



House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia

## DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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### Second Session

FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2019

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House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2019**

**Sixty-third General Assembly**

**Second Session**

**9:00 A.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Kevin Murphy

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, Brendan Maguire

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

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

**PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

THE SPEAKER: As Speaker of the House of Assembly, I am pleased to table the House of Assembly Management Commission Annual Report for the calendar year 2018. This report is prepared by the House of Assembly Management Commission pursuant to Section 11(1)(f) of the House of Assembly Management Commission Act.

The report is tabled.

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

**GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

**RESOLUTION NO. 714**

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

Whereas Nova Scotia is home to many dedicated and talented lawyers who work tirelessly to improve public policy and justice, who take the time to lead the next generation of lawyers and ensure they have the skills and knowledge needed, and who support community and volunteer organizations across the province; and

Whereas the Queen's Counsel designation, a mark of distinction in the legal community, is awarded annually to those who have represented their profession with the highest integrity and who have contributed greatly to their communities; and

Whereas again this year, 14 of the province's most esteemed lawyers are being awarded the prestigious Q.C. designation, including our colleague and Chief Clerk of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, Neil Ferguson;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislature recognize Neil and the other worthy individuals for their outstanding contributions and applaud them on their appointment as Queen's Counsel.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried. (Standing Ovation)

The honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

**RESOLUTION NO. 715**

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

Whereas retired Archbishop Vincent Waterman, beloved patriarch of the African Orthodox Church in Whitney Pier, recently passed away at the age of 93; and

Whereas Archbishop Waterman was born in Barbados and moved to Cape Breton with his wife, Isabel, to set up their ministry in 1983; and

Whereas Archbishop Waterman will always be remembered for his compassion and generosity shown towards all individuals, regardless of race, religion, or belief;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly please join me in acknowledging the extraordinary life of Archbishop Vincent Waterman and the positive impact he made in his community.

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

THE 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. (Applause)

The honourable Minister of Acadian Affairs.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 716**

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

Attendu qu'aujourd'hui marque le début de 21<sup>e</sup> Rendez-vous de la Francophonie; et

Attendu que cette manifestation annuelle célèbre la francophonie canadienne dans ses cultures, sa diversité, et son inclusivité par un dialogue ouvert, une écoute, et un respect mutuel; et

Attendu que la Nouvelle-Écosse, depuis l'établissement de l'Acadie il y a plus de 400 ans, abrite une communauté acadienne et francophone dynamique;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les députés de l'Assemblée législative se joignent à moi pour souhaiter à tous les Acadiens, francophones, et francophiles de la Nouvelle-

Écosse et à travers le pays un Rendez-vous de la Francophonie 2019 riche en échanges et en découvertes.

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

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

Whereas today marks the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Rendez-vous de la Francophonie; and

Whereas this annual event celebrates the Canadian Francophonie and its culture, diversity, and inclusiveness through open dialogue, listening, and mutual respect; and

Whereas Nova Scotia, since the establishment of Acadia more than 400 years ago, has been home to a vibrant Acadian and francophone community;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in wishing all Acadians, francophones, and francophiles from Nova Scotia and across the country a 2019 Rendez-vous de la Francophonie filled with positive exchange and discovery.

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

THE 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 Municipal Affairs.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 717**

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

Whereas 2019 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the incorporation of the Town of Clarks Harbour; and



Whereas there are many celebratory events planned for the months ahead - events that will give the residents of Clarks Harbour and Nova Scotians the opportunity to learn more about, and celebrate, the history and culture of Clarks Harbour; and

Whereas this milestone event is a time to honour and celebrate a rich history and the contributions of all those people who have played an integral role in making Clarks Harbour a place people want to call home;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the Legislature congratulate the residents of Clarks Harbour on their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and wish them all the best as they continue to celebrate and plan for a strong and resilient future.

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

THE 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 responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 718**

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

Whereas Nova Scotians are mourning the loss of Doreen Paris, an outstanding leader and member of the African Nova Scotian community who proudly served as a member and Chair of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women from 1994 to 2011; and

Whereas Doreen was known for her passion for ensuring equality, dignity, and fairness for all Nova Scotian women, as well as her dedication to her church and her community; and

Whereas Doreen will be remembered by all Nova Scotians for her lifelong commitment to empowering women to escape the traps of poverty, violence, and racism;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature take a moment to reflect in loving memory of Doreen Paris and send our most heartfelt condolences to her family, the African Nova Scotian community, and all of the women and girls who were inspired by the accomplishments of one of Nova Scotia's strongest leaders.

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

[9:15 a.m.]

THE 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 Cape Breton Centre.

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction. I'd like to welcome today to the West Gallery some very distinguished guests: Brendan Meagher, President of the Halifax Professional Fire Fighters Association; Joe Triff, Vice President; Auren Deters, Treasurer; Josh Chisling from Truro Firefighters; Donny Whalen from Sydney, Recording Secretary of Sydney local, Atlantic Provinces Professional Fire Fighters Association; and all of the other firefighters that are with us here today. Please rise and acknowledge. (Standing Ovation)

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 89 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 10 of the Acts of 1994-95. The Workers' Compensation Act. (Tammy Martin)**

**Bill No. 90 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 43 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Boxing Authority Act. (Hon. Leo Glavine)**

**Bill No. 91 - Entitled an Act Respecting the Nova Scotia Museum. (Hon. Leo Glavine)**

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

### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**BOWEN, TYSON - VETERAN: RCR - HEALING VENTURE**

KARLA MACFARLANE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to recognize Tyson Bowen, an unsung hero and military veteran, for his powerful compassion, vision, and willingness to step outside his comfort zone to help others.

I personally had the pleasure of discussing Tyson's concept to create the Real Canadian Recreation Ltd., the RCR, in Pictou County. This will be an eco-friendly outdoor recreational facility which will focus primarily on veterans and their families. For those suffering it will be an enjoyable, safe haven to decompress alone or in the company of others. Nature certainly has a beautiful way of healing.

Tyson has put his entire being into this venture and I am hopeful that I will be able to attend the grand opening and wish him all the best on this wonderful endeavour.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

**N.S./CDN. FIREFIGHTERS: DEDICATION & RESILIENCE - RECOG.**

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to celebrate the firefighters not only with us here today, but the firefighters all across Nova Scotia and the country.

Two years ago, I had the sad experience to watch just what they do when my hometown school burned to the ground. I saw so many people come together to save my school, to work together and to protect each other. Honestly, I guess I never realized what went into their job and what it took for them to go to work every day. I think we need to take time to recognize what they do. They're gone for hours from their family and hopefully they all come home at the end of the day. But what I saw that day was absolutely amazing and the least that I could do was volunteer and offer them some food.

I want to thank you - my school didn't make it, but the firefighters did, and I thank you for that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Waverly-Fall River-Beaver Bank.

**GAUDRY, ABBI: ATHL. OF THE YR. - CONGRATS.**

BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a student at Lockview High, Abbi Gaudry. She is Athletic Nova Scotia's U16 Female Athlete of the Year for the Province of Nova Scotia.

At last year's high school provincial championships she claimed five medals, including three silvers in high jump, long jump, and 80-metre hurdles. Mr. Speaker, Abbi competed for Nova Scotia at the National Legion Championships, where she qualified for the finals both in long jump and 200-metre hurdles. Her season best long jump of 5.43 metres ranked her sixth in the country, and 19 centimetres farther than any other U16 Nova Scotia athlete in the last decade.

Congratulations Abbi on your accomplishments and best wishes for the future.

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

**LOGAN, KATIE: TEACHING CONFLICT RES. - CONGRATS.**

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring recognition to a very generous and compassionate Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage constituent, Katie Logan. Katie is a university student studying at Saint Mary's. On February 12, 2019, Katie, 22 fellow students and four faculty embarked on a two-week trip to Belfast, Ireland. While in Ireland, the Saint Mary's Conflict Resolution Society visited schools of Grades Primary to 6, teaching peace and conflict resolution skills. One tool they used to get the message across is books written and illustrated by three Halifax youth: Amelia Marin DeWolf, Amelia Penney-Crocker, and Ruby Jangaard, and edited by the not-for-profit charity Peaceful Schools International.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in acknowledging all of the selfless work Katie is doing in Northern Ireland and wish her and the society all the best in bringing positivity to the lives of these students.

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

**COLCHESTER CO.: HEALTH CARE ACCESS - INVEST**

LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, according to a freedom of information request recently obtained by our NDP caucus, emergency room visits by patients without a family doctor are far greater in Truro than the provincial average. We discovered the number of visits to the Colchester East Hants Health Centre by patients without a family doctor increased 257 per cent from 2013 to 2018. This was the second highest in the province - the greatest being in Valley Regional Hospital, which saw a 264 per cent increase.

So, in 2018 there were 3,158 people without a family doctor who went to the emergency room in Truro - almost four times as many as the 883 people who visited the ER in 2013 without a family physician. People in Colchester County should be able to access health care when they need it, Mr. Speaker. We need serious investment to solve this provincial health care crisis.

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

**COMEAU, BRINTEN: AUS ROOKIE OF THE YR. - CONGRATS.**

BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to recognize Ms. Brinten Comeau of Hammonds Plains. Ms. Comeau is a first-year student at the University of Prince Edward Island and is a flanker on the Panthers rugby team. She formerly played at Charles P. Allen High School, where she was team captain for two years before heading on to university. In her first year with the Panthers, she played all regular season games and in the AUS semi-final. She was the top scorer for UPEI with 30 points and was eighth overall in conference scoring.

Brinten was rewarded for her hard work and dedication by being named to the AUS all-star team, as well as being the AUS Rookie of the Year for rugby.

I'd ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating Brinten Comeau for her accomplishments and wish her well in her future endeavours.

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

**POLYTECH PRODUCTS: BUS. AWARD - CONGRATS.**

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, in November 2018 the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce celebrated its success stories of outstanding businesses at their Fall Awards Dinner.

It was a great pleasure to see that top honours went to Polytech Products of Baddeck. The company has been manufacturing high-quality, European-style tilt-turn windows since 1988.

Polytech's customer base includes residential and commercial clients across Atlantic Canada and they've made strides in adopting environmentally friendly manufacturing processes. Polytech has grown from just a few employees to opening a second office in Dartmouth.

I rise today to congratulate the general manager, Reid Campbell, and the staff of Polytech Products Ltd. on their Top Honour Business Award, and to thank Polytech for their contribution to our economy. Thank you.

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

**HENDERSON, SUSAN: MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY - CONGRATS.**

LENORE ZANN: Susan Henderson, Executive Director of the Colchester East Hants branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association is overseeing a \$1.5 million renovation of their new headquarters in downtown Truro, which will be completed by June of 2019.

Susan and her committee founded the Women and Wellness event in Truro which annually brings in female guest speakers who address sold-out audiences of several hundreds of women on the topics of female-related mental illness including anxiety, depression, and issues surrounding self-esteem.

In 2014 I was honoured to be called to speak and was also named one of five national spokespeople for mental health and addictions - and today I celebrate 23 years of sobriety, of which I am very proud. (Applause) Thank you.

Congratulations to Susan and her committee on 10 successful years presenting Women in Wellness to the community of Truro and the surrounding areas.

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

**BLACK POINT & AREA COM. CTR.: REOPENING - CONGRATS.**

HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the many hard-working community volunteers who devoted themselves to reopening the Black Point and Area Community Centre located in the District 1 Firehall at Black Point in the HRM.

I was pleased to attend their first open house this past January to help celebrate their official launch. Area residents were welcome to view the newly refurbished facility which had been closed for several years.

In addition to the work by volunteers, the newly opened community centre benefited from much other help as well. HRM helped make improvements to the kitchen and bar areas, the Aspotogan Heritage Trust provided a new industrial size refrigerator, chairs came from the Estabrooks Community Hall, and financial support was supplied by the Bay Treasure Chest.

The organizers hope this newly refurbished centre will be used for weddings, fitness classes, meetings, birthday parties, sports events, family reunions, and many other community events.

I invite the members of this Assembly to congratulate the volunteers of the Black Point and Area Community Centre on their excellent work and to wish them well in their future endeavours.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**GRAHAM FAM.: COM. CHAMPS. AWARD - THANKS**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker I am very pleased to inform all members of this Legislature that the Ronald McDonald House Charities Atlantic has named the Graham family of New Glasgow one of its first official Community Champions.

Drew and Kaitlin Graham have been long-time supporters of Ronald McDonald House after it became their home away from home when their son Oliver became seriously ill before succumbing to his battle with cancer.

To honour Oliver's memory, the family started an annual fundraising hockey tournament several years ago. It raises funds for this special facility and every year, prior to Christmas, the Grahams load up a van full of toys and head off to Halifax.

I would like to thank the Graham family for their commitment to raising funds in support of the IWK Oncology Unit.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**N.S. FIREFIGHTERS: COM. AMBASSADORS - THANKS**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my voice to my colleagues who are bringing attention to the firefighters doing work in our communities.

Growing up in Prospect, the volunteer firefighters of the Prospect Road station and the Terence Bay station were very present in our communities all the time.

I, too, saw my school burn to the ground and remember like it was yesterday, watching the trucks fill up with water in Whites Lake to try to continue to put out that fire.

Last year there were two terrible fires in Dartmouth North on the same night. The firefighters from Highfield Park station and other stations around the HRM performed many dangerous rescues that night and although there was one fatality, their work prevented many more.

When not fighting fires, they are community ambassadors, they organize toy drives for kids in the neighbourhood, and they show up at schools and civic events

When not fighting fires, they are community ambassadors. They organize toy drives for kids in the neighbourhood and they show up at schools and civic events. Big shout-outs to the people who let kids like my four-year-old crawl all over your trucks and wear hats. It's very exciting.

[9:30 a.m.]

Firefighters are children, siblings, parents, and friends. They put themselves in harm's way every day, and I am very grateful for their service.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

**WILLIAMS SYNDROME: EDUC. - RECOG.**

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, Williams Syndrome is a rare genetic condition that is thought to occur in approximately one in 10,000 births. Williams Syndrome brings many challenges, including difficulties with numbers and spatial relations, and some challenges that can be life threatening. Youth with Williams Syndrome are highly sociable and have an affinity for music.

I will be honest, I had not heard of Williams Syndrome until childhood friend and local resident Jodie Connors organized and educated our community about their son Aden, who was born with this rare syndrome. Aden is full of energy and love. The last time I saw him was at the grocery store, and he ran up to me and gave me a high-five.

Jodie, thank you for educating us all. Aden, the world is yours.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

TIM HALMAN: Thank you. In the West Gallery we have Dartmouth resident and firefighter Mike Sears. The other day, when I received a phone call from a resident in Dartmouth East who had been iced in and was unable to get out of her home, I contacted Mike. When he was off duty, Mike and his colleagues from Station 14 went above and beyond the call of duty to help a resident.

I'd like the House to acknowledge the great work our firefighters do throughout Nova Scotia. I ask all members of the House to welcome Mike and his colleagues and the great work they do. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.



**BEAVER, SOPHIE: YOUTH SURGERY VIDEO - CONGRATS.**

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sophie Beaver, a student at École Bois-Joli in Dartmouth East. Sophie recently partnered with the IWK to create a video that prepares young people for the IWK surgical process.

In the video, Sophie shares her top five tips for kids getting ready for surgery and walks viewers step-by-step through the day leading up to surgery. Surgery can be a difficult time for young people, and Sophie, through this initiative, has helped them to know what to expect.

I would like to thank Sophie for her brave effort and congratulate her on having made such an important contribution to her peers, and I want to thank her for being such a great best friend to Sophie Halman.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**AIRBNB: HYDROSTONE RENTALS - CONCERNS**

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I like sharing, but I am standing here today to express some concerns that I have about the sharing economy through Airbnb - particularly in Halifax Needham, but I'm sure also beyond. Thanks to correspondence from constituents, I have heard of long-term renters on month-to-month leases who have experienced multiple subsequent rent increases until they can no longer afford their apartment, only to then see the same unit listed on Airbnb.

Recently I've been hearing from constituents who are concerned to see townhouses in the historic Hydrostone neighbourhood - built with public funds after the Halifax Explosion - being turned into short-term rentals, also through Airbnb.

I'm lucky to live in a diverse, attractive, dynamic neighbourhood. It needs to be a place for long-term residents and visitors. As the province considers changes to regulations for tourism accommodations, I beg them to consider the interests of long-term renters who are also neighbours and citizens.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

**N.S. FIREFIGHTERS/FIRST RESPONDERS: COM. SERV. - THANKS**

HON. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I too want to take a moment this morning to rise, not only as the Minister of Municipal Affairs but as the Minister responsible for the Emergency Measures Office and The Office of the Fire Marshal, to welcome our friends from the fire service to the gallery this morning.

Having been a volunteer firefighter back through the 1980s and 1990s, as well as a paramedic for a good many years, I know the relationships that are built working with our friends, not only those who are here but right across the province. I want to thank them and all of our first responders - our firefighters who are paid and unpaid - out there doing the work every day that we count on. We've heard some great stories this morning, and reflections on the kind of work they do. They don't just do it on sunshiney warm days, either, as we all know.

We also go through some tough times in the fire service and emergency responses, as we've seen lately. We want to thank them for all their great work and the contributions they make across this great province of ours. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: I'll accept your member's statement as the honourable member for Hants West, not as the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

**FISHER, ERICA: KIDSPORT FUNDRAISER - COMMEND**

LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, it's always encouraging to see our younger generation displaying leadership along with a capacity for compassion.

These and many other traits were recently demonstrated by a Grade 11 student at South Colchester Academy named Erica Fisher. A skilled volleyball player, she wanted to share her passion for the sport by organizing a volleyball clinic for others. Raising \$300 from the clinic, Erica chose to help those less-fortunate participate in sport and donated the funds to KidSport. Impressed by her selflessness, Volleyball Nova Scotia stepped in and matched her donation to KidSport.

I commend Erica Fisher for her time, effort, and generosity, and would like to congratulate her on such a successful endeavour.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

**BAYERS, GREG - PARAMEDIC: EMS AWARD - CONGRATS.**

SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Greg Bayers of Dayspring on being awarded the Emergency Medical Services Exemplary Services Medal for his dedication. Greg received this medal after more than 30 years in the emergency medical services field. Bayers attended his first ambulance call in Sheet Harbour when he was only 15 years old. He has served in a number of positions, including senior operations paramedic, supervisor, and safety coach.

On February 20<sup>th</sup>, Lieutenant Governor Arthur J. LeBlanc presented medals to Greg and 12 of his colleagues, all receiving recognition for their dedication to their careers in providing care to Nova Scotians.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you and all members of this House of Assembly please join me in congratulating Greg on receiving this medal and for his long-serving dedication in the field of emergency medical services.

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

**CRICK, DOREEN: BOOK LAUNCH - RECOG.**

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, yesterday wrapped up this year's African Heritage Month, and as the critic for our caucus, I had an opportunity to attend many wonderful events across the municipality and the province.

There is one particular event I wanted to recognize today. I had the pleasure of attending Ms. Doreen Crick's official book launch at the Keshen Goodman Public Library in Halifax. The event was so well attended that extra chairs had to be brought in, and there was still only standing room.

The books focus on women and their contributions to the survival of their families. The first book, *The Beautiful Caribbean Rainbow Islands*, is a fantasy trilogy about the creation of beautiful islands, and the second book, *Seawater*, is a tale of adventure of the Atlantic Ocean during an age of discovery.

I want to recognize Ms. Doreen Crick and all the organizers for a very entertaining and enjoyable evening and thank them for inviting me.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

**GOUCHER, JUDITH: STUDENT SAFETY INITIATIVE - RECOG.**

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a woman from my riding who noticed a problem in her community and worked diligently to fix it. Judith Goucher is a proud grandmother of students who attend Halifax West High School. While taking a walk on a pathway near the high school, Judith noticed a broken bench and garbage bins. Judith saw this as a hazard for students and the public and knew that something had to be done before someone got hurt.

She contacted her MLA office and presented us with pictures. With the help of my CA, Zeina Klayme, and the EA for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, Dylan Blain, this issue was resolved in two short weeks. Now, instead of being a danger at the school, the bench and the garbage bins are fixed and look wonderful.

Would this House of Assembly join me in applauding Judith for her keen eye? Our communities are safer because of people like Ms. Goucher.

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

**HILLIARD, MICHAEL - FIRE CHIEF: CAREER DEV. - CONGRATS.**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Before I start, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome the firefighters here today as well, and a special thanks to Donnie Whalen, who got on the road at four o'clock this morning to be here in time for the session to start.

A little-known fact: in a previous life, I spent two years as a paid firefighter for the Cape Breton Development Corporation. So I rise today to acknowledge Michael Hilliard, who was recently named chief of the Albert Bridge Volunteer Fire Department. Michael has been a firefighter for 28 years and is looking forward to taking over the position as chief.

While Michael is looking forward to his new position, he still feels chief isn't as important as fighting fires. "I didn't give up volunteering when I got hired (by Cape Breton Fire Services). I do it as my job and I do it to give back to my community."

I stand here today, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate Michael Hilliard on his new position and I feel very confident he will put all he has into that position. The Albert Bridge Fire Department and the whole community of Albert Bridge are very fortunate.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

**ALCOE-HOLLAND, JILL/SAULNIER, ANDREA - COMPETITORS:  
TOURN. OF HEARTS - BEST WISHES**

KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I recently became aware that a member's statement I delivered some time ago omitted a name, so I am going to read into Hansard so that the official record of this province accurately reflects the member's statement that I intended to give.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my most sincere congratulations to Jill Alcoe-Holland and Andrea Saulnier of Coldbrook, on qualifying to represent Nova Scotia at one of my favourite tournaments, the 2017 Scotties Tournament of Hearts in St. Catherine's, Ontario, starting on February 18. Jill and Andrea are the first members of the Glooscap Curling Club in Kentville to compete in this prestigious Canadian Women's Curling Championship. This accomplishment will provide inspiration to Kings County curlers for many years to come.

On behalf of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, I congratulate Jill and Andrea on this impressive achievement and wish team Nova Scotia the very best of luck in St. Catherine's. I know they will make us proud - and they did.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

**RANKIN, SARA: WORLD-CLASS LOGO DESIGN - CONGRATS.**

ALLAN MACMASTER: Let us recognize Sara Rankin of Mabou. Her design company has been named one of the top 10 best for designing logos. Clearly her creative talents are working and that is happening right here at home in rural Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, these are the kinds of success stories that give hope. Young people finding success at careers they have a passion for here at home. *Drizzle Mag* has found praise for her work and noted that she can be counted on to deliver guaranteed results on time. Sara was chosen amongst a field including companies in the United States, Europe, and South Africa.

We wish Ms. Rankin continued success and thank her for giving Nova Scotia companies award-winning logo designs, which are helping to grow revenues for small businesses.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

**JSTRONG FUND COMM.: FUNDRAISING - RECOG.**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the JStrong Fund was created to honour and remember the life of Jadon Robinson. Sports played a large role and made a big difference in Jadon's life. The JStrong Fund believes that every single child should be afforded the opportunity to participate in sports and recreation and the financial costs to take part should never be a barrier.

In the few years that it has been in operation, the JStrong Fund has raised over \$100,000 to assist with the cost of sports and recreation for youth in the Yarmouth community. The JStrong Fund is a loving tribute and testament to Jadon Robinson's passion for sports and his dedication to helping others - always with that famous, big, infectious smile.

I'd like to ask this House to join me in recognizing the JStrong Fund committee, Marla Robinson-Pyne, Chris Pyne, Tanya Maillet, Deborah Robinson, and Steve Berry for so generously giving their time and effort to helping the youth in our community be engaged in sports.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

**WILLIAMS, BILL: BOOK,  
TRAGEDIES ON THE UNFORGIVING SEAS - CONGRATS.**

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Bill Williams from Allendale on the publication of his book, *Tragedies on the Unforgiving Seas*, which was launched in Lockeport in December 2018 and captures true stories of those lost at sea in the area. Almost 90 years' worth of newspaper clippings carefully preserved by Bill and his father were used to recount the heartbreak and tragedy of lives lost in the dangerous pursuit of earning a living by fishing.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Mr. Williams on the tremendous achievement of writing and getting his book published and preserving these memories for generations to come. I wish him every success in the future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**PARK VIEW PANTHERS: HOCKEY TOURN. CHAMPS. - CONGRATS.**

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, last November the Park View Education Centre Panthers captured the title for the Glen Murray Invitational High School Hockey Tournament for the second straight year. The Panthers defeated North East Kings Education Centre in an exciting semi-final and then went on to defeat West Kings 5-0 in the final. The Panthers' Tyler Mason and Noah Wilkie were named tournament all-stars, and Wilkie was selected as best defenceman and Nick Croft was the tournament top goaltender.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in recognizing head coach Grant Johnston, along with the assistant coach Ethan Thomas, manager Mike MacLellan, trainer Lisa McCarthy, and all the parents and volunteers that it takes to make this popular and successful annual tournament happen.

Also, congratulations to the Park View Education Centre Panthers for their championship win.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

**DUFF, RYAN/VICTORY PARK SOC.: CONSTR. - THANKS**

EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ryan Duff and the Victory Park Society. Their goal is to construct a public park on the waterfront in North Sydney, and they've been actively pursuing that goal for the past three years. Fundraising and community involvement have been a cornerstone of the society. The park will include an accessible playground, splash pad, an open green space, boardwalk, wharf, and kiosks.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those community-minded citizens for the dream of Victory Park and their hard work to make it a reality.

[9:45 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

**GALBRAITH, MARGARET & PAUL:  
GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIV. - CONGRATS.**

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to congratulate two Bedford residents who recently celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. Margaret and Paul Galbraith were married January 18, 1969, in St. Catharines, Ontario, before heading off to Paul's first posting as a meteorologist.

The two of them are the kind of people you hope live in your community. They volunteer, they're people you can count on, and they get along with everybody. In fact, I don't think I've ever heard either one of them utter a bad word about anybody.

When I think about Paul and Margaret, I think of a well-matched couple. They go together like peanut butter and jam or beer and pizza. All those things are great on their own, but they're even better when they're together.

Margaret and Paul Galbraith have been a joy to get to know over the past dozen years or so, and I'm most happy to wish them love and many more years of happiness together.

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

**GEORGE, LORNA: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the life of Mrs. Lorna George of Arichat, who passed away on December 18, 2018. Lorna was instrumental in the founding of the OLA Catholic ladies' group, was a long-time school board member and trustee, and played a significant role in the establishment of Isle Madame District High School.

Lorna was well-known as volunteer for the CNIB and the Arthritis Society. Lorna's support for health care in the region was of personal importance to her. She worked tirelessly to secure the St. Anne Community and Nursing Care Centre with its emergency care facilities. St. Anne held a special place in Lorna's heart.

I send my heartfelt condolences to Lorna's family and friends for their loss. May she rest in peace.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

TAMMY MARTIN: I draw the members' attention to the gallery opposite - over there. (Laughter) I would like to introduce two very special guests that have just joined us: Ken Stuebing, the Fire Chief for Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency, and Peter Andrews, the Deputy Chief for Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency. I would like the House to give them a warm welcome and thank them for attending. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

### **ELLIOTT, BILL - MUSICIAN: CAREER ACHIEVEMENTS - CONGRATS.**

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, Bill Elliott of Bass River, Colchester North, has been involved with music all of his life as part of the talented Elliott Family. He began playing the fiddle as a child, but is also skilled on guitar, banjo, mandolin, and bass. Like his range of instruments, his music also crosses a variety of genres including country, old time, bluegrass, swing, jazz, folk, and Celtic.

Because of his skills on the guitar, in 2015, he was named the first recipient of the Canadian Certified Guitar Player. He has performed across North America and has opened for such folks as Merle Haggard and Waylon Jennings. He still plays with his family and with J.P. Cormier who considers Elliott one of Canada's best musicians.

He put out a new album in June and has been nominated for an East Coast Music Award for jazz recording of the year. He has been nominated before as part of the Elliott Family, but this time he's on his own.

This year's East Coast Music Awards: Festival and Conference will take place in Charlottetown, P.E.I., on May 1<sup>st</sup> to May 5<sup>th</sup>, and we wish this talented musician success. As a province, we have recognized Bill's contribution to the music industry in Nova Scotia. We wish him well as he stands as a proud Nova Scotian at the ECMA Festival.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

### **SELF-INJURY AWARENESS DAY - BUILDING BRIDGES**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to bring awareness to Self-Injury Awareness Day. For the past 16 years, we have brought awareness to this incredibly important cause. Raising awareness helps to educate those who are not affected by this serious injury and helps to reach out to those who are suffering. It's



important we talk about mental health issues like this, so we can help end stigma and build bridges to reach out to anyone who is hurting.

No one should feel alone and, as a community, we should reflect on what we can do to help with this growing concern.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**MORSE, CONNOR: STIHL TIMBERSPORTS CHAMP. - CONGRATS.**

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Harmony resident Connor Morse on winning the STIHL Rookie Canadian Championship title at the 2018 STIHL TIMBERSPORTS Canadian Championship.

Growing up on his family farm, Connor's training for this competition started early on as he began competing in 4-H woodsmen competitions at the age of six. His training, dedication, and incredible hard work paid off as he competed nationally in the STIHL TIMBERSPORTS Canadian competition, placing first in the underhand chop, the single buck, and stock saw events, and placing second in the standing block chop. These personal-best highs propelled Connor to become the champion of the under-25 Men's Rookie Division and are a true display of how he strives for excellence in all he undertakes.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of the House join me in congratulating Connor Morse on his remarkable championship title and wish him well as he competes in the Rookie World Championship in Sweden this May.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

**STRONGE, PAT: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.**

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and congratulate Pat Stronge, administrative assistant to the Advocate District School.

Pat retired yesterday, February 28, 2019, after 35 years guiding and inspiring everyone at the Advocate District School, and she will forever be known as the "captain" of this vessel. In her 35 years, Pat has survived six different principals, numerous teachers, and has seen over 250 graduates walk across the stage. Pat Stronge will be missed by all who have come to love her and admire her.

Please join me in congratulating Pat on her retirement after 35 years and a future filled with family, friends, and laughter.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

**ST. F.X.: SPORTING INITIATIVE FOR IMMIGRANTS - THANKS**

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, children from our Syrian-Canadian community in Antigonish have been getting more active by trying different sports for the first time over the past year, thanks to a new program aimed at helping immigrant children overcome inhibitions to being active in their new home community.

The initiative was led by St. F.X. education faculty members Dan and Ingrid Robinson, who along with Vanessa Currie, drew together community and government partners, St. F.X. faculty and students, and the Syrian-Canadian children themselves to plan and orchestrate opportunities to try such activities as basketball, tennis, rowing, and swimming.

Volunteers lent their time and skills to lead sessions, including more than 20 St. F.X. student athletes, who will follow up by presenting to funding partners about the first session. Although the numbers waxed and waned over the course of the program, 10 children were consistent participants. Not only did the participants enjoy the athletics, but they made new friends and gained new confidence in being active members in the community. They're even playing the new sports on their own time.

Mr. Speaker, I invite members to join me in showing their appreciation to organizers and partners in developing and delivering this excellent program for immigrant children in Antigonish.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**HEIGHTON, ELIZABETH - COMPETITOR:  
ROYAL AGRIC. FAIR - CONGRATS.**

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate Elizabeth Heighton of River John on her recent trek to Toronto to compete in the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. Elizabeth and her beef cow, Emma, were selected to represent the area during the national exhibition.

The duo started to work together over a year ago forming a unique bond, which propelled them through many local competitions and wins. Elizabeth and Emma took home second in the senior Charolais class and second in conformation. It was a dream come true for Mr. Langille, Emma's owner, to have one of his cattle participating in the Royal.

Elizabeth has a few more years to be involved with 4-H and I will be watching to see her advancements and her talent continue to shine in Pictou West.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**BUS STOP THEATRE: CURRENT SPACE - SECURE**

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, investing in infrastructure is a crucial role of government and it's not just 100-series highways. Almost 14,000 Nova Scotians work in the cultural sector and they need cultural infrastructure. Right now, a vital piece of my constituency is in jeopardy.

The Bus Stop Theatre on Gottingen Street is the only space in Halifax where independent companies can rent fully-equipped theatre space with professional sound and lighting. Shows like *One Discordant Violin* by 2b theatre have debuted there and gone on to tour widely. But just as important, the theatre is a warm, accessible space that is regularly used by community groups and diverse communities. As many properties in Halifax Needham have been redeveloped, makeshift theatre spaces have disappeared. Without the Bus Stop Theatre, the Fringe Festival, Mayworks, and Prismatic will be in jeopardy.

I beg the provincial government to work with the Bus Stop Theatre Cooperative to secure their current space and work towards doubling it so that the shows may go on.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

**HUDSON, KAREN: 2019 OUTSTANDING PRINCIPAL - CONGRATS.**

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Ms. Karen Hudson, principal of Auburn High School in Cole Harbour, who has been chosen by The Learning Partnership as one of 30 of Canada's Outstanding Principals for 2019.

Ms. Hudson understands that all students need to see themselves reflected in their learning and, as a result, Ms. Hudson has implemented culturally responsive, Afrocentric programming at Auburn High. Ms. Hudson helps her school team to develop the capacity to deliver culturally relevant programming through professional development and community involvement, which resulted in increased enrolment and achievements in higher-level math.

I applaud and congratulate Ms. Karen Hudson on being chosen as one of Canada's Outstanding Principals and for her dedication to ensure that all students feel supported in the school.

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

**DALI VAN GOGH - SINGLE: *GET AWAY* - CONGRATS.**

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to acknowledge a local Halifax band known as Dali Van Gogh on the release of their new single, *Get Away*. Cyrus R.O., bass player; Isaac Kent, son of former NDP MLA Becky Kent, guitar player; Rachel

Moreau at keyboard; John Scotto, lead vocals; and Johnny Moore on drums are the very talented five who make up Dali Van Gogh.

Isaac Kent is one of the owners of HouseFire Records recording studio which is located right around the corner from my office. The latest record, *Under Her Spell*, will be released on March 29, 2019, with a special event at the Garrison Brewing in Halifax. The record follows their 2017 album, *From Ashes*, which won the band victory in the Garrison's Brewing Battle of the Bands Bash, leading to an opening gig for the Glorious Sons at the Cunard Centre.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in acknowledging the local talent of Dali Van Gogh and much success during their future tour.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

#### **DARTMOUTH HS: AFRICAN HERITAGE MO. - RECOG.**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, last week I had the privilege to attend the African Heritage Month celebration at Dartmouth High School, organized by staff and students in association with the African Nova Scotian Music Association, it was a program full of music, dance, and was infused with a spirit of the community.

The celebration began with a traditional libation ceremony led by Ms. Monard and Ms. Winship. There were musical performances by the incredible Zamani Bernard-Millar and Owen Lee, spoken word poetry, and a visiting dance company from Halifax West High School.

In her remarks, guest speaker Delvina Bernard offered the students a little bit of African Nova Scotian history and heritage and reminded everyone in attendance that we need to shift our way of learning about history away from a Eurocentric lens so that all stories and histories get told and all peoples have a chance to connect to their past and present.

Dartmouth High is a great school that celebrates its diverse student population and it is truly an honour to be MLA for so many of its awesome students.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

#### **GOOD, BEN - ATHL.: SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS - BEST WISHES**

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Once in a while we get to celebrate outstanding young people in our communities. Today I am pleased to rise to bring attention to tri-sport athlete Ben Good.

Ben was recently named Athlete of the Year in the 14 and Under Male Athlete Division for the 2018 East Hants Sport Awards, recognizing his impressive record of accomplishments. He is the first athlete from Riverside Education Centre in Milford to win a provincial championship in cross-country running; he has placed in numerous marathons; he is also an award-winning goalie for the East Hants Minor Hockey Pee Wee A team; and is an almost impenetrable wall in the soccer net - he assisted his team with 13 wins, zero losses, and had only six goals scored on him in the regular season. Between the goal posts in soccer and hockey and on the cross-country trail or marathon track this young athlete is deserving of our recognition and congratulations.

I ask that all members of this House join me as we wish Ben Good continued success in all his endeavours.

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

[10:00 a.m.]

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

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

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

#### **GOV'T. (N.S.) - PAC MEETINGS: REDUCTION - CONCERN**

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, in 2016, the Public Accounts Committee met 29 times. Good work happens at that committee. That's the committee that raised questions about the changes to Seniors' Pharmacare, is one example. The government used its good wisdom to stop those changes because it wasn't prepared to make them. That's a good committee.

But recently, the Liberal majority on that committee used their power to force through a motion that would cap the number of times the Public Accounts Committee would meet to just 12 times, down from 29 times in 2016.

The Public Accounts Committee was in place for a lot longer than this government, and governments before that stood up to the scrutiny of the Public Accounts Committee with pride. I would like to ask the Premier: Is he concerned that his government is trying to reduce the number of the Public Accounts Committee meetings down to just 12?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As he would know, the Auditor General recommended we look at the Public

Accounts Committee and make it focused on the Public Accounts, which are really the reports that the Auditor General brings out.

He is very right; last year that committee sat 26 times. He is also right when it comes to the fact that they've reduced it to 12. But what he left out of the equation, and the example he used was Pharmacare, half of our budget is related to health care. Progressive Conservative Governments and New Democratic Governments have been asked every time they were in this House to put together a committee that could be scrutinized.

What we've done is put together a Health Committee that will be televised so Nova Scotians across this province can also see not only the Public Accounts being scrutinized, but can actually see their number one item, which is health care, the largest budget item being scrutinized in the Chamber of this House. That will require 24 meetings. That is a good thing for the people of Nova Scotia.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I applaud the addition of the Health Committee. That's something we called for; a place to discuss health issues. But what we didn't anticipate was that what he giveth, he taketh away.

Back in 2016, there were six standing committees, and with the addition of the Health Committee, there are still six standing committees because they consolidated the Natural Resources and the Economic Development Committees. The Health Committee is not supposed to be addition by subtraction. Does the Premier agree that the restrictions placed around the Public Accounts Committee and the removal of another committee increases transparency or does he think it takes away transparency and produces opportunities for the government to hide information?

THE PREMIER: I'm very proud of the fact that since we've come into government, we have an open data portal that we've seen Nova Scotians have access to more information. We've seen expenses of all the Cabinet Ministers being put online to be scrutinized by Nova Scotians. We've seen the expenses of senior staff in the Public Service online to be scrutinized by all Nova Scotians. We've seen information put online that could be accessed by Nova Scotians to be able to use.

On top of that, unlike the Progressive Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party, we're not afraid to let Nova Scotians look at the Department of Health and Wellness. We're not afraid to let them scrutinize the openness. (Interruptions)

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

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we're televising that debate so Nova Scotians across this province can see it. (Interruptions)

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

THE PREMIER: Half of our budget is health care. We've opened it up for the scrutiny of the Opposition Parties, so Nova Scotians can see that. For the life of me, I can't understand why the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party is opposed to that.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, the Premier may not be able to understand why we're opposed to how they limit witnesses and limit discussions, but I will tell you that anyone who looked at the federal Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights proceedings this week would understand that committees can be good for taxpayers, and would understand why the Liberal Party doesn't want committee meetings.

We can see why the Liberal Party doesn't want committee meetings. In 2016, there were six committees. There are still six committees, even with the addition of the Health Committee, so they're taking things away.

In 2016, those six committees met a total of 64 times. Under the new terms of reference that the Liberal Party has put down on committees, the maximum they can meet is 54. I would like to ask the Premier: What number is bigger - 64 or 54?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, in 2016 there was one committee that was televised. The Auditor General that Nova Scotians look to when it comes to the Public Accounts of this province said on behalf of Nova Scotians that committee needed to be revamped so that it would focus on the Public Accounts. There isn't a government in the history of this province that enjoys the Auditor General being in here. We opened it up to make sure that every month, he's in this Chamber for scrutiny.

On top of that, we also televise another committee called the Health Committee. Not one Progressive Conservative Government in the history of this province, or the one New Democratic government in the history of our province, was willing to do that. That is being open and transparent. That is doing what Nova Scotians want. We're looking forward to seeing that work happen.

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

### **H&W: AVAILABLE AMBULANCES - INADEQUATE**

GARY BURRILL: Over the course of the last eight weeks, paramedics in the province have issued a public warning that the supply of ambulances is perilously compromised. They have done this over 170 different times. That means that, over the last eight weeks, on an average of three times a day, in at least one of the four zones of the province, the supply of ambulances has not been adequate because the trucks have been backed up while paramedics have waited to transfer responsibility for their patients into overcrowded emergency rooms.

For crying out loud, Mr. Speaker, does the Premier not think that we can do any better than this?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for bringing this very important concern to the floor of the Legislature. Of course, we can do better than that.

The Minister of Health and Wellness is working with our partners. He sent a directive to ensure that we look at all options when it comes to the issues facing paramedics and the rigs that are on the road and certainly the off-load times that are happening within our province, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to hearing back from our partners through the Minister of Health and Wellness about what those options will be.

GARY BURRILL: In the last year for which data is publicly available, 10 per cent of the patients at the Dartmouth General's ER gave up waiting and left the hospital before they had ever been seen by a physician. At the QEII, the corresponding number is 8 per cent.

Last week at the Northside General, they were giving out flyers to people in the emergency room who had been there for eight hours, telling them that it was going to be quite a little while longer yet for a wait and suggesting they might want to come back the next morning or go over to the Regional in Sydney.

I want to ask the Premier: Doesn't all of this indicate that at a basic level, something somewhere deeply isn't working?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the reality is, the honourable member is laying out what is really an important issue. The fact of the matter is, over the last two decades, there has been no investment or transformation of health care delivery to reflect our reality today, not only that of us as patients but also of our health care professionals and how they want to deliver their services.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and Wellness stood up in this House yesterday, talking about the number of new physicians in the Dartmouth area who are taking 1,400 and 1,500 patients. We believe that number will grow after their practices continue to expand.

The issues that he highlights in different parts of the province are the reality, but I also want to tell the honourable member, so is the infrastructure that we have continued to invest in. Here in the capital region, he talked about the Dartmouth General. We are now putting four more operating theatres in Dartmouth, which will make a grand total of eight. If you were waiting for hips and knees downtown where you were before, and something happened in our province, you would be bumped. That will eliminate that possibility. Your surgeons will be there on time. The investments that we make down here are important.



The ones that we are making, Mr. Speaker, in Cape Breton Island are improving the health care delivery model on the island. Those who are caught in this in a political way do not want us to make the single-largest infrastructure investment in health care in Cape Breton Island. We're also hearing from health care providers who want to work in a new model.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, when you ask paramedics, what is the problem here, one of the things they say is that a great deal of overcrowding in our emergency room is caused by there being so many people in our hospitals who are waiting for placement in long-term care. The result is that there is nowhere to transfer patients from the emergency rooms.

Accreditation Canada, responsible for the validation of our own Health Authority, says that the expansion of these, they're called alternate level of care beds, is a core component of the challenge there is around patient flow.

When you talk to the seniors who are, themselves, living in the hospital and paying the NSHA a thousand dollars a month or more in order to be able to do that while they wait for a nursing home, they say that the circumstance isn't ideal for them, but they don't have anywhere else to go.

My question to the Premier is: When will he recognize and acknowledge that making investments in more long-term care facilities and infrastructure is a key core component of our successfully addressing the ongoing crisis in emergency care?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Long-term care has and continues to be on the top of the minds of Nova Scotians.

It is not just about long-term care beds. People want to age in place and that is why we continue to invest in home care to provide those supports. We continue to make sure that people get the opportunity to live at home for as long as possible.

The honourable member raises the issue about people who are in hospitals taking up hospital beds. That is exactly why in the new redevelopment in Cape Breton we are doubling the number of long-term care beds associated with those two facilities and we are building actually long-term care beds, not hospital rooms, but long-term care beds so we are providing the appropriate care in the appropriate place, and I look forward to the honourable member supporting that initiative that is being opposed by his Party.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

**GOV'T. (N.S.): PAC TOPICS - RESTRICTIONS**

TIM HOUSTON: Listen, there can be no doubt the Auditor General does good work on behalf of Nova Scotians, but when the Premier talks about limiting the Public Accounts Committee to only Auditor General Reports, we know his reasoning. His reasoning is because they know those reports months, years in advance.

It's really just a communications exercise to minimize damage. We know that because even when we propose topics from the Auditor General, the committee has used their power to reject them, like the November 2017 mental health topic when the committee said we don't want to talk about it, even though it is the Auditor General.

My question to the Premier is: Is he willing to instruct his members on committee to take the topics the Opposition put forward that are within his mandate instead of limiting them to just the ones that the Liberals feel comfortable as a communications exercise?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to make sure that all members of this House know that topics put before us and the committees are viewed by those committees independently of me. At the same time, we have a focus on the Auditor General and I encourage the honourable member to speak to the Auditor General about the recommendations he brought forward.

Again, I would also encourage all members of this House, when we talk about the very serious issue of mental health, we now have put together a Health Committee that will allow it to be in this Chamber and be televised for all Nova Scotians. I would encourage the Progressive Conservative caucus to take all those important issues to that committee.

THE SPEAKER: Before we go on to the supplementary, I want to remind all members (Interruptions)

Order, please. I'll ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to remove the folks in the gallery.

The House will now recess for a couple of minutes.

[10:13 a.m. The House recessed.]

[10:15 a.m. The House reconvened.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. Just before we were interrupted, I was about to say that the line of questioning on the work of the committee including those topics that the committee decides to set for agendas is not permissible for Question Period - general questioning about the committee, but not getting into the intricacies of what the committee does.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, given the importance of the Health Committee - because that we do think the Health Committee has the potential to be a good thing for this province and it is a significant portion of our budget - we do think that limiting it to 12 times a year is probably not significant, and we do think that the committee needs to be mindful as it sets its agenda.

This should be a committee that hears from physicians, that hears from front-line workers and lets them talk about their experiences with the health care system. That's how we'll move things forward.

So I would like to ask the Premier, is he willing to increase the frequency of the Health Committee to maybe twice a month, at least until we get through this health care crisis, and will we have some openness to hear from actual physicians and front-line workers about how we can improve health care in this province.

THE SPEAKER: I would reiterate my previous comments on the business of the committee is not to be discussed here, including the committee's mandate to set its own frequency of meeting.

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I would encourage all members of this House who are sitting on committees of any kind to bring the issues forward, make recommendations how often they sit.

I think just recently the Yarmouth ferry was brought before a committee, the Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee that the Opposition didn't want to sit during the House session. We made a recommendation to have it sit, that will be before us.

But, on top of that, I want to also go back to one other part of this question. I meet with physicians very regularly when it comes to looking at health care and I'm looking forward to continuing to meet with them as we continue not only to negotiate with them, but how do we work together to improve the system.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

#### **H&W - CAPE BRETON: COMM. HOSPITAL CLOSURES - REGRET**

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness.

The plan to close the community hospitals in Cape Breton makes no sense, and everybody knows it. Community hospitals actually ease the pressure on the larger system

because they can provide care to people close to home; keeping those who don't need more serious treatment out of emergency rooms and allowing local physicians to maintain a balanced practice.

This is a fact that the Premier and the Minister of Health and Wellness don't understand. If they did, they wouldn't continue to plow ahead with the closure of Northside General Hospital and New Waterford Consolidated Hospital.

Does the minister regret deciding to close community hospitals in Cape Breton without consulting doctors, nurses, health care workers, or any other community members?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Again, it seems that the member is advocating to maintain the status quo while at the same time arguing that the current system isn't sufficient for providing the care that Cape Bretoners need and want. That's why we're investing in new infrastructure in those communities to provide the environment for those physicians and other health care providers to provide the care to the patients in those communities. I absolutely will not apologize for that.

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, medical leadership in the NSHA is bleeding out on the island, and it's no surprise. Over the past few months, we've seen the resignations of several highly-respected doctors from leadership roles within the NSHA. Family doctors with emergency privileges are declining to pick up shifts because their own practices are overwhelmed.

Sadly, one of the only two hospitals to remain in Cape Breton is closed more than ever now, the Glace Bay emergency room. All available resources are being funnelled to the regional where staff are being run off their feet.

Will the minister admit that the crisis in health care in Cape Breton is getting significantly worse?

RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member, and I would like to remind the member that, in fact, as we continue to go through the work on the redevelopment project, investing in new infrastructure, new health care delivery model for the Cape Breton region that we do have doctors coming forward. Just a couple of weeks ago, Dr. Orrell came forward to join that program. He's been talking very much in the community and has been inviting feedback; in fact, he's spoken publicly about how he has already seen his voice being heard . . . (Interruptions)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please, order please, the honourable Minister of Health and Wellness has the floor.

RANDY DELOREY: He's spoken publicly though the media indicating exactly how he has seen his voice already being heard and impacting on the work that's being done planning these new infrastructure projects.

Mr. Speaker, I advise the member opposite that we do listen to physicians. They are part of this program and we'll continue to listen to their advice.

THE SPEAKER: Before we move on to the next question, I'm going to add three minutes to Question Period to allow compensation for the interruption that we just experienced, so we'll conclude at 10:53 a.m.

The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg.

### **H&W - CAMP HILL HOSPITAL: PROV. FUNDING - CONFIRM**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Can I use all those three minutes, Mr. Speaker? (Laughter) My question - through you of course - is to the Minister of Health and Wellness.

Recently, meetings were held with veterans' advocate and Naval veteran Angus Cameron. Angus is a friend of a World War II veteran and a resident of the Camp Hill facility here in Halifax. His friend has been told that his wife of many years, currently a resident of a nursing home, cannot be reunited with him in a vacant bed at Camp Hill. Angus reached out to the Minister of Health and Wellness on his friend's behalf and was told the department is not responsible for any beds at Camp Hill.

So, my question is simple, Mr. Speaker: Will the minister confirm today that Camp Hill Hospital is owned and operated by the province and administrated by the Nova Scotia Health Authority and, if so, can he confirm that non-military veterans have been admitted while they await long-term care beds?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, the veterans' beds at the Camp Hill facility are licensed or I guess funded, and the policies about those admissions for those veterans and others are by the federal government. There are occasions where some of the beds are purchased back by the province when they're vacant, but it is a facility that is operated, and the policies for veteran admission, are governed by the federal government, Veterans Affairs Department, and that's the way that operates.

ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, there are 16 vacant beds in that facility at this time. The minister has written a letter back to Angus saying that indeed the province is not responsible for those beds, but in his answer he says that they can buy back those beds that are not being used. Given those facts, why can't the minister and Nova Scotia Health Authority work together to place this veteran and his wife in beds together, as they are in their final years?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I believe one of the things the member is not highlighting from that correspondence is also the fact that I can't provide the details of individuals advocating on behalf of a third party without their express written consent. I believe I've also indicated that if individuals want to, they should reach out to Veterans Affairs and/or the Health Authority to look at individual situations. But that has to be done by the individual parties involved, or if they wish to have a third party to advocate on their behalf, to provide the appropriate privacy waivers to have those conversations and engagements.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

### **H&W - V.G. HOSPITAL: WATER LEAK - UPDATE**

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness.

Earlier this month, more than 150 radiation treatments were cancelled at the Victoria General Hospital after water leaked into fuel for the hospital's emergency power generator - and I'll table that story. Obviously, many patients and their families were concerned and upset that cancer treatments, in particular, had to be delayed because of an equipment failure. Patients had to deal with travel and pre-op procedures all over again for what might have been a preventable incident.

I'm wondering if the minister can update us: Has the Department of Health and Wellness determined what caused water to leak into fuel tanks at the VG?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, in fact the situation obviously is not the outcome that we would expect or hope to have any impact to care or delivery of services in our health care system. We know the VG is an aging site; that's why we've committed to the redevelopment project that will see new infrastructure in place. Work is already underway for new operating rooms and other work at Dartmouth General and Hants. The design is well established for the redevelopment on the HI site.

Mr. Speaker I haven't received the report as to why the water, how that tank got contaminated.

KARLA MACFARLANE: I thank the minister for his answers. I know we all know in this Chamber that the VG is absolutely no stranger to these kinds of incidents in recent years, particularly. We understand that the water tanks were inspected recently, in January actually, but for some reason the flaw leading to the water leakage wasn't identified at that time of inspection.

An exterior tank has now been installed to improve backup fuel supply, but what we don't know is if there has been any change to the inspection routine. Patients are deeply

concerned that a failure to properly inspect this equipment could lead to even more procedure cancellations and we certainly don't want that for people. It is an added expense for them, especially when they are travelling across the province.

How often are inspections conducted on backup generator fuel tanks and other critical infrastructures at the VG? Have those procedures changed following this incident?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, in fact, I believe this process did evolve actually out of one of the detailed emergency system tests. That's why this issue with the backup power was identified, because they were testing those generators in the system transfer. We identified it at the time when it didn't occur in an absolute emergency situation.

In fact, these processes and these emergency response, again having protocols and processes in place on paper is one thing, but what the public can have confidence in is that our systems actually do get tested, so if there are flaws or challenges in them that we identify them and we can implement the fixes, so when a true emergency comes along we'll have everything in place.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

#### **EECD - REPORT CARD CHANGES: LOSS OF INFO - RESPOND**

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Last year when we stood in this House and voiced our concerns about the removal of elected school boards, the minister assured us things will be better because now we'd have a direct line to the minister himself.

I have a letter sent by a constituent that I'll table that outlines the short-sighted changes made to report cards for students in Grade 6. The constituent sent this letter three times and it took seven weeks to get a response. That is hardly a direct line, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the minister is: Now that the Grade 4 to Grade 6 reports cards are focusing on math and language arts, how are parents of students in Grade 6 expected to know how their children are doing when 40 per cent of their classes are not included on the report card?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: To the member's point, we've had three independent reports that indicated to government that the old governance structure of our education system with the boards was contributing to bad impacts in the education system, namely different levels of achievement being experienced from region to region. That is simply because with nine independent education authorities in this province programming was being delivered differently, to different standards, and to different levels of success.

Modernizing that governance system is actually critical to improving the achievement levels of our students. That is not according to government; that's according to three independent reports we took very seriously. That is why those changes were made.

Integrating this system does allow the department to have greater control over these, to make sure there are better standards of practice applied in each of our regions so our students, no matter where they're going to school in this province, have the same chance at succeeding.

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, Grade 6 classes that are in junior high have a different teacher for every subject, unlike those who are still in elementary school. The new report card configuration for Grade 4 to Grade 6 does not account for the different teachers for each subject because it is based on the assumption Grade 6 students are in elementary school. My question to the minister is: What message are we sending to students about the value of science and social studies when they don't even merit a grade on their report card?

[10:30 a.m.]

ZACH CHURCHILL: To be clear, school boards - those regional governing bodies - were not making decisions on assessment or on reporting. Those have always been with the department, and we do have a process for that.

We're currently working with the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions, which involves teachers from across this province - I just met with them this week actually - who are working on recommendations in relation to assessment with the goal of doing our very best to reduce paperwork burden on teachers, but also have the appropriate framework in place to give our kids the best chance at succeeding. I do trust those folks in the system who make decisions in relation to this and the processes that we have in place.

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

#### **H&W: COL.-E. HANTS HEALTH CTR. - SANE SERV.**

LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Last Fall, I asked the minister to respond to the lack of a sexual assault nurse examiner for treatment of sexual assault survivors at the Colchester East Hants Health Centre. After continued questioning throughout the Fall session, the minister finally promised to expand the same program to Truro, but here we are, four months later, and there is still no indication of when that might happen. Can the minister please tell us when the good people of Colchester can expect to have SANE services at the hospital in Truro?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Indeed, we take the concerns that were brought up in the Fall very seriously. We engaged



with the Health Authority. They've already taken steps to improve the education at emergency departments - not just with Truro, but across the province - to make sure that staff have the appropriate awareness of SANE services and how to respond to sexual assault victims that show up in our emergency departments.

We did investigate the opportunity for our proposal to deliver the services from a provider outside the Truro area. That didn't materialize so we have to go to an RFP. That work is under way to get the RFP built to go out to market to have those services provided in the Truro region.

LENORE ZANN: Thank you for that response. However, having SANE services in communities right across the province is a necessary aspect of health care, particularly for women. Victims of sexual assault and violence being turned away from our hospitals is completely unacceptable.

One of the women who last Fall shared her account publicly, who is a constituent of mine - and she wrote a letter to the minister, which he responded to - recently has said that the lack of progress on the issue is extremely disappointing, and the Colchester Sexual Assault Centre in Truro has still not received any response to their requests from the department, which were sent over a year ago.

Could the minister please assure me today, on behalf of my constituents, that funding for SANE services in Truro will be included in the next budget and available at the hospital by the summer?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I do want to assure the member, and indeed, all Nova Scotians in Truro and throughout the province, especially those who may be victims of a sexual assault, that the services are available in our emergency departments.

SANE services have been expanding throughout the province - recently in the South Shore area and Cape Breton. Those came onstream just in this past year. (Interruptions)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness has the floor.

RANDY DELOREY: As I've already indicated, concerns that were brought forward late in the summer and the Fall, were taken to heart so steps were taken by the Health Authority to do more on educating and providing more information to emergency department staff so that they know where and how to refer people to those SANE services that are available, while at the same time, we as a department have been working to evaluate a proposal that did come forward that the member referenced.

That proposal did not come to fruition, and we have to go forward with a full RFP, and I can't say when that's going to be completed.

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

### **H&W - BUCHANAN MEM. HOSP.: POINT-OF-CARE TEST - EXPLAIN**

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Over a month ago, residents of the North of Smokey area who are served by Buchanan Memorial Hospital in Neils Harbour were informed that they would be losing the services of the only lab technician on site and that he would be replaced by point-of-care testing.

As expected, Mr. Speaker, this has raised a lot of concern for both residents of the community and the doctors who serve the hospital - so much so that Dr. Bernie Buffett, one of those doctors, has shared five letters questioning the action and point-of-care testing. Yesterday, the minister spoke highly of the benefits of point-of-care testing. I suggest maybe he should speak to Dr. Buffett.

My question for the minister is: Who is responsible for making this decision and why was it made?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: The operations within the hospitals, Mr. Speaker, are governed and administered by the Nova Scotia Health Authority. That would be the organization that makes the decisions around the operations for those facilities.

With respect to when a lab technician who is providing services is no longer available, the Health Authority does have to respond to ensure that testing services are available. The advances in technology - the member referenced point-of-care technology. That is technology that allows testing of many, many samples to be conducted on site in community hospitals without the need for lab technicians, because the technology does the testing for them. That's what they put in place at that site when they weren't able to find a replacement technician.

KEITH BAIN: Well, apparently the Health Authority hasn't taken into account the fact that it's going to take at least three hours to deliver blood from Buchanan Hospital to the Regional, and citing the lack of technologists as one of the reasons won't cut it either.

It is our understanding that there are 35 people graduating from the lab tech program at NSCC who have never even been approached by the Health Authority. On top of this, the hospital foundation and the community have been trying to recruit doctors to replace two on staff who are ready to retire. The decision by the Health Authority to remove this service makes recruitment even more difficult if doctors feel that they're not being properly supported and the services they require aren't there.

My question to the minister: Will he reverse this bad decision and begin the process to immediately hire a lab technician at Buchanan Memorial Hospital?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, the member again questions the role of the testing technology - point-of-care bedside testing services. What this actually enables is, in many cases, getting tests for many conditions back even faster on site through that technology.

I've spoken and had information presented to me from community hospitals where point-of-care testing has been implemented in the province. Individual front-line workers who admit that they were hesitant and resistant to this technology, only months later, after seeing it implemented in their community hospitals, speak quite positively and encourage others to go into these systems with an open mind.

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

### **EECD: INCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS - IMPLEMENT**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

It has been over a year now since I raised this point regarding young people in our society who face challenges in our public school system - challenges which can only be solved through an alternate avenue of education. The minister had stated that an expert and informed group on the system of inclusion would investigate and provide recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, my question is: Can the minister explain what those recommendations have been and what his ministry has done in terms of implementing them?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: We do have a tuition support program in place - which I know at least one constituent of the member was not eligible for - to help students who aren't getting what they need in the public system to access that in specialized schools in the private sector.

In terms of the inclusion support, we acted immediately. We increased our Education budget specifically for inclusion by \$15 million. We used that money to hire nearly 200 non-teaching support staff into the system, which include child and youth care practitioners, teaching assistants, behavioural specialists, autism specialists and school psychologists, speech language pathologists. Those are all hired right now in the system.

We've also created eight alternative learning programs, one for each region of the province, to help make sure that each of our students in the system, no matter what challenges they may face when it comes to learning, have better access to better learning.

ALFIE MACLEOD: I thank the minister for his answer. Once Eric's parents were told that he wouldn't be able to read past a Grade 2 level or do multiplication, Eric Wynn is now thriving for the first time in his life, Mr. Speaker. However, this success is at a cost to the family, causing considerable financial strain and stress. Students like Eric Wynn, who is known to be twice exceptional, something that affects only about 1 per cent of the children, and is not qualified to receive subsidies because he is going to a private school.

Mr. Speaker, the question to the minister is: What will the minister do to change the system so that students with exceptional cases like Eric, will be able to receive the fair financial support and the education they should be entitled to in the Province of Nova Scotia?

ZACH CHURCHILL: Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker. We're making some of the most substantial and transformative changes in our educational system that we've seen in at least 30 years, to help students like Eric. Knowing a bit about this case, programs that could specifically in the public system be of use to that family are the alternative learning programs, looking at the additional individual interventionists that we do have in the system, the new behavioural, autism and learning specialists that we've hired.

These new supports, I believe, can have an impact on learning for Eric and many more students who are in our system, Mr. Speaker, who haven't necessarily been getting their learning experience that we want them to.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

#### **H&W - NURSING HOME BEDS: PLACEMENT DELAY - EXPLAIN**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Last Friday there were 15 empty long-term care nursing care beds in Cumberland County. Meanwhile, there were nine patients ready and waiting for a long-term care bed in our acute care hospital. Meanwhile, there were 10 patients admitted in the emergency, laying on a stretcher in hallways for three to four days because there were no acute care beds available.

Mr. Speaker, the average length of time to transfer a patient from the acute care hospital bed to a long-term care bed when one becomes available is cited at 10 to 12 days. My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: What is causing the delay in these nursing home bed placements?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: That's work that is under way between the department and the Health Authority when looking at flows and discharges, Mr. Speaker, throughout the system, not just for the ALC beds - alternative level of care beds - but indeed throughout the hospital system.

We recognize that having a smooth transition and timely and efficient discharges from our hospital system can have a positive impact throughout. What we have seen though, Mr. Speaker, over the course of our term in office is that the number of patients waiting in those ALC beds for a nursing home bed have decreased, as has the amount of time that they've been waiting decreased since our time in office.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I thank him for the answer and even though maybe on paper some numbers have decreased, when you are a family member or a person who is waiting in a hallway on a stretcher for three to four days, sick, with no privacy, can't sleep and get your lunch brought to you in a paper bag, this is a problem that there's really no excuse, knowing that there are empty nursing home beds for 10 to 12 days while people are waiting on these stretchers.

Health care is a 24/7 service and I've been told that nursing homes are refusing admissions on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Nursing home owners are paid, whether the bed is empty or full.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: What is he willing to do to remove

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: What is he willing to do to remove red tape and improve efficiencies to move patients faster from these acute care beds to our nursing home long-term-care facilities?

[10:45 a.m.]

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as I had indicated in my first response, that work is underway to look at the processes within our health care system to improve exactly that, the process flows and how to do so in a more efficient and effective way. That is part of continuous improvement. That is what we are committed to doing throughout our health care system.

We've made investments in our systems. We invested in home care to help transition people to home. We have a number of recommendations around long-term care from our long-term-care expert panel review that is targeted towards improving the quality of care being delivered to those in our long-term-care facilities. We look forward to being more efficient in moving patients or residents into those facilities as well.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

#### **H&W - DOCTOR RETIREMENTS: SENIOR SUPPORTS - RESPOND**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. I was approached by a constituent this week whose doctor retired in December. This senior has diabetes and also had a heart bypass. This constituent requires annual

bloodwork to monitor his diabetes. Before retiring, his doctor gave this gentleman a requisition to get bloodwork done. However, when he presented the requisition, he was refused because his doctor is no longer practising.

My question to the minister is: Is it a common practice that a retiring doctor's requisitions are no longer honoured?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, that's the first I've heard of a situation like that. I thank the member for bringing it to my attention and I'll certainly endeavour to look into it if he wants to provide me perhaps with a little more detail after the fact. What I can advise the member, I think for his constituents and those in the region, we have recruited, the Nova Scotia Health Authority, I believe about six physicians to the Pictou region since April 1 of last year. In addition to that, they've hired seven additional nurses supporting primary care providers in collaborative practice teams in the Pictou County recently as well. Work is underway to support the residents of his community.

PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer. This gentleman has tried repeatedly to go to walk-in clinics to get his bloodwork done but long lineups have prevented him from seeing a doctor. He is past due for the bloodwork but can't seem to get the process started despite having a doctor's requisition for it. Like many Nova Scotians, he's yet to find a new family doctor. My question to the minister: Can the minister tell me how the health care system supports seniors with significant needs who have lost their family doctor?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as I'd indicated, I hope the member will share perhaps the details with me. We can look in to the specific situation to help that constituent. More broadly, as I said, in communities like Pictou, indeed communities across the province, we continue to work with our partners at the Health Authority to recruit additional family physicians. I'd like to remind the member that coming onstream in July of this year are 10 additional family practice residency seats. Indeed, six of those residency seats are committed to the Northern Zone of which Pictou is part. These are some of the examples of things that we are focused on doing to ensure we improve primary care in communities like Pictou and throughout the province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

#### **EECD - STUDENTS FIRST REPORT: IMPLEMENTATION - UPDATE**

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Almost a year ago, the minister told us that he accepted the broad objectives of the recommendations made by the Commission on Inclusive Education. However, beyond a one-time investment which we've heard about many times in some additional staff, it isn't clear what the government is doing to build the truly

inclusive education system that was laid out in the comprehensive five-year plan of the commission entitled *Students First*.

Will the minister update concerned parents and teachers by tabling the government's implementation plan for the recommendations in the *Students First* report?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There'll be more coming in this year's budget and I hope that the member does support (Interruption) Oh, we have three minutes more, then I have time to answer that question.

We're about six months into a five-year rollout of the inclusion report. They have established a blueprint for us to follow - we're partnering with Inclusive Education Canada to provide oversight and direction on the implementation of this report. We have already gone to an RFP to bring in an independent third-party academic to provide public evaluations for us to assess how we're doing.

The first focus of the report obviously was on behavioural supports, additional bodies in the system. We successfully hired 200 people. We are in the process of bringing forward a new budget and the member, I know, will be happy to see that there will be good news in that budget - and I hope to have her support as we continue to increase investment in education, which has already happened by about \$400 million in this province, by 30 per cent of the budget.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, more support workers are welcome, but parents and community members are concerned that not enough is being done to make real change, and the experience on the ground that we hear is that the experiences for students have gotten worse.

Part of the reason, despite these investments, is that there's a lack of clarity and accountability in the government's approach to this issue. One of the key recommendations in that very first phase of the report was the creation of an Executive Director of Inclusive Education position within the department, to lead the implementation and be responsible for it. The creation of this position was key, again, in the very first phase of that implementation.

Mr. Speaker, has the minister filled this position and, if not, when can we expect it to be filled?

ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, in recognizing that inclusive education isn't just one thing, recognizing that we need to have a culture of inclusive education within the department and across the system, we've actually brought in three people to take on the responsibilities of that.

We have our Director of Student Services, who is taking on a leadership role in this regard, and we have hired a Mi'kmaw representative and an African Nova Scotian representative, all three of whom are the triumvirate on this position. We're approaching it by not hiring one position, but by applying these responsibilities to no less than three.

Mr. Speaker, I will remind the member opposite, while I know she is rightfully critical of what we're doing, that's her job, I will remind her that the chairperson of the Commission on Inclusive Education has actually been very supportive publicly on the direction that this government has taken - and I will table her public comments for the record.

THE SPEAKER: Order please. The time allotted for Oral Questions put by Members to Ministers has expired.

The honourable Minister of Internal Services on an introduction.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, we have some important guests in the East Gallery that I know the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board will be introducing after me, but I wanted to take a moment to introduce one of the adults with them - my former teacher, Mr. John Stone.

Members, if you've ever watched the movie *Dead Poets Society* and you think, do teachers like that actually exist? I'd like you to know that in our gallery we do have one. He embodies John Keating. He taught me how to be a lifelong learner and he taught me how to have joy in everything that I do and, more importantly, he taught me confidence and self-worth, which is partly why I am here today.

So, I ask that you welcome him to the gallery and let him receive the warm welcome. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board on an introduction.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Again, I would like to draw everyone's attention to the gallery opposite, where we do have Mr. John Stone. We also have teacher Jamie Langille and not to say "more importantly," but I will say more importantly, the class of Grade 9 students from Armbrae Academy. They are part of the Canadian government class and they are here to learn about the proceedings here in the Province of Nova Scotia as part of their study of the British Parliamentary System.

So, I would like all of those students and their teachers to stand. I would like to acknowledge Lucy Rafuse - maybe you could be the first one to stand up, Lucy - and her classmates. Thank you for coming. I know you've had a tour of this historic building and



I hope it's been a great learning experience for you and your teachers. They will take you back to the classroom and you will continue that learning journey. (Applause)

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

### **PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 84.

#### **Bill No. 84 - Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary Appreciation Act.**

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

HON. KAREN CASEY: I stand today to move Bill No. 84, the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary Appreciation Act, and that it be now read for a second time.

Nova Scotians who volunteer for the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary are being recognized for their valuable support for marine search and rescue operations. The auxiliary provides valuable support for the commercial fishery year-round and for pleasure craft during the summer.

Auxiliary members will be able to qualify for an exemption from their vehicle registration fee with this new legislation being introduced today. The exemptions include both car and truck vehicles. I'm proud we are the first in the country to acknowledge the marine search and rescue volunteers and that they deserve this important recognition.

Members live in communities such as Yarmouth, Liverpool, Parrsboro, Advocate, Pugwash, Sheet Harbour, Ingonish, Glace Bay, and many other communities along our coastline. When requested by the Canadian Coast Guard or the Department of National Defence, the auxiliary activates their boats in the designated area.

In Nova Scotia, there are about 400 active auxiliary members who volunteer and provide the service of their own vessels to help cover this extensive coastline we have. Volunteers operate their privately-owned vessels during a crisis when the goal of everyone is to save lives that are at risk. When a distress call goes out, volunteers are typically already on the water or very close by. They are well-positioned to reach the scene quickly and are trained to stabilize the situation and offer support.

Prevention is another important work of this group. Volunteers aim to reduce the number and severity of marine incidents and for this reason, the auxiliary is active in promoting marine safety through safe boating awareness activities.

Nova Scotians appreciate the selfless contributions made by search and rescue volunteers on land and at sea. Yesterday, Frank Boudreau and Darcy Henn joined us for introduction of the bill and we were so proud that they were invited, and they were so proud to be invited.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the comments and support from the Opposition members of the House and I think we all need to remember this bill is not about who takes credit; it's about who gets credit.

[11:00 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

KARLA MACFARLANE: I want to thank my colleague for introducing this bill. It's the third time it was introduced, and absolutely right - I've never been an individual that cared who got credit. I'm glad the bill is here. I couldn't be happier about this. It's fantastic.

With hundreds of thousands of miles of coastline around Canada and Nova Scotia, with a limited number of government search-and-rescue facilities, there has been a steady reliance upon volunteer services to assist those in distress at sea. Often in the past, those coordinating a search wasted valuable time attempting to contact willing volunteers who are properly equipped or knowledgeable to assist in search and rescue, also known as SAR. No mechanism was available to compensate these volunteers for expended fuel and wear and tear to their vehicles or vessels, or to basically to insure their boats while rendering assistance to others on the sea.

To address some of these shortcomings, in 1978, concerned mariners in various parts of Canada met with the Canadian Coast Guard and agreed to form themselves into five associations, one in each Coast Guard region. Each association or Canadian Marine Rescue Auxiliary, then signed a contract in the fall of that year, with the CCG Maritime signing in that December.

This concept of an independent corporate body with a contract to provide search and rescue services allows the Canadian Coast Guard to provide training, insurance, and compensation to the CMRA members without losing their volunteer status.

Auxiliary members are not government employees and are under no more compulsion than any other vessel owner to assist in search and rescue as required by the Canadian Shipping Act, but because of their participation in the CMRA, details such as

names, phone numbers, types of vessels, and locations are now readily available to the rescue centre.

This greatly reduces response times to SAR. Incidents in areas far removed from other rescue sources at a cost far below that of deploying a full-time SAR vessel and crew at the many locations served by the CMRA.

With the signing of the contract among the CMRA Maritimes and the Coast Guard in December of 1978, the newly-incorporated Auxiliary, often referred to informally as the Coast Guard Auxiliary, existed only on paper.

Times have changed, and these local groups, now called units, are made up of fishers and/or yachtsmen from one or more local communities who organize themselves in areas for volunteer rescue work with their own vessels. They choose a leader, they go into SAR training, first-aid courses, and exercises, and then decide on how to best put themselves at the disposal of the rescue centre.

The Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary is an organization that is dedicated to on-water search and rescue and safe boating activities. Their mission is to provide permanent day and night search and rescue services to cover marine requirements in the Maritime region and prevent the loss of life and injury. Their mission statement is simple, and I quote, "Save 100% of lives at risk; Reduce the number and severity of SAR incidents; Promote marine safety; Support the Canadian Coast Guard; Provide a humanitarian service; Maintain the highest professional standards; Promote dedication and pride of membership."

Like many volunteer organizations, CCGA is experiencing difficulty in retaining volunteers. This is, in part, due to an aging population of vessel owners in rural communities, in particular, and a shift of the younger demographics moving to major urban cities.

Another major challenge in the recruitment and retention of volunteers is the time pressures that are put on families today. Both parents, in most cases, are working and commuting further and further for employment and any effort to balance time between work, home, and volunteering is most challenging.

With any volunteer organization, there is not a simple solution to the issue of recruiting and retaining volunteers, however, this bill could provide incentive for Nova Scotians, in particular in the rural areas, to put their names forward to volunteer.

I do want to personally thank the members for allowing me to enjoy water activities in my community with my friends and family. We are on the water a lot as a family and I want to thank them for answering the calls in the middle of the night, in the middle of

supper, in the middle of playing with their own children, or whatever they are doing to help us.

I am so very proud, after trying my best to pass this bill for two years, to have the bill introduced this session by the Liberal Government.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Darcy Henn and Frank Boudreau for their advice and wisdom over the last two years. It has been a great opportunity for me to learn more about the Canadian Coast Guard and, again, we stand over here totally in support of this bill going forward. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to stand and speak on this today.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Madam Speaker, the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary have a long history in my electoral district of Dartmouth South and in Dartmouth North, where we are very lucky to have a huge amount of our district run along the coast of Halifax Harbour.

The former base at Parker Street, the Coast Guard base, is now home to the Centre for Ocean Ventures & Entrepreneurship, which is a truly awesome facility that we're very proud to host. The long history of that facility in Dartmouth and the current base near the Bedford Institute of Oceanography has really embedded the Coast Guard and its auxiliary into our community. We have lots of families, as the member just spoke of, who are very connected to the work of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and who benefit from the protection of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the lifesaving work they do.

As you've heard from my colleagues, the work of the Coast Guard Auxiliary is hugely important and also impactful. As a volunteer corps, I think there's nothing better that we could do than to support them.

The NDP caucus fully supports the work of these women and men and all efforts of this House to increase their numbers and to recognize the importance of that work.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Madam Speaker, it is my honour to stand here today and speak on this very important bill. We heard a lot of great things said about the Coast Guard Auxiliary. Part of the Coast Guard Auxiliary's mission that really sticks with me is to save lives on the water. It's a pretty powerful mission, to save lives.

I grew up in the fishing village of Herring Cove, in between Herring Cove and Sambro. When we were younger, we used to hitchhike down to Sambro and bait trawl and

then, those of us who were brave enough, we'd get out on the boats and try to fish. I've said this many times - I didn't have my sea legs, so I wasn't the best for that.

Our community, like many communities in Nova Scotia, depends on the water. It depends on the ocean. A lot of us were born with and still have salt - a lot of people in this Chamber have salt in our veins. Not only do we make a living off the water but we live next to the water and we are on the water for recreational purposes.

There are a lot of people to thank who made this happen. I believe this was truly a collaboration. It was an example of partnership between communities, between individuals, and between political Parties.

I want to specifically thank and acknowledge Paddy Gray from Sambro, Nova Scotia. I'd also like to get on record that Paddy can stop calling me about this bill now. Paddy probably called me - and I've had conversations with Darcy, and Darcy and Paddy went back and forth several times - about 100 times on this. That's not an exaggeration. He called me this morning, he called me last night, he called me in the afternoon.

He specifically wanted to thank all members of the Legislature and the minister for making this happen. It may not seem like a lot to some people, but just that little bit of acknowledgement that the work you are doing is extremely important to Nova Scotians - and it is lifesaving work - goes a long way for those men and women.

A lot of them are actually fishermen and fisherwomen who in their free time, in their spare time, are out there as part of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. It means a lot to them that they are being recognized for their hard work and their volunteerism.

I would like to recognize and thank the minister for the importance of her leadership on this and taking hold of this bill and making sure that it is one that was put through and that all sides were listened to on this. That's a big thank you.

To the member for Pictou West, for our many conversations over the years on this, I can say there was collaboration and our communities came together. I think Pictou and Sambro came together on this bill. The member and I had many conversations on the importance of this bill and making sure that this bill gets through. I do want to recognize her for helping to make this a reality and for working with all of us to make this happen.

So, I'm going to keep this short and sweet, so, to the many people who have worked together to recognize the important work of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, their services are ones that are critical. They're critical to a lot of Nova Scotians. Their work, their service, I think, a lot of times go unnoticed until, like we saw here today with our brave men and women in the fire department, until we need them. I think a lot of times we don't realize how important their services are. So, I'm proud to stand here today in support of this bill and, as a caucus, we are all deeply in support of this bill.

We all hope that we never have to use these services but, when we do need these services, we are forever grateful. So, Madam Speaker, I would argue that this isn't a government bill. It isn't an Opposition bill. This is a bill of collaboration and appreciation; appreciation for all our local heroes. Thank you.

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

HON. KAREN CASEY: Madam Speaker, I do appreciate the comments that came from Opposition Parties and, as the member has just said, this is something that every member, I believe, in this House would support. I thank you for your comments. I thank you for your support and, with those comments, I will close debate on Bill No. 84.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 84. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Madam Speaker, this concludes the government's business for today. We'll be back though, ladies and gentlemen.

I move that the House do now rise to sit again Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Business will include, after the daily routine, the second readings of Bill No. 90, the Boxing Authority Act, as well as Bill No. 91, the Nova Scotia Museum Act. So, of course, we'll go through those second readings and then, with time permitting, move to Address in Reply.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again on March 5<sup>th</sup> between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

The House stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>.

[The House rose at 11:13 a.m.]