault survivor who is attending Dalhousie University who tells me that restorative justice is the route most universities seem to be using. She asks if that may be the cause of low reporting statistics since her attacker only had to do a short, online course and write a 10-page letter. She said it just wasn't enough and he was definitely not banned from campus.

So, Mr. Speaker, student advocates have said that they feel betrayed by this government. The chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students has called the minister's opposition to legislative changes, "liberal hypocrisy at its finest." I will table that.

My question for the minister, again, is: Why won't he just take legislative action to address sexual violence on campus, as students have been requesting and demanding for so long now?

MR. SPEAKER: Before the minister answers the question, the honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River, the word "hypocrisy" is an unparliamentary

term, even if it is within a quote of somebody else. I'll ask you to stand up and retract that statement just before the minister answers.

MS. ZANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will retract it, although it was not my own words but the student's, in writing, in a newspaper article.

MR. SPEAKER: I appreciate that; it's still unparliamentary.

MS. KOUSOULIS: When we embarked on this journey in terms of addressing sexual violence on our campuses, one of the aspects that was brought forward to us is that in the past over 90 per cent of sexually violent conduct is not even reported and that's part of the culture we want to change.

Mr. Speaker, if I thought that legislation would actually stop sexual violence on campuses I would be the first to bring it forward. We know that legislation doesn't solve all our problems. If it did, then we'd bring the legislation forward or it would have been solved a long time ago when sexual violence was made criminal conduct.

Mr. Speaker, what we have embarked on is working with our universities, our partners, to change the culture on campus, to raise awareness. It will work, and it will make changes to the lives of Nova Scotians.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the changes happening and I have committed that if the changes don't happen, we will bring forward legislation.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

E&M - IRVING REF. (SAINT JOHN): SHUTDOWN - GAS SHORTAGE

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Energy. Yesterday the Irving Refinery in Saint John experienced what was described by company officials as a major incident. Fortunately, only minor injuries were reported. But it does raise concerns for Nova Scotians about gas prices as the Saint John refinery is a major supplier of gasoline for Nova Scotia and other jurisdictions in eastern Canada and northeastern U.S.

It is unclear how long the refinery will be out of operation, but even a short-term shutdown could have an effect. Has the minister been briefed on the length of the shutdown and should Nova Scotians expect a gasoline shortage?

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I have not had a full briefing yet on the incident, but I will say that my thoughts are with the families of the injured workers yesterday. I do expect a full briefing on it and I don't expect any changes at this point.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, refinery capacity in North America is a delicate balance. We've seen price spikes here when capacity has been shut down in the Gulf of Mexico due to bad weather. This shutdown is in our own region and the reshuffling of supplies could create shortfalls. Even if there aren't shortfalls, the reduction in supply could create a spike in gasoline prices.

If past supply shortfalls are any indication, how much would Nova Scotians expect to pay for gasoline?

MR. MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, at this point now my number one concern was with those families when the incident took place yesterday. We continue to work with our fuel suppliers, whether they are here locally in the province or across our region. We continue those conversations.

Again, at this point, I don't have any additional information about any gas price changes. I do expect a full briefing of what took place yesterday. But first and foremost, our thoughts are with the families.

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

NSLC - REC. CANNABIS: ONLINE PURCHASES - ACCESS CODE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for the NSLC. Today we learned that the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation plans to require that anyone buying recreational cannabis online needs an access code beforehand. These access codes are not available online, but only in physical NSLC locations. This is a sudden, unexplained change from requiring a signature and a proof of age at the door when a shipment is delivered.

We are just over a week away from legal recreational cannabis and this government has demonstrated once again that it does not have a firm plan in place. My question for the minister: Why suddenly announce this significant verification measure only days before legalization?

HON. KAREN CASEY: When we acknowledged that we would be asking the NSLC to be responsible for the retail of cannabis we did that recognizing they are credible, they focus on social responsibility, they ensure the safety and the security of all those people who are purchasing from them. We believe they have the respect of Nova Scotians, that they are seen to be credible and we believe that NSLC is the right avenue for the purchase of cannabis.

MS. MACFARLANE: From the beginning, this government has insisted it knows best when it comes to the sale and safety of recreational cannabis. It has ignored nearly all best practices and the warnings of experts from across our country. Now this government's

plan to provide cannabis access codes raises the question of what kind of data they are collecting on Nova Scotians purchasing cannabis.

Our provinces across the country are using industry-standard e-commerce platforms like Shopify that have been transparent about how personal data is being collected and stored.

My question to the Minister of Justice is: With all of this government's go-it-alone solutions for legal cannabis, how do we know that cannabis access codes won't end up like the FOIPOP portal?

HON. MARK FUREY: The process that my colleague has identified is actually the last of the process that we have implemented to respond to the federal legalization of cannabis. The process my colleague has referred to in the use of the bar code actually retains little to no data that is not already retained. There is no new additional data provided by Nova Scotia.

We believe this model will be seen as the example in the country. We believe the model will best protect our youth on the front end of the retail model as well as the back end.

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

H&W - NURSING HOMES: STAFF SHORTAGES - AWARENESS

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness.

Recently, situations at nursing homes in Cape Breton were brought to my attention. According to what I've heard, there are staffing shortages in these nursing homes that have reached a critical point. Some patients are only taken out of bed every other day because there is insufficient staff or equipment to get residents up every day.

It is greatly concerning to me that there are elderly Nova Scotians who are needlessly confined to their beds because of undue shortages.

My question to the minister is: Is he aware of this day on/day off practice of patient care and how widespread is it in this province?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: The member raises a point with respect to quality of care in our long-term care facilities. It's a perspective that I and all of government shares. I believe all members of the Legislature do. That's why, last month in September, I announced a panel of experts who have come together to evaluate and come forward with

some evidence-based recommendations on what steps we can take to improve the quality of care in nursing home facilities across the province.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I was told the facilities in question have clean records when it comes to pressure sores. This was their defence for the practice; since they don't have a history of pressure sores, there's nothing to worry about. That's like saying because I haven't had any accidents, I could probably drive with my eyes closed.

The Minister of Health and Wellness is expecting this report on pressure sores from his expert panel, as he just said. My question to the minister is: Will the Minister of Health and Wellness be as quick to implement any recommendations on the pressure sores as the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development was to implement the Glaze report, or will he simply take it under advisement?

MR. DELOREY: I'd like to clarify for the members of the Legislature that this expert panel's scope of review goes well beyond the limited focus of pressure sores. That's one area they will certainly be looking into but, in fact, we have actually taken action already this summer in that area.

We established some people with expertise. We went out, provided support in our facilities to help with assessments, reassessments, some education initiatives, and we've provided additional resources in terms of material but also equipment to help our long-term care facilities. We continue to work in that area to improve the efficiency of providing the supports requested in those facilities with pressure injuries.

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

H&W - COLCHESTER E. HANTS HEALTH CTR.: SANE SERV. - TIMELINE

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. For over a month now I've been asking the minister to respond to a lack of proper treatment available for victims of sexual assault at the Colchester East Hants Health Centre in Truro.

Government has been slow to respond, I have to say. But one of my constituents whose story had been published in media reports emailed the minister personally to share her experience. Last Thursday, October 4th, she received a response from the minister saying that the Premier has now committed to having SANE services available in Truro.

While this is very welcome news, can the minister please tell us when we can expect to have SANE services in Truro?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member bringing the question forward. I don't have a specific time frame. I did get an update last week, and I've requested another one.

I believe we're getting some additional information from the Health Authority today with respect to the discussions about what and how to implement and move forward to ensure that services are made available as soon as possible. It's important for members to realize that the care and the services being provided do require specialized training. You need to have the staff, the nurses, available and lined up to provide the training.

Again, meetings have been ongoing to work with potential service providers to line up how this process and the services will be rolled out in that community.

MS. ZANN: Well, the Colchester Sexual Assault Centre sent a request over a year ago now and heard nothing back from the Health Authority. They re-sent it about a month ago and still heard nothing. Now we're hearing that things are starting to happen.

We also know that there are nurses lined up, ready, who want to take the training. We're set to go. Truro is ready.

Having SANE services in communities across the province is clearly a step in the right direction, but obviously the minister can understand that a timeline is essential. Can the minister assure us that SANE services will be available in Truro before the end of this year?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as I said, work is ongoing. The proposal that was first brought forward last year was a proposal to provide weekend coverage. If we wanted to roll out with just weekend services, perhaps we could have adopted that. But we're continuing our work with the potential service providers to just work out those details and ensure that we get the path forward.

What I can assure the member, and all members here and all residents of the region, is that we'll get this program rolled out to the community as soon as practically feasible and possible.

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

FISH. & AQUACULTURE: INFRASTRUCTURE - ATTENTION

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. Fishing is the lifeblood of our community, especially in Argyle-Barrington, as I'm sure it is in many areas of our province - hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of fresh seafood - lobster, haddock, halibut, and crab, just to

name a few. Many of our ports and wharves are now too small, or in some cases, unsafe to use.

I know that this is a federal issue, but how will the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture ensure that these important pieces of infrastructure get the attention that they so sorely need?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Thank you very much for the very important question. This is an ongoing problem with our fishing industry in the province, and it does fall under Small Craft Harbours federally. Your colleague had brought forward some information about a wharf in Cape Breton and a breakwater in Cape Breton. We're following up with a letter to the federal minister responsible for that, and we'll continue to lobby on behalf of the fishermen in the province.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: There are something like 28 wharves from Cape Forchu around to Baccaro. These are the business parks of our communities. They are too small for the size of vessels or inadequate for the weather we're experiencing, especially during our lucrative lobster season.

Westport, East Pubnico, Stoney Island - I know many other members can list a bunch. I'm sure Saulnierville is in there, and I'm sure there are a number of them as you go around the Digby way.

This can create some real risks for the safety of fishers and their equipment. Will the minister and this government truly lobby our federal government and make them realize that our fishery needs support and requires real investment to ensure the safety of all of our fishers?

MR. COLWELL: Again, thank you for this very important question. It is vital for our fishing community to have the resources they need, in the form of breakwaters and wharves and all the facilities they have to put in place. We have been lobbying and we will continue to lobby the federal government for proper funding to do this.

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

H&W - AUTISM ASSESS.: WAIT TIMES - EXPLAIN

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Krista Huskins is a mom who lives in Liverpool. She waited 18 months to secure an appointment for an Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule for her daughter. Although this assessment has been completed, her daughter will now wait at least an additional six months to participate in the Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention assessment. By contrast, Dylan Meisner, who recently moved to Liverpool from New Brunswick, is the

father of an autistic son. The entire process from ADOS to full participation in the EIBI program in Saint John was only four months.

My question is: Can the minister explain why Nova Scotia parents are forced to wait nearly 24 months for these crucial assessments for autistic children?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for raising this question. We do recognize the value and the importance of early intervention for youth. That's why we continue to invest towards mental health initiatives; the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, investments there as well. As far as the difference between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, I'm not aware of differences in the structure, but I'll certainly take a look to see if they've got something set up in Saint John that's different. It could be just the circumstances of the demand at that particular point in time, as well.

MS. MASLAND: I thank the minister for his response. Mr. Meisner believes had his son been born in Nova Scotia instead of New Brunswick, he would be experiencing the same struggles as Ms. Huskins and thousands of other Nova Scotia families who have an autistic child. Autism Nova Scotia has highlighted that psychologists are the only professionals permitted to perform ADOS assessments in Nova Scotia. The cost for the ADOS assessment can run as high as \$3,000 leaving parents to face both delays and excessive financial costs. My question to the minister is: What steps is the minister taking to address the need for additional professionals who can administer the ADOS test and resolve this immense backlog?

MR. DELOREY: The Nova Scotia Health Authority continues to perform recruitment, as they have the responsibility through legislation to provide the operational services in our health care system. Between the IWK and the Nova Scotia Health Authority, our two health authorities, they provide the operational services. It's through those entities the recruitment of health care professionals takes place. They continue with their efforts, and we as a province work with them to provide incentive programs and initiatives to help support the recruitment efforts.

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

ENVIRON. - NOONANS PROV. BEACH (E. PASSAGE): EROSION - ACTION

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: My question is to the Minister of Environment. For 10 years, people who live near Noonans Provincial Beach in Eastern Passage have been contacting various government departments about the erosion on their beach. In the last decade, residents have not received a satisfactory answer from any level of government and the issue has never been addressed, so they formed an organization. Most recently I contacted the minister's office on behalf of the organization on September 10th. I was told in a response from the department they would address the erosion problem in about two

weeks. The residents are still waiting, so I'm just asking the minister: When can the residents expect a response from the minister and when will corrective action be taken at Noonans Beach?

HON. MARGARET MILLER: I have to admit to the honourable member, I haven't seen that correspondence yet. When I do see it, we will make sure that the information gets out to her as well. We know that beaches and erosion are a big problem around the province; that's why we're talking about our Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act, so there's continuity with all the municipalities in how they deal with the coastal properties. Formerly, in DNR it was also an issue that we're the only one with a breakwater, so it is a continuing issue. We certainly need to find a solution for it and I thank the member for the question.

MS. ADAMS: I thank the minister for her answer. As she just mentioned, erosion of our provincial shoreline continues to be an ongoing challenge. It has a real impact, though, on the people in my community and their property. For instance, one of the constituents who's part of this group lives across the street from the beach. During the last windstorm in January 2018, she ended up with sand and seaweed in her basement. The road was also torn up and this affects both resale value and getting in and out of their community. The damage was so extensive to the road that the municipality had to repair the road, putting the cost from the province's lack of action on their community beaches on to the municipality.

The question to the minister is: Would the minister commit to visiting Eastern Passage to tour the area and to meet with concerned Noonans Beach area residents about what a potential plan of action would be?

MS. MILLER: To discuss the situation again with the flooding, this is not unique to Eastern Passage. It's not unique to any area of Nova Scotia. We're finding the same thing happening on the Eastern Shore and on the South Shore. It's happening in Cape Breton. It's happening in Halifax here, where we have seen different weather patterns bring water and debris right into the city. It's something that's happening across Nova Scotia, and we're going to be working with the municipalities to improve things in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

L&F: LOCAL WOOD MARKETS - EXPAND

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Lands and Forestry. Twelve organizations representing over 2,000 private woodlot owners have endorsed the implementation of the Lahey recommendations, saying it would be good for the forest sector. Private woodlot owners highlight that, "They also are hampered by insufficient markets to support the economic feasibility of carrying out forest improvement work." The Lahey report includes specific recommendations for government to support the

creation of local markets for forest products that will help us to move towards ecological forestry.

My question for the minister is: Will he commit that his government will help expand local wood markets to support ecological forestry?

HON. IAIN RANKIN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question and for her interest in and support for government's endeavour to look at the forestry industry with the Lahey report and move towards a more ecological-based system.

The report has 45 recommendations. Staff continue to go through each one assiduously, and we also meet with our stakeholders. I actually met with the industrial private woodlot owners already. I continue to meet with others. There are opportunities that we can look at. I look forward to continuing those discussions, and we'll move forward when we can.

MS. ROBERTS: The Lahey report put special emphasis on the potential of small-scale wood energy projects. Done right, small-scale heating with wood can provide a highly efficient sustainable local heating source that can replace oil consumption in schools and municipal buildings. The experience in Summerside, P.E.I., shows what can be accomplished.

There is interest from municipalities here in Nova Scotia, like Bridgewater. If some government buildings adopt wood heating systems, it would provide a local, appropriately scaled, and flexible market for low-value wood to help make more ecological harvests possible.

My question for the minister is: Will he work with woodlot owner associations and municipalities to develop a program for using a wood for heat in government buildings?

MR. RANKIN: Again, this is one of the 45 recommendations we have already begun to look at. Even before the Lahey report came out, we have had discussions internally. The member for Clare-Digby as well as the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board have brought this to my attention. It is one I think is a good opportunity, particularly for areas where there is pulpwood and other low-value wood that doesn't have access to markets such as the pulp mills.

Indeed, it is an opportunity that, if it works, we'll have a look at the costs, and we'll look at different sites and see if we can accommodate it through the tendering process with our departments.

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

TIR - TOWN OF PORT HAWKES.: ACTIVE TRANSPORT. ROUTES - SAFETY

MS. ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, the Town of Port Hawkesbury is partnering with the province in the Destination Reeves Street pilot project. This project is multi-layered, with one aspect aiming to reduce four lanes to three along the town thoroughfare, using the road diet concept, with space devoted to active transportation. While I admire the intent, and certainly welcome beautification and active transportation, I worry about the safety and potential negative impacts of these changes. Reeves Street is a busy street for commercial activity because Reeves Street is part of the busy 100-Series Highway.

Despite assurances of safety, my constituents question the wisdom of building bike lanes next to large transport truck traffic. Why is the province reducing lanes to install active transportation routes on a 100-Series Highway?

HON. LLOYD HINES: I thank the member opposite for the question. I want to congratulate the Town of Port Hawkesbury, in particular, for stepping forward and looking to improve their community by taking the industrial nature of Reeves Street and transforming it into an active transportation corridor which will complement all the citizens of Port Hawkesbury, in particular, and all the users. From our perspective of course, we're interested primarily in safety.

MS. PAON: Mr. Speaker, a thank you to the minister who seemed a bit surprised by my question. I just want to make sure he understands that Reeves Street is in fact part of the 100-Series Highway.

The concerns of my constituents over this project go beyond the obvious safety issues. While consultation was held with the community of Port Hawkesbury, no consultation was extended into the other communities in Cape Breton-Richmond. A road diet initiative on this section of highway will impact local traffic and traffic using it as a highway - because it is a highway, the only highway access into the rest of Cape Breton-Richmond. This has serious impacts on communities further down the line. Will the minister commit to put the road diet aspect of this project on hold until the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal consultations with other communities and business owners in Cape Breton-Richmond occur?

MR. HINES: My apologies, Mr. Speaker. The previous statement wasn't addressed to any ministers, so I thought maybe one of my colleagues might like to take it. In any case, the matter has gotten wide (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

MR. HINES: The matter has gotten wide consultation in the communities, in a lot of the greater communities. There have been a lot of public meetings and I've received

tremendous support for this particular project from people who are outside of the town itself. At the end of the day, this is a project being put forward by the town and, in the absence of any change in their direction, we continue to support what they're planning on doing, which is a big upgrade for that particular section of road.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

H&W: DART. NURSE PRACTITIONERS - UPDATE

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I bet everyone on the government side is paying attention now. In the spring, I asked the Minister of Health and Wellness for more details about which Dartmouth practices were receiving the nurse practitioners announced by the minister in March. The minister indicated he'd get back to me on the locations of those practices and, now, it's October and I'd like to be able to tell my constituents the locations.

I don't have to remind the minister, I hope, of the significant pressures Dartmouth is facing from the doctor shortage impacting our province. I will remind the minister that my constituents are anxious to know when and where they can access resources promised by the government.

My question is this: Can the minister confirm where the nurse practitioners announced for Dartmouth seven months ago have been placed?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, it's timely that the member raises this question. In fact, we've been reviewing the information over this week to identify exactly where, not just in Dartmouth, but across the province and the status of those. So, I can advise the member that not just his community, but other communities, will be getting an update in the very near future.

MR. HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for that response and I look forward to finding out the information regarding those locations.

As the minister would know from our exchanges in the spring, 40 per cent of the family doctors in Dartmouth will be retiring over the next five years, and the minister and this government have encouraged Nova Scotians without a family doctor to add themselves to the need of family practice wait-list. But the number of individuals on that list in the Central Zone is closing in on 30,000.

Residents of Dartmouth are discouraged to see this number grow month after month. My question is this: Can the minister tell the people of Dartmouth the net impact of these new nurse practitioners in terms of new patients particularly when every week we hear of another doctor retiring or leaving?

MR. DELOREY: Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that these collaborative practices, as well as the supports that government provides to practitioners through family practice nurses, nurse practitioners and other health care professionals like social workers, therapists, physical therapists, and occupational therapists - it's the groups that come forward to request and work with the Nova Scotia Health Authority to identify what composition makes the most sense.

[2:45 p.m.]

The impact and the effect varies from practice to practice because indeed the complements do vary, depending on the teams that are pulled together.

I assure the member that I've been to practices across the province, including in Dartmouth, and they speak very positively about the impacts of their ability to perform more services for the good people of Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

H&W: PHARMACARE PROG.: PRESCRIPTION COVERAGE - REFUSAL

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, local family physicians and internists have shared their frustration with me about our Pharmacare program. Family physicians do a minimum of 10 years of post-secondary education and internists do a minimum of 14 years of post-secondary education. Yet when they prescribe a medication to best treat a patient, an employee at Medavie Blue Cross, who is not a doctor, will often deny a patient the medication their doctor has ordered.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Is he willing to examine this practice and seek to stop it?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as the member may be aware, in the province, as with other provinces and territories across the country, we do have Pharmacare programs. Indeed, the list of medications that would be approved that fall within that list are actually in the last number of years being informed by clinical research done on a pan-Canadian level. That advice comes forward to help identify what drugs provinces are likely to adopt. That information is not made really at the bureaucratic level, but indeed with clinical research done at a national level.

MS. SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia is the only province that has not approved a certain diabetic medication, even though this organization he has pointed to has recommended it. One of the most common chronic conditions that medications are prescribed for, and then denied, is diabetes.

Last week one of my constituents, who did not have access to diabetic medication, sadly had to have urgent surgery to have a limb amputated. Instead of focusing on lower costs of prevention and medical management, this government is now covering the cost of hospitalization and surgery but, most important, a man is dealing with the loss of his limb.

My question to the minister is: Is he willing to look at the overall costs of diabetes, commit to a diabetes strategy that focuses on prevention and management, and stop Pharmacare from preventing doctors from having optimal medical management?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that indeed the process for the member's benefit, indeed all of the members, that goes through, there are actually about three or four steps that pharmaceutical products go through in jurisdictions across the country. The first is Health Canada, which essentially does an approval to ensure that the product doesn't cause harm. Then there's the scientific review that the CADTH pan-Canadian assessment does to verify if there's efficacy or value, that the product works and provides value beyond existing products. We enter into negotiations on a pan-Canadian level, as well, to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies and then, finally, after all those steps are done, moves into the provincial jurisdiction to add to our formulary.

I have been working, Mr. Speaker, and continue within the department to improve our response rate once drugs get to that level.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

MUN. AFFS. - HEALTH CARE SERV.: MUN. FUNDING - ADEQUACY

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Last week Halifax Regional Council decided to allocate up to \$0.5 million from property taxes to fund the Halifax Hospice, but before voting, councillors expressed concerns that they were being forced to take on a provincial responsibility.

Is the Minister of Municipal Affairs concerned that municipalities are bearing the financial burden of health care services that the province is failing to fund adequately?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, each and every municipality across Nova Scotia and their respective councils have the ability to make the decisions that they best see to serve their constituents. We count on them to do so and we support them as they do make those decisions, and we'll be there to support them right along as time flies by.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 29.

Bill No. 29 - Labour Standards Code.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 29, an Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Labour Standards Code, now be read a third time and do pass.

The proposed amendments we are making to the Labour Standards Code will provide employees with enhanced leaves to better support and care for their families.

Mr. Speaker, we know Nova Scotians want to feel secure in their jobs when they need to care for a new child or a sick family member. As I've said before, parental leave will now be extended to 77 weeks, and Nova Scotia is one of the few areas in the country where adoptive parents will continue to receive this benefit.

These changes will not only support Nova Scotians and their families, but will also better align provincial legislation with the recently updated federal EI benefits.

The proposed amendments in this bill will provide Nova Scotians the time they need to care for their families, knowing their jobs will be there when they return.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

MR. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to respond to this bill. I know I'm new in the House, and when the minister responds and closes third reading on this, I fully support our colleagues in the Opposition on their attempt to get the amendments in last week.

If the minister could respond and please let me know, as a new member here, what was the big issue? We all believed in and heard from him that as this goes through it will

cover what was in our colleague's request, so maybe he could explain why we couldn't accept it into this bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, when this bill came to the Law Amendments Committee, on which I am privileged to sit, we came forward to the chairman before the committee even began and I said to the chairman, I think there must have been a mistake, I want to give you this amendment that we are bringing forward because I think there must have been a mistake.

We were told by the government that they were introducing legislation to mirror the federal legislation. Our interpretation of that was now that there is a more expanded leave, and that leave requires 17 weeks or 600 hours of work to be eligible, that it would only stand to reason that to mirror that legislation would mean that after working that eligibility period to receive your benefits - 600 hours, 15 to 17 weeks, depending on how you do the math - that your job would be protected.

It became quickly and sadly clear that it wasn't a mistake at all, although it did seem to take some of the government members on that committee by surprise. This government not only was not introducing legislation to mirror the period of job protection with the period of eligibility, but it was introducing brand-new legislation to put Nova Scotia at the very bottom of the pack for job protection for women.

Just to reiterate for the benefit of the members of this House: in B.C., New Brunswick, and Quebec there is no minimum time period for your job to be protected; in Alberta the time period is 90 days; in Ontario the time period is 13 weeks; in Saskatchewan, P.E.I., and Newfoundland and Labrador the time period is 20 weeks; in Manitoba it is 7 months; and here and in Nunavut it's 1 year.

So we have a brand-new piece of legislation that makes this the least attractive province to be a working mother in all of Canada. Congratulations to the government on that point.

We've already said a lot about this bill, but I will reiterate a couple of points. One is that for anyone who has been following the news south of the border and around the world, I think it goes without saying that it's a tough time to be a woman.

What we are seeing is a galvanizing of energy around very egregious stories and issues that have been brought forward through the MeToo movement and other channels. I would argue that while people get very upset about the outcomes, the stories they hear, or the injustices they see that are blatant and clear. I would argue that we have a role in those, here in this Legislature. Our role is to change the system so that those outcomes don't occur.

One of the issues we see is the continually diminished credibility and ability for advancement of women. We know that we have fewer women who are board chairs, we have fewer women running Fortune 500 companies, we have fewer women in politics, we have fewer women everywhere you look that people look to as a place of power, with a very notable exception of the caring professions.

I want to argue that it's precisely legislation like this, which frankly should be uncontroversial. In a liberal democracy, in 2018, the amendment that the NDP brought forward should be uncontroversial, Mr. Speaker. There should be no question about this.

This isn't something outlandish. We're not being Communists by asking for this amendment. What we're doing is we're arguing for basic equity, basic principles of equity that I would argue are already recognized by almost all of the members in this House.

Mr. Speaker, we have a role to play in equality, and right now we have a choice, which is to erect a barrier, which again is shocking. But in this day and age what we're doing is introducing regressive legislation when it comes to women's ability to participate in the workforce, or we can help, we can be helpful in this regard. I think it's clear where I think we're landing on this one.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this is an equity issue. With all due respect, yes, sure, business owners have to be able to adapt to changing conditions, but we have a lengthy maternity leave that is already enshrined in our laws in Canada and has been for quite a long time. And we have business owners who do and in many cases, happy to oblige their workers in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, to argue that I think as the minister said in his opening comments on the introduction of this bill, I believe he said it would be an abuse of his power to set a lower limit without consulting. Frankly, I think that's absurd. That's exactly what the minister's job is: the minister's job is to ensure that this legislation is in accord with the principles of equities and in accord with the federal legislation and lets women into the workforce in Nova Scotia and allows them to be at home with their children.

I don't think he's accomplishing much of that, Mr. Speaker. I, myself, would not have been able to take what I think was a well-earned maternity leave with my second child, had this legislation been in place.

I know that my colleagues have some words to say about this, Mr. Speaker. In closing I just want to urge the government to sometimes, occasionally, use this Chamber in the way that it was intended. I was asked by the media today, how do you feel about the fact that the government just never gives an inch; that no matter what amendments you put forward, no matter what conversation you try to have, no matter how constructive the Opposition tries to be, that you never made any progress - how do you feel about that?

I said well, I feel not at all surprised and deeply disappointed at the very same time. I was elected by my constituents to come here and try to participate in the process by which we make laws in this province. I know there are many people in this House who prefer to be in their constituencies, who feel that that is the place where they can make a difference. In many cases that is true, but I would argue that all of us have a responsibility to show up in this Chamber and to do what we can.

Speaking for myself and maybe some of my colleagues on this side of the House, sometimes it feels pretty useless to be over here because it feels like even when we introduce a very common-sense item for discussion, we are continually shut down. In this particular case, as I said when I started, this should be an uncontroversial amendment - to make it so that women can take a maternity leave, once they are eligible for it, and have a job to come back to. In 2018, in Nova Scotia with a Liberal Government that talks about their commitment to gender equality, should be uncontroversial. Frankly, it's disappointing and disheartening to be standing where I stand today, making these remarks.

[3:00 p.m.]

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

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I too am quite disappointed to have to stand here and try to defend why it's okay for a woman to have a job to come back to after she has a baby. I can't even believe - like I've said many times - why we even talk about some of the things we talk about in this Chamber.

The stated goal of this bill is to adjust the pregnancy and parental-leave provisions under the Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code to align with changes made to the federal program of parental leave through EI. While I think it's reasonable, given our understanding of gender and the changes we have proudly made to the Vital Statistics Act, that we should be talking more about "pregnant people" and "parents," I think that in this debate we need to talk about women.

Women are more likely than men to take time away from employment to care for children. Women are more likely than men to feel the impact from that in terms of lost seniority and being passed over for promotions or raises. On average, Nova Scotian women earn \$15,000 less than men each year. The earnings gap between men and women in Nova Scotia persists despite the educational attainment of women.

Women in Nova Scotia represent 100 per cent of those employed in 6 out of the 10 lowest-paid professions; 61 per cent of employees who earn minimum wage or less are women. It seems to be a theme.

In the entire history of having elected representatives in this province, only 51 women have ever been members in this Legislature, and 17 of us are here today. The

dominance of male voices in this House is abundantly clear in the way that legislation has been and continues to be written, and that is shameful.

The way parental leave works in this country means it is already not a financially-viable option for many parents. Few people can use the full time allowed and live on only a portion of their earnings - especially if they're a single parent. They certainly don't need the added concern about whether or not they even have a job to come back to.

Imagine anyone in this House, especially the women or the men who are parents, for their loved one - to think about whether you should have a baby or have a job to come back to. What says that that's acceptable in the Province of Nova Scotia in 2018, and how can this Liberal Government think it's okay?

The way this bill is currently written, a pregnant person could be eligible for parental leave through EI, but their job would not be protected. Imagine, in 2018 we are not protecting jobs for women to have babies, so we are asking new parents to take the risk of a leave period with only part of their salary and no guarantee that they'll have a job when they come back to work. How they would feed their child after they could lose their job, or send their child to daycare, is unknown to any of us.

As written, this bill makes us one of the worst in the country when it comes to job protections for new parents. What a way to be recognized.

Let's talk about that. We're being recognized in Nova Scotia as one of the worst because we are discriminating against women for their ability to have a child and have a job protected. Our caucus put forward a very reasonable amendment, as my colleague spoke to. I remember having the conversation in our caucus office and saying, "You know what? We don't care about a win here. We care about what's right. So let's try to talk to the government and let them know that this is morally and ethically disgraceful."

We don't want the win. We just want good laws. We want good legislation, and we couldn't even get that. This amendment was not supported by the government, and as I said, this is disgraceful.

To say that consultation is required is offensive. Look around. Let's have a conversation. Consultation with whom, and when, and where? This government talks a lot about consultation, but we never, ever hear the results. With new parents, to see if they would like to know what their peace of mind would be at the thought of losing their jobs? With businesses, to see if they can afford to protect their jobs?

As members of this House, we have an obligation to make laws that protect those who are vulnerable, and an obligation to raise the standards so that Nova Scotia can be a more equitable place. This bill, as it is presented today, falls extremely short and I am

embarrassed to be part of this House right now that is going to pass such a discriminatory bill against women and their choice to have a baby.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I want to add my voice to that of my colleagues in the House speaking on this bill.

Last week, when we took the bill to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills, I was outraged at the result of my colleague's plea for common sense - a passionate plea for common sense. I was outraged. I couldn't believe it and it was one of those moments where I was like, wow, this is actually how this works. It was profoundly disappointing. I was shocked but, then, over the weekend, when I talked about it to people and I thought about it for a while, I remembered that this is the same government that refuses to offer paid leave for victims of domestic violence or intimate-partner violence - at least, they refused to put it into legislation. They might put it into the regulations down the road and we'll talk about that later but, in essence, in this room, they refused to allow that to happen in legislation.

It's the same government who refuses to put into legislation protections for vulnerable females on our campuses of which there are many in this province. And let's not forget that it's also the same government that does a very bad job at bargaining with the health care unions and teachers unions - most of which are made up of women. So actually, with sober second thought, I'm not that surprised at all what we're talking about here.

My colleague mentioned this and I want to talk about it again for a little bit. For the past couple of weeks, we have been watching or last week in particular, we've been watching what's been going on in the United States. The media is consumed with Dr. Christine Blasey Ford and with Brett Kavanaugh and for good reason. It's an outrage, what has just happened in the United States, but people will look to the States and go, oh, my God, it's so good that we don't live there. Wow, it's such an outrage. But, in fact, I would like to say - and I'm not being dramatic here - that there's not much difference about what is going on with that and what is going on right now.

If people think it's outrageous for me to suggest that there is a link between that hearing or whatever it's called and what's happening today in this Chamber, the link is one word - I would suggest it's called patriarchy. (Interruption) My colleague didn't get into Hansard but she said dictatorship - I'll say patriarchy. We should be in Nova Scotia just as outraged by what is happening today in this House as what people are with what's going on in the States.

You know, it's like we're batting around months and days and weeks and you may consider this a small thing, Mr. Speaker, but in fact it's not. It's all these tiny little things that are adding up to suggest that what's happening now is that women in Nova Scotia are

living in a place where they face a giant wage gap as my colleague has just described, and where women discover that they actually must choose between having a child or having a career. Again, in 2018, that just doesn't seem okay anymore.

Nova Scotia is basically the worst place in Canada to be a woman right now. For all the comments that this government makes about historical numbers of members of the Legislature that are women and for the protections of our wives and daughters as our Premier loves to say, the government has actually not stepped up very much for women in my experience in this House. Women in this province should be very angry. This is a systemic problem and women should be angry about it.

People often ask each other what their favourite season is and I would like to say, if anyone asks me, my favourite season to quote the great Facebook meme that's going on right now, is the fall of the patriarchy and I hope it comes soon.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to join with my female counterparts in the NDP caucus to speak briefly to this legislation.

What I would like to suggest is that there are many things that are worth consulting on - this particular potential tweaking to the regulations does not merit consultation. As my colleague from Dartmouth South has said, it's quite clear and evident what could have, and should have, been in this legislation to make it mirror the federal legislation - to make the job protection mirror the employment insurance eligibility. That does not merit consultation.

What would merit consultation? How about how we expand benefits to parents who are precariously employed? To women who are cobbling together various, and extremely poorly-paid in this province, minimum wage jobs? Who cannot anticipate parenthood with any degree of security as they embark on that very important part of their lives.

Why should we want to consult on that? Because, in the end, as this government in particular likes to talk about in the context of pre-Primary, we need to be taking care of all children. As soon as children are born, they are citizens of this province and they deserve to have time with their parents. They deserve to have parents who are not stressed by poverty.

If this government wanted to be progressive and wanted to work towards truly better outcomes for not just women, but all parents and all children born in this province, there are many conversations that could be entered into in the public realm in a truly consultative and forward-looking manner to ensure that children have a great start in life. That doesn't begin at four years old. It begins long before that and in many, many ways,

children are being left behind before they even get to pre-Primary. I welcome the invitation to consultation, but I would like to be on something that merits that public conversation.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I too am going to join my sisters here and stand up and talk about this bill: Bill No. 29, the amended Labour Standard Code. As has been said, the stated goal of this bill is to adjust the parental and pregnancy leave provisions under the Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code to align with changes made to the federal program of parental leave through EI.

I have to say, having travelled around the world quite a bit before beginning this political career almost 10 years ago, some governments really prioritize the well-being of new parents, both straight and same sex - they grant them more than a year of leave at full pay in some countries. In Quebec at one point, when they realized that they had an aging population, they actually paid families to have children and supported women and their husbands in taking time from work to bring up those children.

If someone is going to think of starting a family, unfortunately Nova Scotia wouldn't be the first one to come to mind. Also, unfortunately, we are a greatly aging population - a population in a province where there are more people dying than being born at this point in time. So it's very crucial for us to try to get as many young people and children as possible in order to try and halt this tsunami - this silver tsunami.

There are 10 countries in the world that have the best pregnancy leave imaginable and sadly, Canada is nowhere near that. I lived in Sweden for a number of years as some people might know, and many women there say that they are just so happy to have a baby there. I have Canadian friends who've actually taken jobs over in Sweden because they wanted to have a baby. They went over there and accepted jobs there so that they could have a baby in that system. They say that it's just so good. One of my cousins lives there, and his wife is Swedish. She told me about it, and it's amazing.

[3:15 p.m.]

It turns out that there are countries even better than Sweden. The first one is Finland. Expecting mothers in Finland can start their maternity leave 7 weeks before their estimated due date; after that, the government covers 16 additional weeks of paid leave through a maternity grant regardless of whether the mother is a student, unemployed, or self-employed. The country also offers 8 weeks of paid paternity leave. That's fabulous. After a child turns 3, parents can also take partial care leave, in which they split time between home and work, and that lasts until the child starts second grade. That is something that we should all think towards and try and work towards.

Denmark, of course, would be the second country. New mothers in Denmark get a total of 18 weeks of maternity leave, 4 weeks before the birth and 14 weeks after - all at full pay. During the 14-week period, the father can also take 2 consecutive weeks off. From that point on, parents can split 32 additional weeks of leave however they see fit. They can extend the leave for another 14 weeks if the child or parent gets sick. By law, the government covers 52 weeks of pay, though not always at full salary.

Following them is Sweden at third in the world. New parents in Sweden are entitled to 480 days of leave at 80 per cent of their normal pay; that's on top of the 18 weeks reserved just for mothers, after which the parents can split up the time however they choose. Sweden is actually unique in that fathers also get 90 paid paternity days reserved just for them - that idea is to promote bonding between the father and the child during a time when mothers are getting most of the attention.

I have to say this is partly why the Scandinavian countries are so healthy. They put a great deal of effort into making families feel that they are looked after, that they are cared for by their government. They're encouraged to take time off; they're encouraged to take family time. Work weeks are usually short work weeks compared to the rest of the world, and that's because families are told to take some time to go out and smell the roses. Spend time with each other; spend time in nature, get exercise, bicycle, and things like that. That is why the Scandinavian countries have some of the best longevity in the world and healthiest seniors.

I'll just go through quickly the countries that come after those first three. You would be surprised, but Belgium is the next one, Iceland after that, Serbia after that, and Norway after that. I'm going to mention something interesting about Norway - their system is flexible, and it's generous - mothers can take 35 weeks at full pay or 45 weeks at 80 per cent pay, and fathers can take between zero and 10 weeks, depending on their wives' income. Together, parents can receive an additional 46 weeks at full pay or 56 weeks at 80 per cent of their income. I think something like this is very encouraging for parents as well.

After that, it is Hungary, Estonia, and Lithuania. Those are the top 10 countries.

So in Lithuania, at the bottom of those 10, new mothers get 18 weeks of fully paid leave, new fathers get 4 weeks, and together the parents get an additional 156 weeks to share. For the shared portion, the parents can decide whether to have it paid out at 100 per cent for the first 52 weeks until the child turns one, or 70 per cent for the first 104 weeks until the child is two years old, and the remaining weeks are unpaid.

Nordic countries really do receive a lot of attention for their generous leave policies, and with good reason. Being in the northern region ourselves here in Nova Scotia, I don't see why we can't follow this kind of thought pattern and try and have legislation that is much more progressive and that would bring people to Nova Scotia. It would bring people

to want to have families here in Nova Scotia. It would give students who are graduating an opportunity to have a child.

I've lived in the United States, too, where they have nothing and where they have to have insurance just to have a baby. There's so many people who can't even afford to have one because they don't have any insurance, or they have little insurance. I say why don't we be a leading, guiding beacon for people and do something different? Think outside the box. Don't just be mediocre. We can be the best. We have the brains. We have the talent. We have exciting, wonderful people, but we need to keep them here and we need to attract more.

With that, I'll say I'm disappointed with this, as my colleagues are. As written, this bill makes us one of the worst in the country when it comes to job protections for new parents. I believe that our caucus put forward a reasonable amendment to ensure that if a pregnant person or parent was eligible for leave through EI, that they would also have job protection.

This amendment was not supported by this government and I have to say this is shameful. To say that consultation is required, sure. I usually say consultation is required for most things, but we don't need consultation in this. All you have to do is check out what's going on around the rest of the world. You do not have to build another bicycle, it has already been built. Let's just get the best bicycle we can get and let's get on it and ride.

MR. SPEAKER: The member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm rising for just a few moments. I want to thank my colleagues in our caucus who just spoke, not only for taking the time here to try to get across to the government members, but get across to Nova Scotians that it's important that we recognize the experience and the values I think we want here, as a province, in Nova Scotia.

It's no secret I've been in the Legislature the longest. My colleagues often turn to me for advice on how we manoeuvre through legislation and what we should do about this or that. I have to admit I've listened intently to my colleagues who made a valid point on this legislation. We're not asking to eliminate every single moment of waiting for receiving these benefits. We're just looking at the government to look at this in a reasonable approach. I think the amendment that we took was just that.

Mr. Speaker, my caucus members have lived this, they know this, they experienced this. I never have. My wife worked through her career with two children. I remember my first child, she had only six months off. Then, of course, with my son she had the year off. I hope the government recognizes that this is really the right thing to do. I know they didn't support the amendment, but if they decide to move in this direction, they should move quickly and show Nova Scotians and the women in Nova Scotia that we respect the

challenges and barriers that each and every one of them face when they try to have a career and a family. I, for one, want to support my members on making sure that that happens here in Nova Scotia.

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

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I just want to briefly add to what my great friends have said about this. We hear so often in the public discourse of Nova Scotia about the demographic challenges before us, about the need to place families in a position where it will seem a reasonable reading of their situations to move forward with establishing a family.

As often as we hear this, we reflect on the actual concrete situation of young people for whom this is a matter of choice that is on their screen. We reflect on the number of our people who are experiencing lower wages, which is greater than anywhere else in the country. We reflect on the amount of student debt that is carried by people in their late twenties, early to mid thirties, making these kinds of decisions, the worst of anywhere in the country.

How else can we think but that it is essential for us, as a province, if we are to move forward that we should make the life move of bringing children into the world something that is not ruled out of the equation for employment or financial reasons. Nothing but this is what has been said by all the members of New Democratic Party caucus. Nothing but this is what the people ought to be able to expect from the government of the province.

At the same time, we hear continually about the need for us in Nova Scotia to be competitive nationally. So, no one, as we have spoken around this amendment at the various stages of this debate, no one in our caucus has said that Nova Scotia ought to be in the position where we would have by far the best protections, that people would have to be in a job for the least time in order to have that job protected while they accessed EI maternity benefits. That's not an argument that has been heard. We haven't put forward a number of weeks that a person ought to be in a position of employment before their job would be protected that would have placed us second, third, or fourth.

In fact, the position that we have put forward would hardly have qualified Nova Scotia to be in the middle of the pack of the rest of the country of the provisions for job protection, how long a woman would need to work in her job before or a parent would need to work in their job before they could access EI parental benefits. But what we cannot countenance, what makes no sense, is to think that a government would bring forward in 2018 a version of what they call - which is not mirroring legislation, which places us the very worst province in the country.

We don't look to our government to bring forward positions venting our labour standards that are going to, off the bat, make us the very worst province there is in the

entire country. So, I want simply to say how deep my pride of association is with the members of the caucus of this Party who have brought clarity to this question and how deep is my growing contempt for the incapacity of the government to recognize wisdom when it is presented to them.

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

The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by saying our government is in complete agreement with the Opposition that the amount of time an individual, a woman, a man should wait and have job protection when they are going to take a maternity leave should be lower. The slight difference is in how we're going to get there and what date we're going to land on.

What we brought forward here is a bill that extended the leave from one year to 77 weeks for maternity leave. That is what we mirrored of the federal government. The federal government, in terms of when someone is eligible for that leave, was 6 months. They never changed it. In Nova Scotia, we were at a year and that is too long. That was set in place in 1992 and the only reason it came to light is because it wasn't in the bill. We never changed that. What happened was somebody came and presented at Law Amendments Committee and they said that, you know, we might want to look at when someone is eligible for leave because, right now, we're the longest in the country. I'm glad that person came forward because we agree with him.

Now, we've had motions brought forward to mimic where the federal government is at 6 months, but we might land somewhere a lot better than that. So, what we have committed to as a government we didn't want to hold this bill up because we do want parents to have the 77 weeks of protected leave. So, what we did is we, as the government, put an amendment in it that we could shorten the leave for when you are eligible in regulation. We've already started consultation on that and I have committed to this House that the change will be shortened by Christmastime of this year.

Again, I would like to reiterate nothing had changed in terms of that one year. It was in place in 1992. It was not addressed in this bill. When we said we mirrored the federal government, we mirrored them on the length of the leave and that went from one year to 77 weeks and that is greatly appreciated. I had many, many phone calls from expecting parents on when that would take place. I had many calls from parents who are already on paternity leave and they said will this apply to my situation and the answer is, yes, you will be protected as soon as this bill receives Royal Assent.

[3:30 p.m.]

With those few words, I would like to say to the House that there will be a shorter period of when you are eligible for your leave brought forward. I'm not sure what that period will be, but in terms of where the federal government is, they are at 6 months. I believe the next longest province is 7 months, and we did hear that many provinces were at no time at all - that the day you start work, if you go on parental leave, you will be afforded the job protection.

One aspect I'd also like to point out, and it wasn't in this bill because we had it from before in other bills, is that Nova Scotia is the only province I believe in all of Canada that protects adoptive parents in having a protected leave, and that will be extended to 77 weeks.

I'm in agreement with the Opposition and we will have a shorter leave, but I am not sure that 6 months is the right shorter leave and that maybe it should be shorter.

Mr. Speaker, what I'd like to do is have quick consultation, which has already started, and we will bring forward that shorter leave within the next 6 weeks, and if anybody in the Opposition would like to be part of that consultation, I welcome them to it.

With those few words, I rise to close third reading on Bill No. 29.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 29. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

Bill No. 39 - Cemetery and Funeral Services Act and Embalmers and Funeral Directors Act.

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

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 39 be now read a third time and do pass.

Last Spring we committed to amend legislation and implement more stringent regulations in the funeral home industry. Simply put, we were determined to strengthen oversight.

What happened at the Serenity Funeral Home in the Valley was both tragic and absolutely unacceptable. We have to do our best to ensure that this never happens again to any Nova Scotian families. We brought forward significant changes, as follows:

Introducing stronger rules to improve the care and handling of the deceased in both funeral homes and crematoriums: Amendments will require funeral homes and crematoriums to label human remains as soon as they are taken into custody. We will inspect the province's funeral homes and crematoriums to help ensure that the new rules are followed.

Increasing the accountability of and consumer representation on the Nova Scotia Board of Registration of Embalmers and Funeral Directors: There will be two positions for consumer representation on the board. This means non-industry members, including the registrar, will increase the 43 per cent of the board. The amendment aligns us with other provinces and will enhance the funeral profession's ability to regulate itself in the public interest.

Significantly increasing the fine amounts for funeral home staff and owners: The fines for individuals will increase from \$500 to \$25,000; fines for businesses will increase from \$500 up to \$300,000; and licensees will be able to be prosecuted for offences up to three years after an incident happens or the registrar becomes aware of that incident.

Finally, and as a result of significant input from Gary Bennett, the member for Kings North, and the member for Inverness, we legislated changes to the board bylaws so that the family participation in hearings will be ensured. I can tell the House that the board has actually already changed those bylaws in anticipation of this legislation. That happened on Friday.

The steps we are taking today will help protect families during one of the most difficult times in their life and will improve the public trust and accountability in the funeral home industry.

It will improve the province's funeral industry, including the processes and increased protection for consumers.

I would like to mention that the Funeral Board and the Funeral Services Association of Nova Scotia have been very helpful with respect to getting this legislation right and they have been very much appreciative of the Bennett family, the struggles they've gone through, and that we hopefully have arrived at a better place today.

I want to thank all stakeholders for their participation in this process and for the Funeral Board and the Funeral Services Association's commitment to protecting the funeral home industry but, more importantly, for Nova Scotian families.

This has been a long journey for the Bennett family and the other families impacted, and I would like to thank the Opposition for their input. We just wanted to land in a place where Gary could be proud of what we did here in the Legislature, and I think we have gotten there.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, we will be supporting this legislation. I think there are some great improvements here, especially in terms of accountability. I think they are welcomed by the industry. I think about the increases in the fines. Previous to now, I think the fines were almost insignificant. Now, they will be significant. Now, they will have meaning. I know the board and the industry support that. They want their industry to have integrity.

I want to thank the board and the minister for makings some changes to the bill for Mr. Bennett, for recognizing what he went through. I also want to mention in terms of the two consumer advocates who are added to the board. I think it's important for accountability and important to reflect the place consumers have and the interests they have in this legislation and in representing the public. We all deal with funeral homes at some point in our lives. We want them to be good experiences, so we thank the minister for that.

We will be supporting the legislation.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: I, too, would like to speak in favour of the bill. First of all, as the minister knows, I've expressed my appreciation that amendments were made to address the concerns that Gary Bennett had. As I said in the House previously, it was Gary Bennett who sought me out and, right from the very beginning, he said he had two goals in seeing the legislation come forward.

His first goal was that this would never happen to another family. As I stated previously in the House, the first part of the bill addressed that to Mr. Bennett's satisfaction with the rules around labelling of bodies. He also expressed dissatisfaction with the levels of fines. He was pleased to see that.

The second part of his experience was dissatisfaction with the way the inquiry was held with the Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors. Mr. Bennett felt that the family should be able to participate and hear the other side of the case and he advocated quite strongly for that. I appreciate the fact the minister has been willing to make the changes.

I know it's unfortunate that it takes a circumstance like what happened to the Bennett family to shed light on this industry and maybe modernize some things that were waiting to be done. I do want to express my admiration for Gary Bennett for his willingness to come here on a number of occasions, without me prompting him, and that he really did have those goals. I do believe the bill has largely, or entirely, addressed those goals.

Of course, our hope is no other family ever goes through this again. I think it's a very rare incident. I don't expect that. I'm sure there will be other cases where families come forward and they'll have an easier time participating in an inquiry, if there is an inquiry with the Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors. I join my colleague, the member for Inverness in saying that we will support the bill.

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 two members who just spoke. I think we did a good job on the first round of this legislation, but it was the input from those two members and from Gary that really made it the best possible piece of legislation it could be. I do appreciate their efforts, and it is true that we can work together here to get good things done for the people of the province.

With that, I'd like to close debate on Bill No. 39.

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

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 49.

Bill No. 49 - Gaming Control Act.

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

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move that Bill No. 49, the Gaming Control Act, be now read a third time and do pass.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank my colleagues for the comments that were presented during second reading. This legislation is enabling legislation, it provides the authority to amend the regulations in consultation with stakeholders: Addiction Services; the Responsible Gaming Council; the Department of Health and Wellness; the Department of Justice; as well as an outreach to those who may have a problem with gambling, which will be an important part of the process to develop those new regulations.

The bill, and the changes it authorizes, will provide people who are having issues with their gambling a more flexible and effective program that allows them to take a break and get the help they need. This is called the Voluntary Self-Exclusion program. Currently in Nova Scotia, there is only one option and that is if you enroll in the program, it is a mandatory lifetime ban. Across Canada, there are two other provinces that have lifetime bans, but it is also an option within those provinces that they have a three-month and a six-month progression up to a lifetime ban. Nova Scotia is the only one that has a lifetime ban as the only option.

Participants who are currently in the program and wish to leave have a very cumbersome process in order to make application to get re-entry. That involves going to Service Nova Scotia, to the URB, possibly a psychological assessment, a financial assessment, and those are not best practices. During second reading, the member for Argyle-Barrington raised the question about the forfeited winnings and where they will go. All forfeited winnings, wagers, and prizes will be donated to organizations that help people address issues or problems with gambling.

Mr. Speaker, with those few comments, I take my place.

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

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, I won't be speaking very long on this one. Quite honestly, I enjoy our system where we've got all these numbers of readings and ways to look at bills and to try to understand them. I can say from our cursory look at this bill when it was originally presented to us, when it was first introduced in this House of Assembly, we looked at this favourably. There had to be a good reason that we were doing this; there had to be issues around how people were self-excluding from the casinos; and understanding that maybe having lifetime bans was something that would preclude someone from actually doing it because they felt it might be too long, so we wouldn't be able to identify those individuals who do have problems gambling.

But when we went through our Law Amendments Committee process, I think many of our bells and whistles started to ring when the Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation decided to pay for a number of individuals to come from the Gaming Control Foundation out of Ontario and B.C. Quite honestly, when we saw that kind of play, it does make you reassess what bills are before you. As much as I don't think the words have necessarily changed within the document that was presented, but what are we missing that the Nova Scotia

Gaming Corporation felt that they had to spend that money to bring those individuals here? What are we missing regarding these individuals, who had a part in identifying the gap and providing recommendations going forward? Does that organization have the opportunity to benefit from future contracts with this government by speaking in favour of this bill?

Through time and through our three readings and our Law Amendments Committee process, I can say that we've landed in a different place than we were in the beginning. I can tell you that we'll be voting against this bill.

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

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I know I rose and spoke at second reading on Bill No. 49. I think as long as I repeat what I had to say there, maybe the government will recognize that they need to continue to look at how the government regulates gaming in the province.

My biggest criticism around this bill was a missed opportunity for the government to really dive into the gaming strategy that was released and updated in 2011, and prior to that, in 2006. We're seven years from the release of that updated gaming strategy and we don't know at this point if the government is going to truly look at updating the gaming strategy for the Province of Nova Scotia, to give that strategy the stamp of the Liberal Government and say this is our road forward over the next few years.

I know the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has indicated that they are continuing to be committed to the gaming strategy of 2011. I appreciate that, to a certain extent, because we know that since then, since the 2011 gaming strategy, since that was introduced, there has been a number of changes to how the government oversees and regulates gaming in the province. One of the most notable ones is, of course, the responsible gaming tool at the time, My-Play, was implemented on the VLTs in the province.

At that time, the evidence that was in front of us, the material indicated to us that as a government, we needed to look at how we attempt to try to mitigate the harmful effects of gaming and VLT gaming has on some Nova Scotians. We know the statistics that the majority of Nova Scotians who entertain themselves within gaming in the province do it in a responsible way, can do it in a way that doesn't jeopardize their career or their livelihoods, their relationships or their lives. But there are many who have addictions, who have an addiction to gambling and the strategy is there to hopefully mitigate those negative impacts.

I've said it before and I'll say it again: I truly believe the government needs to be in the business of regulating gaming in Nova Scotia. We know far too often about the dark side of jurisdictions that don't regulate gaming and how it's the wild, wild west of what you get for consumers in those jurisdictions.

With this, Mr. Speaker, it was a prime opportunity for the government to say okay, let's have a serious look at gaming and what should we do, as a government, to move forward on this? I know the government. I would hope that they recognize that they play an important role in this. Maybe this is another time to just give advice that I think it's time the government revisits and modernizes the gaming strategy and hopefully within the next year or two we'll hear what direction they're going to go.

We know the way we game is changing every day. The introduction of technology and the Internet has really propelled the exposure of gaming. It's not just going to the VLTs at the local bar or the Legion or the Casino or wherever. Mr. Speaker, it's online gaming. A serious amount of money is involved in that and it's at a younger age.

I have young kids. We try to monitor and make sure that they aren't involved in that, but we can't kid ourselves, we know what happens. There are kids in the province who get consumed with gaming and online gaming.

Again, I'll appeal to the government, to the minister, that we would like to see and I think Nova Scotia would like to see a strategy, even if it's not by the end of the year or within the next year or two that the government is committed to updating that strategy, because things do change and the approach the government takes is important to reflect that in the strategy.

As I said, the cancellation of My-Play, I knew at the time when we updated that strategy in 2011 that revenues for VLTs would go down. We knew that that was most likely going to happen and it did. But since the cancellation of that, we've seen those revenues continue to increase every year in VLTs.

I know one of the areas of that strategy that I believe is continuing on is the fact that we would retire any VLT machines that if an establishment closes, for example. In the past the practice was those machines would be opened up for current users or owners, retailers. But during the 2011 strategy release, we said no, if a business closes, those machines will be retired. That continues to be the case, from my knowledge. It's a small way of us, as a government, recognizing will we see less and less VLTs in the province.

My colleague mentioned some of the things that happened through Law Amendments and the gaming corporation and their paying for lobbyists to come in to Law Amendments. Mr. Speaker, I think the biggest impact that this government could have would be to revise that strategy and really tell Nova Scotians that this is the road map for the next five years when it comes to gaming and addiction here in the province.

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

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Thank you to the members for their comments. As has been stated, the content of the bill has not changed. When Law Amendments was held, there were no presenters there who spoke against the bill. As it was presented, it will now continue to stand.

I would like to say to the member for Sackville-Cobequid that I have heard the member many times speak about the issue of gaming and the gaming strategy. I respect your comments. I respect your thoughts and your opinions. It was a strategy that was developed in 2005 and updated in 2011. Certainly, timing is right for a review of that strategy. To the member opposite, we would welcome your input when there is a review of that strategy.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I close debate on Bill No. 49.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 51.

Bill No. 51 - Halifax Convention Centre Act.

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

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I move that Bill No. 51 be now read a third time and do pass.

The amendments in this bill will give more organizational clarity to Events East, more clarity for the businesses of Events East in what they carry out, which of course manages and operates our Halifax Convention Centre. As the members of the House know, the province and HRM are 50/50 shareholders of our convention centre, and the amendments ensure that oversight in the Act is in line with other public entities and Crown corporations.

The bill includes four key elements of accountability: an annual accountability and performance report, including audited financial statements; an independent third party assessment of the five-year strategic plan that compares Events East's performance to the plan itself; new annual outcome agreements with the province and with the municipality;

and the Offices of the Auditor General of the province and the municipality both have auditing authority.

With the passage of this bill, we look forward to the convention centre continuing to showcase our province to visitors and drive economic growth, and we look forward to all the successes ahead, led by Carrie Cussons and her team at Events East.

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

MR. BRAD JOHNS: I do want to thank the minister not only for his clarifications in regard to some of the concerns our caucus had when this was before us at Committee of the Whole House on Bills, but also in his opening statements here again today. We were concerned in regard to annual reporting and budgets and what the public would see. We do recognize and thank the government for addressing that and clarifying for us.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I thank the member opposite for his comments. With that, I move to close third reading on Bill No. 51.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 55.

Bill No. 55 - Region of Windsor and West Hants Municipality Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 55 be now read a third time and do pass.

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

MR. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, we do want to take an opportunity as a caucus to congratulate both Windsor and West Hants municipalities for taking this step toward municipal modernization. It was very good to see during the Law Amendments hearings that this is supported by both municipal councils as well as by the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities, who also presented there.

We do recognize that there wasn't a unanimous vote, but we do think this process has merit and seems to be going forward. It's also good to see that there is a future commitment over and above the \$500,000. I think that was something that was raised here as a concern, and it did come out at Law Amendments that \$500,000 was the initial commitment in this budget and there would potentially be more later.

I do want to reiterate something that I said previously, which is that, given that this is the fourth or fifth municipality that is starting to come together through municipal modernization and amalgamation, it would be nice to see some kind of template on a go-forward position that would highlight budgets, funding formulas, perhaps based on population or some other - to show consistency as we move forward doing these. I'm sure that once other municipalities see the success of this particular merger, we may see others coming forward with similar things or other MOUs, so it would be good to have some templates there.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

MS. LISA ROBERTS: It's my pleasure to speak to this bill just briefly. Amalgamations and consolidations of municipalities have been a difficult topic for Nova Scotia for many years, and of course, that is because the situations on the ground in those municipalities are often difficult. Many rural areas are struggling.

While I welcome and also congratulate West Hants and Windsor on arriving at this shared vision of the path forward, I also want to make the point that the province does need to be doing more to support rural municipalities, and there's a whole host of ways the province could be doing more.

As I'm also the NDP spokesperson on immigration, I think one element has to be really working in a concerted way to increase the number of immigrants who are choosing to live in rural Nova Scotia. Both the landscape and the built infrastructure in rural Nova Scotia are often beautiful, and when people travel around this province, they can't believe the number of wonderful homes and wonderful communities that are really spread out across Nova Scotia. What we need are people. We need people who will work that land and join those volunteer fire departments and enrol their kids in schools and do everything that has historically been done in rural Nova Scotia.

In terms of direct support from the province, the equalization payments made to municipalities around the province have not increased in years, even though service and

infrastructure costs have continued to rise for municipalities and provincial revenue has increased. This needs to be revisited.

Our province still collects money from municipalities. On average, one out of every five dollars collected through property tax gets paid to the province. For some municipalities, this is actually their greatest budget expense. If that's not enough, municipalities are having to step up and bear the costs of some provincial responsibilities, which frankly are not being well taken in hand at the provincial level.

I raised the case of Hospice Halifax today, which was a capital expense. The former Minister of Health and Wellness came over and made the point that the hospice agreed from the outset that the province would take care of operating and they would take care of funding it.

Well, that's fine and that's great but we also see municipalities actually underwriting the costs of health clinics on an ongoing basis. That's the case in Clare where the municipality spends about \$100,000 a year to keep their collaborative health care clinic going. In other municipalities we see municipal dollars going towards physician recruitment and affordable housing.

[4:00 p.m.]

So, the province collects some of the municipality's tax revenue in order to pay for things like schools and correction facilities. These are things that, long ago, moved from being municipal responsibilities to being provincial responsibilities and many other provinces have stopped collecting revenue from municipalities to pay for those items. Nova Scotia continues.

In total, municipalities lose out on about \$246 million in revenue because the province takes it. When our rural municipalities are struggling, that doesn't seem fair or smart. The property tax burden on rural residents is becoming unsustainable. In a discouraging road, the map becomes a negative spiral. The province really does need to work with municipalities to revisit those payments. Again, in this case, it appears this amalgamation is entered into willingly by both parties. I congratulate them on arriving on that together and hope that it works out well for the citizens and, certainly, for the bottom line, but encourage the province to also not shy away from the bigger, broader, systemic approach towards making sure that rural Nova Scotia can thrive with its many municipalities.

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

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the comments from my member colleagues across the floor and just a couple of points I do want to make on this bill.

The \$500,000, yes, the honourable member for Sackville-Beaver Bank, the \$500,000 was to begin the process to start the transition, the administrative, and the studies and such that would be part of this coming together as we move forward. That transition period will help indicate what some of those infrastructure projects may be and whatever the other priorities of the new region may be going forward. Those will be options that we look at for funding. There is no such price, of course, with that. That leaves the door open to discuss all kinds of options for Windsor and West Hants.

The honourable member raises a good point around the template. I believe this is the beginning of that template. We're starting down that road where we're seeing a lot of activity around municipal units in the province that want to have the conversation about consolidating, amalgamating, pick a word, whichever one you'd like to use. It's really still about coming together for the benefit of their residents. This, I hope, is a beginning of a template; if not, something that we will use consistently along the way by way of legislation and how we move forward with these two units and whatever other units we may see want to do the same.

To the honourable member for Halifax Needham: thank you for your comments around rural Nova Scotia. You are quite right, it is a beautiful place to live, many parts of it, all parts of it, quite frankly, and we certainly offered that in Windsor and West Hants and nobody would argue with you in this Chamber about that. You also are quite right, Mr. Speaker, through you, to the honourable member, that it takes people and we actually have had some of this area that we're referring to that have been growth areas over the years, believe it or not.

We want to continue to see that with things like new projects that may come along, infrastructure projects like arenas and soccer domes and new highways and twinned highways and all those things that are going on right now, development going on around town and around the county. These will help encourage young families who want to move to the area and enjoy living there throughout the course of their lives. We certainly encourage all families, young and old alike, that they come and enjoy what the region will be called; who knows yet. That will all get worked out in the transition.

So with those few words, I move to close debate on third reading of Bill No. 55, the Region of Windsor and West Hants Municipality Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 55. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 58.

Bill No. 58 - Municipal Government Act and the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 58, an Act to Amend the Municipal Government Act and the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter be now read a third time and do pass.

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

MR. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't bring up some of the points I brought up regarding this when it was before us at Committee of the Whole House as well. I did point out at the time I find it somewhat ironic that during Law Amendments we did have the lawyer, the solicitor from HRM. John Traves did present, as well as head of planning Kelly Denty.

Both of them expressed different concerns at that time with this legislation, particularly around the ministerial powers it gave. They did note that HRM already has a very comprehensive planning exercise that they went through, the regional plan, in addition to that the RP5 plan about seven years ago. They do have a City Centre plan. Various MPs and the city did express some concerns that this ministerial order could come forward and actually end up costing, or even undoing in some cases, some of the work that HRM did.

There was a suggestion that instead of putting this legislation through that perhaps there could be an MOU entered into with HRM and the province to ensure provincial interests, priorities were met. The HRM certainly didn't have an issue that they expressed there.

However, having said that, we have debated this in our caucus and given that it is so widespread and impacting across all the municipalities in this province, and not just HRM, but that this legislation does affect other municipalities where it is needed and where it is wanted, so we are going to support this at this time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to make a few comments on Bill No. 58. As my colleague from Sackville-Beaver Bank just commented, this bill is sort of setting a floor for municipal planning and it's important that we have that sort of minimum standard.

However, I guess I just really want to encourage the province to enter into its relationship with municipal units with a real spirit of partnership and humility, which frankly is sometimes missing in the way that the province interacts with municipalities.

Municipalities are closest to residents and they are often paying the price for provincial decisions where the province has not consulted with them. In some cases, the province is not actually looking at what the planning documents are on the ground when they are deciding where to place provincial assets. I think, for example, and I've raised it before and I'll raise it again and again: the Bayers Lake location for an outpatient clinic. When we know that the traffic jams out there are beyond ridiculous for all of November and December because it was built as an industrial park. There is not going to be adequate, fast, reliable transit service, either for people who go to work there every day or for patients who have to get there.

I recognize there are people coming in from out of the city who don't want to negotiate downtown traffic. Well, as has been mentioned here in this Chamber, we have the Cobequid Centre that was built to be built upon.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. I ask that you keep the chatter down a bit. It's kind of hard to hear the member.

MS. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have the Cobequid Community Health Centre where there is both space available and a building available which can be added on to, or, as city staff suggested when they were consulted, there's the area around the Lacewood Terminal. There are some good planning decisions that could have been made that would have required actually the sort of partnership where sometimes we let municipalities lead and sometimes the province leads.

I think this is a case of a bill where the province is leading but, frankly, Halifax on this file is the one which should be leading the dance and the province should be learning how to follow sometimes.

I think that's where, frankly, the relationship gets damaged. There has been a poor track record and so, as we heard from Halifax Regional Municipality speakers at Law Amendments Committee, there is concern - there is concern that there is so much ministerial discretion and there's no guarantee that Halifax in this case will be consulted on the regulations.

My bottom line is that we will support this bill, but I want to express our fervent desire that the province work with municipalities consistently to achieve the best outcomes for residents who are citizens and who are taxpayers.

It was interesting to hear the Minister of Municipal Affairs talk about growth that is possibly happening in West Hants because of highway construction and highway twinning. Well, we have a lot of highway infrastructure in this province; that doesn't always lead to more vibrant communities. If you have communities where all of your business is done, be it at the IKEA outside Halifax on your way back to town, or at some other highway exit, that doesn't result in great, walkable, sustainable communities with the real economic and social vibrancy that we increasingly are looking for in the places where we live.

Sometimes, the province is the worst culprit in this. I think of the case of a school that was placed in a location in Amherst where virtually nobody can walk to it. I think about some of the debates that we hear in this Chamber where MLAs are having to beg TIR to complete sidewalks because the sidewalk ends at the municipal limit; then the provincial office is farther down the same road but because it's considered, at that point, a provincial road, TIR doesn't see any need to do sidewalks.

When their communities include provincial assets, residents of this province need the province also to follow the examples of good land use planning where it's on the books.

While I believe this bill is a step in the right direction, it is only that. I'd also make the point that the clock keeps ticking as this government drags its feet on more meaningful changes for municipalities from proper funding to a whole new framework through municipal modernization and charters.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand today to make a few comments on Bill 58.

As many know, municipal planning is an issue that is very, very important to me, having spent seven years at the municipal level, and for that reason I believe that this is one of the most important pieces of legislation that we will pass in this session.

As we know, many municipalities in this province have been doing planning for decades. The heart of this bill is to ensure that all of the municipalities are doing proper planning. I want to commend the minister for bringing this forward, commend his staff for consulting and getting the support of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities as we go forward.

[4:15 p.m.]

I did want to just speak to a few arguments made by my colleague from Sackville-Beaver Bank during both the law amendments process and the Committee of the Whole House where he was arguing for HRM to be removed from that. I'm delighted to hear that his caucus has talked him into supporting this bill because I do think it is important.

During those debates, he quoted from our debates of March 22nd on Bill No. 84 with respect to bonus density. He quoted me from Hansard, and I'll remind members of the House what he quoted. These are my words:

"I feel it is important that we as a province recognize that we have a capital city here. The capital city is half of our province. They are a mature government. They're as mature as Regina, Vancouver, Toronto, or Québec City. I think we need to trust them and support them in making the decisions for their communities within the HRM, and not be too much a Big Brother to HRM."

The inference there was that I was inconsistent with the position of this government on this bill. I want to reinforce to the House that is, in fact, not the case. I'll begin by going back to the arguments being made by my colleague from Sackville-Beaver Bank with respect to Big Brother. If my words were taken in the same context that he presented it, then his words in that debate could be looked upon in the same way.

The honourable member from Sackville-Beaver Bank in that debate said, ". . . I was on council, it was one of the things that we always said is a very big frustration, was we always had to come to the province, or Big Brother, and ask for permission for things" Then he sort of reconsidered his position: "I think the process is in place for a reason, and they are coming forward" - that being HRM - "and asking for this, but it's not something that we're currently going to support."

So in actual fact, the member was taking the position that we, as a province, really should be being a gatekeeper with respect to that bill in terms of HRM and was standing against the province supporting giving that tool to HRM. I'll table that.

The real difference here is that Bill No. 84 was about a tool. This is a completely different bill, and I do want to remind the House and the member opposite that in that debate on March 22nd on Bill No. 84, I prefaced my remarks with the following:

"Where I would like to begin is that land-use planning is a task that we have delegated to municipalities. We, in a very limited way, retain some control around agricultural land preservation, housing, infrastructure efficiency, and water, through our statements of

provincial interest. The rest we have delegated to our municipal partners.”

I did preface my remarks that the province does retain some powers with respect to land-use planning. The difference to the debate previously was about a specific tool of planning where this is a debate about the framework and ensuring that the province is able to retain some interest in planning where there is a province-wide interest.

As we have talked about, and as I believe all members of this House is supporting in this bill, this allows the province to provide consistency throughout all 51 municipalities that go through philosophical changes as their councils turn over at each election. This allows for some consistency where the province, through its statements of provincial interest - agricultural, land preservation, flooding - these are important interests that the province needs to ensure that we retain throughout the province as a whole.

Planning is important for economic certainty, for development, for economic investment throughout our province, so the underlining goal of this to provide mandatory planning throughout the province allows for economic certainty.

I guess I will not go into the other comments that I was going to make because we have heard now from the Opposition that they are supporting this bill, which I am delighted with.

In consultation, the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities submitted amendments and their whole-hearted support, which includes the vice president of the Federation, who is the Deputy Mayor of Halifax. I will just quote from their letter:

“We are pleased to see our members’ long-standing concerns reflected in the wording and passages of this bill. It addresses many municipal planning concerns and we believe it will help enable effective local government in the building of sustainable communities. For these reasons we stand firmly in support of this bill.”

So, I think it’s fair to say that all provincial and municipal politicians are firmly in support of this bill and I look forward to the passage of it.

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

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. CHUCK PORTER: I want to thank my honourable colleagues for their comments and to the member for Kings South for offering all of my closing comments. I appreciate that, as well. (Laughter) He did mention in there the statements of provincial interest. He started down that path and I won’t name them all either, but I want to be clear

- the statements of provincial interest are indeed the statements of the public's interest. That's very important.

The honourable member for Halifax Needham talked about growth and my comments around growth in our area with regards to the twinning of the highway. That is but one thing that brings growth to the area. But I can tell you that when you talk to the people in rural Nova Scotia, certainly in my area and other areas that we are certainly all familiar with - the twinning of highways is a major issue around safety and all of those things and roads in general. I think it is important to note that.

Also, I want to make a point that I know was mentioned by the honourable member for Sackville-Beaver Bank. Mr. Traves appeared at Law Amendments and I believe he was asked - and I don't have the Hansard in front of me - how this will change business in the HRM. His comment reflected somewhat along the lines of, it probably will change very little, if anything. I stand to be corrected on that. I don't have the Hansard in front of me, but that was what was explained.

We certainly will recognize the importance of the consultation that's been mentioned with regard to the regulations. The Department of Municipal Affairs will be conducting a robust consultation on these regulations, and make no mistake about it, all municipalities will have the opportunity to provide the input and feedback that they so wish to do.

This is a good step moving forward in effective land-use planning. It is the right thing and the responsible thing to do across this province.

I want to thank those in the Department of Municipal Affairs who worked hard on these amendments, including some who have already been mentioned, the NSFAM and the Federation of Agriculture who have supported this bill, and members of the other side who have also agreed today to support this bill. I appreciate that very much.

With those few words, I move to close debate on Bill No. 58.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 58. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contract minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 63.

Bill No. 63 - Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission Act.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: I hereby move third reading of Bill No. 63.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

MR. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, as I spoke here a couple of weeks ago during the session, this bill doesn't give us full detail of what the whole plan is for this facility in the Truro area.

We know that this facility was in debt for hundreds of thousands of dollars, and over the last few years we've seen several changes to the current Act where the minister has spoken out that this is going to be a positive note and encouraging for the area. To date we have yet to see this. As recently as just this past February, he removed the whole board, and since February he has been acting contradictory to what the Act does state.

Does the minister have a business plan? Now we heard a little bit of what the plan is. If the plan could be in writing where we know that the racing track, for instance, and the facility are safe, as he does say - could he please put that in writing and table it to this House? We'd feel very comfortable in supporting this.

But as it states, we show up to a bill briefing and get shown before and after pictures of a barn coming down and a beautiful new barn for the 4-H, which I do have to commend. Speaking with the 4-H members in that area, they do welcome this barn - it's a beautiful new facility where 4-H members will be able to showcase. But still, it's the essence of this bill. There's no meat and potatoes added, if you will. There's no accountability, there's no transparency in it. We fail to find where we're going to be financially stable with this bill, where we've already gone through two or times of this.

I guess that would be my question to the minister on his closing - if he could please update us with that, put it in writing and table it in this House so we'd feel a lot more comfortable with this third or fourth attempt of approving this Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission bill.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: I'm happy to rise to my feet to say a few words on this bill, the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission Act. I am a little concerned about the fact that it's being repealed with nothing at all in its place to say that the Truro Raceway is actually protected. I've mentioned this a few times before. I would like it to be on the record

that the minister has assured me that the raceway will be continuing and that he does intend to keep giving them the needed money to keep going.

For many years, it has been about \$1 million a year for three racetracks in Nova Scotia, and the Truro racetrack gets the bulk of it, being the one that races the most. All three of them are reliant on each other for the industry to be successful in the Maritimes. P.E.I. is very successful and very supportive of their racing. In Nova Scotia we've had some ups and some downs, and I feel we are on an up at this point in time.

I'm pleased to see some of the renovations at the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition grounds, and I am told there are going to be more. There is also now a lease in place with the horsepeople's association, with the horsemen and women, and this is a good thing. Apparently they did very well this year. They made about \$100,000, and there has been less slack and less money not accounted for.

There have been a number of times where certain monies have been unaccounted for, I have to say - disappeared. Things like this, that has to stop. It's not right that the Province of Nova Scotia would be supporting something where there's no accountability. With accountability I feel we can be successful, and if the minister is true to his word and this government is true to their word and they don't backtrack like they did with the film and television industry, then I will feel very good going forward.

With that, I don't have much more to say other than that I truly hope the minister does mean what he says and that we will continue to see the Truro Raceway and the exhibition grow in sustainability and also profitability and joy for our community and all of Nova Scotia.

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

The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Actually, Mr. Speaker, it's the Minister of Agriculture in this case.

I welcome the comments by both the Opposition Parties, and I can assure the honourable member across the way that the racetrack will continue in Truro. It's very important in the structure of the Province of Nova Scotia and I want to put on the record I'm very impressed with the horseracing association that represents Truro now. They've really stepped up to the plate. They've really come up with some great ideas, very positive things happening there at the track. So, I can't say enough positive about them and how they've really reacted to the situation.

[4:30 p.m.]

As far as the exhibition itself goes, 100 per cent accountability from now on. We're going to make sure that the facility is run properly and, on the record, I can say if we didn't put this Act in place the operation, including the track, would have been bankrupt by now. So when we took the facility over, it was on the edge of bankruptcy. We did do a lot of work there. As you've seen already, we tore some barns down that were not safe to be in and people were actually in.

We're resolving some of the really poor leases that were put in place. Very poor purchasing policies were in place. I'll give you one example and I don't think we even have an example of this in government. Somebody had authorized the lease of a \$53,000 photocopying machine over a 10-year period and it cost us \$25,000 to get out of it. So, that just gives you an idea of how poorly the place was being operated. Under legislation, there are supposed to be quarterly reports into this place, the Legislature, itself. They didn't do one. So, the accountability has to be put in place. It's going to be put in place.

We want to see the exhibition grow and prosper in Truro. Bible Hill is a beautiful, beautiful community and the place was an eyesore, to be quite honest. It was an eyesore. There was junk all over the place and it hadn't been run properly for years and years and years for the reason that the honourable member indicated.

I can remember years ago, even before I was in politics and that was a long time ago, the yearly cheque presentation. So, whatever the deficit was, a cheque was written, no accountability whatsoever. We stopped that process. I'm pleased to say that my colleagues and then the Opposition, when they get to know the full story, will understand why we did what we did. We will continue to grow the facility and make sure it's a showcase for agriculture in Nova Scotia and a place that it's nice to go to and nice to visit and a place that the community can be very proud of. We're on the edge of that right now.

You're going to see some improvements, some more buildings. For the improvements we made, they haven't cost very much. It's just some dedication. Even the new manager of the facility planted flowers of her own garden and around the place just to give you an idea how much better the place looks. When you go - I know I've visited several times over the last five years and it's really nice around the site - I have a comfortable feeling when I go there. You feel sort of at home. That wasn't the case before. There were old trailers there. It was a mess, to be quite honest, it was a mess. That has all been cleaned up and will be cleaned up and I want to commend the manager and the people that have been working to get this in place.

I want to commend the horse racing organization. They've taken an awful situation that they inherited and they've corrected it. They were carrying on races and then becoming profitable. It looks like the exhibition itself, this year, will break even. That's a far cry from

the hundreds of thousands of dollars they would have been in if we'd have left it the way it was.

The exhibition this year was the most successful one, I don't know, in maybe 20 or 25 years. It had the most profit, the most people attended and everything from that standpoint is very positive. We have to continue that positive trend and make sure it's a destination people want to go to because Truro is centre in the province. We must look after Truro and Cumberland County and that area where people want to come - it's close to New Brunswick, it's close to Prince Edward Island, it's a wonderful place to come.

I'm from metro, but I would like to see Truro grow as metro has grown, but grow in quality. I personally want to thank the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. She has been very supportive on this process all the way through, I know the member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River has been very supportive as well. So I want to thank you both for that. I think this is a new day. I know it's a new day for the exhibition. It's a long-term solution that will work and it has been a hard road getting here, really difficult road getting here.

So, again, thank you and, with that, I move third reading of Bill No. 63, the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 63. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 67.

Bill No. 67 - Securities Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister responsible for the Securities Act.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 67, amendments to the Securities Act, be now read a third time and do pass.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank colleagues from both sides of the Opposition who did speak to this. In particular, I do want to acknowledge an amendment that came forward from the NDP caucus. It was to provide clarification. We on this side of the House supported that amendment. Clarity is important. That clarification was to make sure that

self-regulatory organizations would be recognized by the commission. That amendment was made and accepted, and I believe it does strengthen it.

These amendments are important to protect investors in Nova Scotia, and the enforcement of securities regulations will be enhanced. The intent here, Mr. Speaker, is to provide security and confidence in Nova Scotia investors and consumers and also to bring us in harmony with other provinces across Canada.

I look forward to this bill moving through the House in third reading.

I move to close debate and that the bill do pass.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 67. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: That concludes government business for today. I move that we do now rise to meet again tomorrow, Wednesday, October 10th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. After the daily routine and Question Period, we will have business as called by the Official Opposition House Leader. Following late debate, we will call government business, which will include the Committee of the Whole House on Bills for Bill Nos. 79 and 80.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Opposition business for tomorrow will include Resolution No. 508, which is on the health care crisis, and Bill No. 33, which is the Personal Health Information Act, or the notifications of patients' breach. Again, Resolution No. 508 and Bill No. 33.

I move that we do now rise to meet again tomorrow between the hours 1:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise to meet tomorrow between the hours 1:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

We are adjourned.

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

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**Tabled October 5, 2018****RESOLUTION NO. 509**

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Lands and Forestry)

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

Whereas we recognize October 9th of each year as PANDAS Awareness Day (Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections) and PANS (Pediatric Acute-onset Neuropsychiatric Syndromes); and

Whereas a diagnosis of PANDAS or PANS means a child has a sudden dramatic change in personality following a strep, bacterial, or viral infection, possibly accompanied by symptoms such as obsessive-compulsive disorder, intense fear, anxiety, tics, depression, behavioural regression, deterioration in school performance, sensory sensitivities, severely restricted food intake, and more; and

Whereas over 15,000 in Canada and 400 in Nova Scotia alone suffer with this disease which is often misunderstood, misdiagnosed, and under-treated with limited treatment options;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in wishing Caelin Swan who suffers with PANDAS, the best of health as she courageously lives life well despite the challenges of living with PANDAS, and works to heighten acceptance, foster understanding, encourage research, and pursue viable treatment for those who live with this syndrome.

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**Tabled October 9, 2018****RESOLUTION NO. 513**

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Agriculture)

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

Whereas St. David's United Church in Lake Echo is part of the Lawrencetown-Lake Echo Pastoral Charge, Halifax Presbytery, and Maritime Conference; and

Whereas St. David's has been serving as the hands and feet of Christ in the Community of Lake Echo for 65 years, offering and supporting a variety of ministries; and

Whereas Sunday, October 21st, the community is invited to join St. David's 65th anniversary celebration beginning with a free will offering chili supper at 6:00 p.m., followed by a service with special music at 7:00 p.m.;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House recognize and congratulate St. David's United Church on their 65 years of serving Christ and the Community of Lake Echo.

RESOLUTION NO. 514

By: Hon. Randy Delorey (Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas September 2018 marked the 25th anniversary of the St. Andrews District Community Centre; and

Whereas the 7,800-square foot multi-purpose building was completely financed and entirely built by the people of St. Andrews when the old parish hall from 1912 needed to be replaced; and

Whereas the community centre quickly became a key component to the St. Andrews Community and is used regularly for many events;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing the 25th anniversary of the St. Andrews District Community Centre.

RESOLUTION NO. 515

By: Hon. Randy Delorey (Health and Wellness)

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

Whereas September 2019 marks the 175th anniversary of the establishment of the Diocese of Antigonish; and

Whereas the diocese covers the counties of Pictou, Antigonish, Guysborough, as well as Cape Breton Island; and

Whereas throughout the coming year there will be many events organized to recognize this special milestone;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly recognize the 175th anniversary of the Diocese of Antigonish.

RESOLUTION NO. 516

By: Ms. Kim Masland (Queens-Shelburne)

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

Whereas the North Nova Lumberjacks Society hosted the first-ever Canadian National Axe Throwing Championships in Liverpool's Centennial Park between August 25 and 26, 2018; and

Whereas approximately 60 competitors took part in the competition, including some from Europe, which builds on the county's rich history in the forestry industry and its reputation for hosting unique and interesting events; and

Whereas axe throwing has grown in popularity in recent years, and the two-day event drew a huge crowd to Liverpool's beautiful waterfront;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Darren Hudson, Ryan MacIntyre, and all the organizers, competitors, and volunteers for proudly hosting the first Canadian National Axe Throwing Championships here in Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 517

By: Hon. Kelly Regan (Community Services)

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

Whereas Lloyd Foster leads a weekly recreational music group at the Bedford Leisure Club, where he has been the program coordinator of the group for the last eight years and its leader for the last five years; and

Whereas in addition to their weekly music sessions, the music group plays at nursing homes and senior centres on a monthly basis; and

Whereas Lloyd is a long-term volunteer - he has previously been involved in the Boy Scouts, the United Way, and the Cancer Society - never asking for recognition, just always quietly and competently organizing events;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Lloyd Foster for putting a song in the heart of many Bedford residents and thank him for making Bedford a great place to live.

RESOLUTION NO. 518

By: Hon. Kelly Regan (Community Services)

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

Whereas Bedford resident Christian Brousseau has been involved in Guiding over the past six years as the primary Guider for one of the largest Guide units, the secretary of the district council, and with the provincial newsletter; and

Whereas Christian puts a lot of thought into the activities the Guides in her unit undertake, always remembering they need to be memorable and help the Guides grow into the best young women they can be;

Whereas Christian was honoured for her work at the Bedford Volunteer Awards in May and has also received the Bronze Unit Guide Award;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Christian Brousseau on being a constant and supportive asset to the Girl Guides of Bedford and on her recent recognition by the Guides and the Bedford Volunteer Awards.

RESOLUTION NO. 519

By: Hon. Kelly Regan (Community Services)

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

Whereas Jerome MacIsaac has been involved in basketball in Bedford for many years, and earlier this year he was honoured for his volunteer work at the Bedford Volunteer Recognition Reception; and

Whereas Jerome has coached girls and boys basketball teams for 15 years - even when he didn't have a child on a team - has served as a board member for the Bedford Minor Basketball Association for a dozen years, and for nine years has coordinated volunteers for the biggest minor basketball tournament in the country, the Bedford Minor Classic, making sure the volunteers feel confident in their roles by ensuring they are well-prepared and having fun; and

Whereas Jerome always encourages his players to give back to their communities and leads by example; in fact, his nominator noted that Jerome always frames decisions by asking what is in the best interests of the children playing basketball in our community;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House congratulate Jerome MacIsaac on his many years of dedication to the young basketball players of Bedford.

RESOLUTION NO. 520

By: Hon. Kelly Regan (Community Services)

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

Whereas, this spring, the Bedford Minor Baseball Association nominated Gordon Grainger for recognition for his commitment to the sport in Bedford; and

Whereas Gordon has been coaching baseball since 2007 often coaching multiple teams so much so that, last year, he was the head coach of two teams, which meant he was on the field five to seven times every week during the season; and

Whereas Gordon's nominator for a Bedford Volunteer Recognition Award noted that he always steps up when he's needed and has positively impacted many lives through baseball;

Therefore be it resolved the members of this House of Assembly salute Gordon Grainger on his recognition from the Bedford Volunteer Awards and congratulate him on hitting a homerun with his volunteer efforts.

RESOLUTION NO. 521

By: Ms. Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

Whereas any loss of life is tragic and imparts upon family and friends feelings of emptiness and loneliness; and

Whereas Mary Gloria LeBlanc of Petit-de-Grat deserves all the respect and honour we have to give for a life that touched so many people and left a lasting impression on her family and community; and

Whereas, as we mourn, we also celebrate the contributions of the life, love, and memory of all residents, past and present, of Cape Breton-Richmond;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly honour and commemorate the life of Mary Gloria LeBlanc having her name forever written as historical record in the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly.

RESOLUTION NO. 522

By: Ms. Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

Whereas any loss of life is tragic and imparts upon family and friends feelings of emptiness and loneliness; and

Whereas Mavis Anne Boudreau of Petit-de-Grat deserves all the respect and honour we have to give for a life that touched so many people and left a lasting impression on her family and community; and

Whereas, as we mourn, we also celebrate the contributions of the life, love, and memory of all residents, past and present, of Cape Breton-Richmond;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly honour and commemorate the life of Mavis Anne Boudreau having her name forever written as historical record in the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly.

RESOLUTION NO. 523

By: Ms. Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

Whereas any loss of life is tragic and imparts upon family and friends feelings of emptiness and loneliness; and

Whereas Charles Joseph Sampson of Louisdale deserves all the respect and honour we have to give for a life that touched so many people and left a lasting impression on her family and community; and

Whereas, as we mourn, we also celebrate the contributions of the life, love, and memory of all residents, past and present, of Cape Breton-Richmond;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly honour and commemorate the life of Charles Joseph Sampson having his name forever written as historical record in the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly.

RESOLUTION NO. 524

By: Ms. Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

Whereas any loss of life is tragic and imparts upon family and friends feelings of emptiness and loneliness; and

Whereas Marie Rita Brewer of Louisdale deserves all the respect and honour we have to give for a life that touched so many people and left a lasting impression on her family and community; and

Whereas as we mourn we also celebrate the contributions of the life, love, and memory of all residents, past and present, of Cape Breton-Richmond; and

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly honour and commemorate the life of Marie Rita Brewer, having her name forever written as historical record in the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly.

RESOLUTION NO. 525

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Lands and Forestry)

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

Whereas Kadin Edwards is only eight years old and is an active Cub Scout, forming the foundations of good character and learning important lessons of citizenship to help build strong communities; and

Whereas Scouting is not only about fun and friendship, but also opens the door for children to discover the world through outdoor activities, games, music, sports, meeting new friends, learning co-operation, teamwork and developing self-confidence; and

Whereas the Five Island Lake Scout Group generates its own revenue through activities in which the Scouts themselves play an active role by selling products within their neighbourhood and last year Kadin was the second top seller for his Beaver group, approaching his fundraising activities with independence, enthusiasm, and leadership;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Kadin on his fundraising activities.

RESOLUTION NO. 526

By: Ms. Lisa Roberts (Halifax Needham)

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

Whereas Sharon Briand voluntarily operates the social committee at Samuel Prince Manor, home to primarily seniors, where she organizes a variety of activities for residents, including bus trips and karaoke; and

Whereas Sharon Briand supports the well-being of her neighbours through the organization of community dinners, always inviting people to her home for meals and organizing barbeques; and

Whereas Sharon Briand brings residents of Samuel Prince Manor together and keeps the peace by creating an environment where everyone is welcome and community is celebrated;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature acknowledge and comment Sharon Briand for her dedication to community, her generosity, and her determination to make Samuel Prince Manor a welcoming home for all who live there.

RESOLUTION NO. 527

By: Ms. Lisa Roberts (Halifax Needham)

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

Whereas Wendy Keen is a leader in the field of preventing and responding to domestic violence through her work as Executive Director of New Start and has contributed greatly to the establishment of the first Domestic Violence Court in Halifax, which focuses on resolving the violence rather than emphasizing punishment; and

Whereas Wendy Keen was recently recognized with the Canadian Association of Social Work's Distinguished Service Award for her pursuit of social justice in a variety of professional settings and volunteer roles; and

Whereas Wendy Keen volunteers in her community with the Rotary Club, helping with a community garden, organizing and cooking food for men at Metro Turning Point Shelter and delivering Christmas dinners every year to those in need;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia legislature acknowledge and commend Wendy Keen for her professional and volunteer contributions to Nova Scotia and thank her for her generosity, commitment and leadership.

RESOLUTION NO. 528

By: Ms. Lisa Roberts (Halifax Needham)

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

Whereas the School Options Committee (Rene Gannon, Kim Robertson, Mike Cuvelier, Nicholas Williams, Lanna Prowse, Blake Roberts, Angela Comeau, Leah Hamilton, Jons Frost, Scott MacPhee, Kim Briand, Sandra Parker, Theresa Kelsie and Nikaya Paris) spent countless hours voluntarily working to create a set of recommendations

for the Halifax Regional School Board to address the infrastructure needs facing North End Halifax schools; and

Whereas the School Options Committee collaborated with each other, school board staff and community organizations to create a vision for these schools through a process that allowed community members to connect with each other and share their passion about their children and neighbourhoods; and

Whereas the School Options Committee's recommendations were accepted and endorsed by the Halifax Regional School Board and their efforts were acknowledged as thorough and exemplary;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature commend each of the members of the School Options Committee for their volunteer effort and their contribution to our schools, youth and community.