



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2019

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2019

Sixty-third General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, Brendan Maguire

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

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

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, before I present the petition, could I have your permission to do an introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

KAREN CASEY: Thank you. In the gallery opposite, we have two members here from the SuNNS, Sustainable Northern Nova Scotia, group. The petition that I will be tabling originated from that group.

I would like to introduce Kathryn Anderson and Carol Ferguson, who are here representing many members of the SuNNS group. Welcome to the Legislature. (Applause)

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

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition. There have been two changes since this petition was circulated. There is now a new minister and a new department, so the operative clause would read: We the undersigned, call upon the new minister and the new department to protect our water and cancel a gold mining project on Warwick Mountain.

Mr. Speaker, I have affixed my name to this petition.

I beg leave for some direction on that change in the operative clause.

THE SPEAKER: As the honourable member stated, given that the petition was done some time ago, prior to the change from the Minister of Lands and Forestry to now the Minister of Mines and Energy, does the House agree to accept the petition?

It is agreed.

The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

GORDON WILSON: As Vice-Chair of the Committee on Law Amendments, I'm directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

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

Bill No. 90 - Boxing Authority Act.

Bill No. 91 - Nova Scotia Museum Act.

Bill No. 92 - Municipal Government Act and Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

Bill No. 95 - Emergency "911" Act.

Bill No. 97 - Credit Union Act.

Bill No. 99 - Assessment Act.

Bill No. 101 - Tourist Accommodations Registration Act.

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

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

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, may I do an introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, in the East Gallery we are joined by a group of young Nova Scotians from the MacPhee Centre for Creative Learning. The MacPhee Centre does incredible work providing creative learning programs and mentorship for youth in the community at their downtown Dartmouth location. As I read their names, I would ask them - oh, they're all standing now. (Applause) My own children don't listen like that. Tabitha White, Charlotte Morin, Julia Prager, Jorja Prager, Quinne Dexter, Matayah Weeks-Williams, Taighe Foster-Gallant, Bryana Skibinsky, Ashlyn Skibinsky, Kylie Mcinroy and Tegan Daley - welcome. (Applause)

Heather MacDonald, who is the executive director; Adam Sigrist, the program manager; Mike Janz, the manager of Fund Development and Stakeholder Relations; and Karn Nichols, who is the chair of the board - I want to welcome all of them here and I also want to thank them. I know we're not allowed to use props in the House, but I want to thank you for the painting that you not only provided me, but you've provided every member of the House, and they're in your mail slot when you go out. I especially want to thank Emily, who was the artist behind the painting that I will actually put in the Premier's Office. Welcome to Province House to all of you. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 825

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

Whereas 10 years ago the community of Dartmouth came together to try a different approach in connecting with and empowering local youth, and founded the MacPhee Centre for Creative Learning; and

Whereas the MacPhee Centre provides youth with an opportunity to learn from creative industry professionals in programs that provide participants with hands-on learning experiences that develop new skills and a greater self-confidence in themselves; and

Whereas through the hard work and dedication of its staff, volunteers, and supporters, the MacPhee Centre was able to provide over 65 free programs to over 1,000 local youth in 2018 alone, demonstrating a strong commitment to providing all youth with an equal opportunity to learn and grow regardless of their background;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in both thanking and recognizing the MacPhee Centre for Creative Learning for the difference it has made in the lives of the many youth who walk through their doors and the even greater impact that has made as they bring together and strengthen their 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.

The honourable Minister of Immigration.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

LENA METLEGE DIAB: I would like to draw your attention to the East Gallery where I'm pleased to introduce a number of employers with us this afternoon who are representing Nova Scotia businesses designated under the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program joining us today. These employers have successfully filled labour needs in the regions of our province through the pilot.

I will ask them to please rise: Gordie Atwood, Recruiting Coordinator, Eassons Transport Group, Coldbrook, Nova Scotia; Lisa Smith, CEO, and Janice Jorden, Employee Relations Specialist, Glen Haven Manor Long-term Care Facility in New Glasgow; Carol Logan, Director of Human Resources, Prince George and Cambridge Suites Hotels, Halifax; and Selena Landon and Jordan Robb, Human Resources, Ubisoft, Halifax.

I ask them to please accept our warm welcome. (Applause)

[1:15 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Immigration.

RESOLUTION NO. 826

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

Whereas through the Atlantic Immigration Pilot, Nova Scotia is continuing to see a steady increase in the number of new immigrants deciding to call our province home, while also meeting the needs of employers; and

Whereas as the Minister of Immigration, I'm pleased with the success we are experiencing as we are now two years into the program and have more than 790 employers designated under the pilot, representing all regions in our beautiful province as well as more than 1,350 people endorsed; and

Whereas the federal government has extended the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program for an additional two years, to December 31, 2021, to build on the success achieved to date;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly continue to join me in promoting the Atlantic Immigration Pilot to employers across the province, so that together we can ensure Nova Scotia fully benefits from the program.

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 Agriculture.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I'd like to make a couple of introductions.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. COLWELL: In the East Gallery, we have Lynne Godlien, newly appointed CEO of Perennia and we also have with her today, Peter Gamble and Vanessa Rich. Peter Gamble and Vanessa Rich have been working as part of the three-person team, and a team of the wineries in Nova Scotia, to develop a new wine quality program. We had a briefing on it this morning and several briefings over the last while. At the end of the day, when we can introduce this wine quality program, it will be the best quality program in the world for bubbly wine, reflecting the high quality of Nova Scotia wines in Nova Scotia.

Perennia will be part of that process, so welcome to the gallery today and it's a pleasure to see you there. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 827

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

Whereas the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture have been raising awareness of farm safety through the annual Canadian Agricultural Safety Week campaign, held the third week of March of each year throughout Canada; and

Whereas Farm Safety Week has been celebrated here in Nova Scotia for the last seven years as a time to reflect on the importance of farm safety and the empowerment of farmers with the information and resources they need to make their farms safer; and

Whereas this year the theme is Build an AgSafe Canada and is part of a three-year campaign, called Safe & Strong Farms, which raises awareness about agriculture safety and supports the vision of an AgSafe Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in wearing a ribbon, which I have here today, in support of the Safe & Strong Farms campaign as a way of raising awareness about farm safety.

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 Fisheries and Aquaculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 828

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

Whereas during the 21st Annual Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister's Conference, Stewart Lamont received the Minister's Award of Excellence; and

Whereas Stewart Lamont received this award in recognition for his ongoing advocacy on behalf of the Nova Scotia fishing industry, and his commitment to quality processes and standards for Nova Scotia lobster; and

Whereas as a board member of the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance and through his participation in numerous industry advocate groups, Stewart has positively influenced the advancement of Nova Scotia's seafood industry to meet the needs of the global marketplace, recognizing lobster's iconic status as representative of Nova Scotia's seafood industry, Stewart is a tireless advocate and partner for lobster quality programs and other initiatives that showcase the quality and value of Nova Scotia lobster;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House thank Stewart Lamont for his commitment to quality and supporting the advancement of Nova Scotia's seafood industry.

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.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, may I please make an introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

HON. MARGARET MILLER: I'd like to draw the House's attention to the East Gallery, where we are joined by two members of the Ecology Action Centre. Mark Butler, as their Policy Director and Nancy Anningson, as their Senior Coastal Adaptation Coordinator.

Mark and Nancy have both worked with the department on the Coastal Protection Act, which I am going to introduce today, and I want to thank them for their input and continued support of this.

I'd like to also introduce our staff member, John Somers, with the Department of Environment, who has led the development of this legislation for the Nova Scotia Department of Environment. So, together we have developed legislation that is going to protect our coastline for future generations. I would like them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

Bill No. 106 - Entitled an Act Respecting Coastal Protection in Nova Scotia. (Hon. Margaret Miller)

Bill No. 107 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 1 (1992 Supplement) of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The House of Assembly Act, Respecting Committees. (Tim Houston)

Bill No. 108 - Entitled an Act Respecting Green Jobs. (Gary Burrill)

Bill No. 109 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2011. The Pension Benefits Act. (Hon. Karen Casey)

Bill No. 110 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 1 (1992 Supplement) of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The House of Assembly Act, Respecting Petitions. (Tim Houston)

Bill No. 111 – Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 7 of the Acts of 2007. The Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act, Respecting a Carbon-neutral Government. (Gary Burrill)

MR. 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.

**LISKA, OLIVIA - MEDALLIST:
PIANO, CELEB. OF EXCELLENCE - CONGRATS.**

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize 11-year-old Olivia Liska from Abercrombie who, in December 2018, participated at a Celebration of Excellence recital in Halifax and won a gold medal.

Olivia, who has been taking piano lessons since 2013, tied against a performer from Bridgewater in June 2018 for the Level 3 exam. She passed Level 4 without any issues and will take her Level 5 in June 2019.

Olivia exudes such a wonderful musical talent. She hopes to one day become a piano teacher as she has so much respect and praise for her current teacher.

I am proud to recognize Olivia and her tremendous commitment. I look forward to seeing what the future holds for such a lovely and talented young girl.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MACPHEE CTR., CREATIVE LEARNING: ENGAGING YOUTH - THANKS

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to also recognize the work of the MacPhee Centre for Creative Learning and the amazing students they serve, many of whom you will have just met.

The MacPhee Centre for Creative Learning serves some of Dartmouth's most incredible kids. Their work has shown that the arts are an avenue to self-confidence and a lens through which many youths can see a brilliant future for themselves. It proves that if arts were the foundation of our work with youth, magic happens.

MacPhee Centre for Creative Learning's programming in music, visual art, drama, technology, and advocacy re-engages youth with their inner brilliance.

Thank you to the youth program leaders and supporters of the MacPhee Centre for Creative Learning for bringing this essential learning service to Dartmouth and now here to the Legislature.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

TRI-STAR INDUS.: BUS. OF THE YR. - CONGRATS.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce celebrated our local business community at its 2018 business awards and the winner of Business of the Year with over 11 employees was Tri-Star Industries Limited.

Tri-Star specializes in the custom design and manufacturing of ambulances and specialty vehicles to the highest quality and safety standards.

Tri-Star products have reached customers in 44 countries and its clients are typically ministries of health, EMS operations, fire departments, military, airports, organizations such as the Red Cross, and private ambulance service operators.

Internationally-renowned, Tri-Star is the winner of nine Export Achievement Awards.

I ask this House to join me in congratulating Tri-Star Industries Limited on being named the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce 2018 Business of the Year and wish them continued success.

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

EPEC/HART, DOROTHY: TECH-FREE MOVEMENT - RECOG.

BARBARA ADAMS: Today I am so proud to rise to bring recognition to principal Dorothy Hart, the staff, teachers, and students at Eastern Passage Education Centre for encouraging a tech-free movement for the month of February.

Starting February 1st, all students kept their personal devices in their lockers, even on breaks and for lunch. It included phones, iPods, iPads, gaming devices, and any other device that could connect to the Internet. In fact, they disconnected the Internet.

Each class has the Intimate Images and Cyber-protection Act outlined for them. Staff noticed an increase in student distraction with personal devices and they saw an amazing decrease once this initiative was implemented, such to the point they are going to extend it for the rest of the school year at the recommendation of the students.

[1:30 p.m.]

The staff and students are also doing their own fundraising for 30 Chromebooks, and I am so proud of all of them.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in acknowledging the dedication of the students and staff at Eastern Passage Education Centre.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

ADSUM: 29th SUCCESSFUL CDN. WOMEN'S DINNER - CONGRATS.

LISA ROBERTS: I want to express my appreciation for the leadership shown by Adsum for Women and Children last November 1st at their 29th Successful Canadian Women's Dinner. Adsum hosted and honoured Katharine Hayhoe, originally from Canada but now an influential climate scientist at Texas Tech University.

In her comments, she explained how climate change is a risk multiplier. Those already most vulnerable around the world and in our communities will disproportionately suffer the consequences of severe weather events, increases to food prices, and rising sea levels. But her key message is that right now, the most important thing we can do about climate change is talk about it and to acknowledge that it is real and scary and that we must and can make changes to avert the worst.

The facts are that climate change is real, people are responsible, and we're all on this wonderful planet together with no Planet B. I'm proud to be a member of the only caucus in this Legislature that is talking about climate change through legislative proposals.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

SABEAN, MICAELA: ATHL./ACAD. ACHIEVEMTS. - CONGRATS.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Micaela Sabean of Bridgewater, a defensive specialist for the Acadia Axewomen varsity volleyball team who earned Academic All-Canadian status for the third time during the 2017-18 academic year. Micaela was also recently nominated by Acadia University for the Top 8 Academic All-Canadians award, where one outstanding female and male student athlete from each of the four U SPORTS conferences are selected to make up the top eight.

Micaela is a fourth-year Bachelor of Science student who will graduate this Spring with honours in biology and a second major in chemistry. Micaela is also an accomplished beach volleyball player who placed second in the women's under-22 at the national beach volleyball championships in 2016 and fourth in the 2017 Canada Summer Games.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in congratulating Micaela Sabeau for her outstanding success in both academics and athletics.

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

BOUDREAU, JULIA - MEDALLIST: SWIMMING - CONGRATS.

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, Julia Boudreau, a 10-year-old from Little Bras d'Or, has been swimming with the Cape Breton Dorados swim team since September 2017. In that short time she has improved greatly as a swimmer.

Last December, Julia received her first-level bronze medal as part of Novatech Aqua Kids, a Swim Nova Scotia program. She is now working on getting her Level 2 silver medal. Julia typically trains three days a week and has lots of support and a big cheering squad, especially her little sister, Kinley, who is also on the team.

Julia says she loves how the coaches encourage her to do her best, how she always works toward beating her own times, and the friendships she has made.

I rise today to congratulate Julia on her medals and wish great success to all members of her team.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

PETERS, JUANITA: WOMEN MAKING WAVES AWARD - CONGRATS.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I rise to recognize Juanita Peters for receiving Women Making Waves Award at the Women in Film & Television Atlantic awards last week and for her commitment to telling the stories that don't get told.

In addition to being a recognized writer, playwright, and filmmaker, Juanita has worked as a reporter and news anchor for 20 years and is currently the general manager of the Africville Museum. She is a born storyteller, and not only has she done so to great acclaim, but she regularly helps others to do so as well, most recently through her involvement with the Being Black in Halifax mentorship program that formed part of the Halifax Black Film Festival.

Of that experience, she said, "When you are able to break through that moment of being scared, and approach somebody in the field that you think knows so much more than you, and you watch it happening as you work together, it's just so wonderful. I always say everything's difficult until you've done it. And then you do it a few more times and wonder what all the fuss was all about."

I definitely resonate with that statement, Mr. Speaker. I ask the House to join me in congratulating Juanita Peters on this prestigious award and all of the hard work that has led up to it.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

**CP ALLEN GIRLS BASKETBALL, BILL DOMPIERRE MEM. TOURN.
- CONGRATS.**

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Charles P. Allen High School on winning the girls' division of the Bill Dompierre Memorial Basketball Tournament in Fall River in January. The CPA Cheetahs triumphed over the Lockview High Dragons - not to distress my honourable colleague, the member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank - by a score of 60 to 52.

This year marked the 10th year of the tournament which honours Bill Dompierre. The much-loved basketball coach died from kidney cancer, and the tournament continues to raise money to combat this disease. The Cheetahs were led in scoring by Hannah Smith with 21 points. Not surprisingly, Hannah was named tournament MVP. I think it was only fitting that one of Bill Dompierre's sons, Matt - himself a CPA grad - presented the girls title. Bill's wife, Kim Dompierre, also taught drama at CPA for many years.

Congratulations to the CPA girls Cheetahs basketball team on their victory, Hannah Smith on her MVP designation, and the Dompierre family, friends, and volunteers on the 10th year of this tournament.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

INSHORE FISHERIES: GROUND FISHERY SUCCESS - CONGRATS.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, the economy in southwestern Nova Scotia continues to be led by a well-managed fishery. Lobster is the species we talk about the most, but the ground fishery still continues to grow and provide for our families in Argyle-Barrington.

Inshore Fisheries Limited is a third-generation fishing company in Lower West Pubnico and has control of their products from the fishing ground to your plate. If you're eating local haddock, it was probably caught, processed, and distributed by Inshore Fisheries Limited. I want to congratulate Inshore Fisheries Limited for being such a great part of our local success.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

LISA ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the West Gallery today, we are joined by Eric Smith. I wonder if he could rise while I read a member's statement.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

SMITH, ERIC: HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD - CONGRATS.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, Eric Smith received a Nova Scotia Human Rights Award in December. Eric served on the Nova Scotia Task Force on AIDS, helped to establish the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia, and has participated in approximately 400 workshops and presentations.

His own HIV-positive status was disclosed without his consent in 1987 when he was a school teacher, and after fighting publicly for four years to get his job back, he gave up that fight but won, I think we can say, a major win for all Nova Scotians when sexual orientation was added to the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act, and strengths and protections were provided for those with disabilities including HIV/AIDS.

Please join me in congratulating Mr. Eric Smith on his human rights award and give him the warm welcome of the House. (Standing Ovation)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make an introduction with your permission.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

KEITH COLWELL: In the East Gallery, I neglected and I apologize - I didn't introduce Kyla Pierik. Kyla works at Perennia and she is responsible for the wine quality program on the government's side of all the development we're doing there and works at Perennia Food and Agriculture Inc. I want to thank her for the great job that she is doing in that position. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

BEALS, KEONTE - VOCALIST/YOUTH ROLE MODEL

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Mr. Keonte Beals of North Preston. He began his singing career at age seven in the junior choir at St. Thomas Baptist Church, which started his career in music and entertainment.

He studies music and trained for many years, and wrote and released his single, *Man Down*, in 2016, which is focused on gun violence. He is a featured speaker on gun violence, and he also operates a program aimed at influencing young people through music with Hope Blooms in Halifax.

I want to recognize and congratulate Keonte Beals on his musical success and for his community service through the Black Business Initiative's Business is Jammin' as well as the Baptist Youth Fellowship.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

NEW GLASGOW POLICE SERV.: OFFICER PROMOTIONS - CONGRATS.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, law enforcement officials are always performing a vital service for the good of society. Police officers are respected members of our community. They answer disturbance calls, respond to accidents and incidents, assault crimes, and protect their community. An officer is called upon to make hundreds of decisions, each day, often using a combination of instinct, research, proper procedure, and analysis.

The New Glasgow Regional Police Force recently promoted six of their officers. Darryl Paris, Ryan Leil, and Jason MacKinnon were promoted to sergeant, while Clare Corkum-Timmons, Nicholas Hirtle, and Jason Lloyd were promoted to corporal. Pictou County is very fortunate to have such good law enforcement officers that exhibit sound judgment and reasoning during stressful situations and under extreme pressure.

I would ask all members of this Legislature to join me and congratulate all six officers who were recently promoted in the New Glasgow Regional Police Force.

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

SANE EXPANSION TO TRURO: DEDICATED TIMELINE - LACKING

LENORE ZANN: Two women shared their stories with the Truro News last Fall about being improperly received at the Truro hospital after presenting there to report they had been sexually assaulted. After their stories were published, the Minister of Health and Wellness told us on the floor of this House that the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program would be expanded to Truro, and he also sent a letter saying this to one of the women confirming that commitment.

It is profoundly disappointing, six months later when we find ourselves here, again, and the minister is saying he does not know when that expansion will occur or even whether it will take place this year.

Kendra MacKinnon, CEO of the Colchester Assault Centre said she has not heard of any changes taking place at the hospital and questions the minister's sincerity about expanding the same program to Truro, at all, given the lack of a dedicated timeline. MacKinnon added that the Nova Scotia Health Authority should be embarrassed as well.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

LENA METLEDGE DIAB: With us today in the East Gallery are very special guests. I'll ask them to stand as I say their names: Ms. Tish Sock-Sachetti, Mi'kmaq/Aboriginal Support Worker for J.L. Ilsley High School, Rockingstone Heights School, and École Elizabeth Sutherland School; Sabine Fels, Fine Arts Coordinator for the J.L. family of schools and a number of their students ranging from Grade 10 to Grade 12 from J.L. Ilsley High School: Joci Duggan, Emily Caines, Selena Borden, Brandon Parsons, Jenna Stewart, Ashley Brooks Jarvis, and Emily Innocent

Mr. Speaker, these students were part of a team that worked on a project entitled Heart Nova Scotia as a submission for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and were selected as runner-up for the Nova Scotia region. I ask my colleagues to give them the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

SOCK-SACHETTI, TISH: FREE CHRISTMAS FEAST - THANKS

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the inspiring work of Armdale's Tish Sock-Sachetti. Tish works as the Mi'kmaq/Aboriginal Support Worker for three of Halifax's schools where she puts her heart into challenging her students, helping them learn, and affirming that they matter.

Last Fall Tish and her students in the Indigenous Student Program made a commitment to give back to their school community. Knowing that the holiday season can be a hard time for less fortunate students, they organized their second annual free Christmas Feast for the students and staff of J.L. Ilsley High School.

The meal was a lovely opportunity for the school community to gather just before Christmas and ensured that each and every student received a small gift to open for Christmas Day.

The Feast was a big undertaking and Tish's students worked very hard last term to fundraise for the effort.

To Tish, her students, and everyone who supported the feast, wela'lin. Thank you for making the holidays brighter.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

SPURWAY, AMY: BOOK, *CROW* - CONGRATS.

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Amy Spurway, an author who was raised in Cape Breton and resides in Dartmouth East. On April 4th, Ms. Spurway will launch her book titled *Crow* in Dartmouth. This book features what she describes as “Sharp Cape Breton humour, big twists, big drama and big personality.” Sounds like some of the colleagues I work with here.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we have all known and lived to experience the importance of a good story. I would like to ask the House to congratulate Amy Spurway on this significant accomplishment and thank Amy for her contribution to local literature.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

WILSON, LINDA/KINGSTON LIONS - SENIORS CHRISTMAS OUTREACH

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Internationally, Lions Clubs are known for serving their local communities and spreading kindness by doing so. With this in mind, it came as no surprise when I learned the local Lions Club in Kingston had once again made a huge impact on the community that left all involved smiling this past Christmas season.

On December 21, 2018, with the inspirational idea to spread joy and cheer to local seniors, Lion Linda Wilson baked and packaged 600 cookies with Lions Christene Keddy, Christine Rithaler, Jeanie Farnell, and Lions spouses Carol Gregory and Mary Caines.

Once this task was completed, Lion Linda Wilson, with the support of the Lions Club, delivered these cookies to over 100 seniors, including those residing in long-term care facilities and at Soldiers Memorial Hospital.

I would like to thank Lion Linda Wilson, the Kingston Lions Club, and all those mentioned who supported this thoughtful and impactful act of kindness and for the continued dedication and service of all Lions Clubs to their local communities.

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

[1:45 p.m.]

SCA WOLVES VOLLEYBALL: ACHIEVEMENTS. - CONGRATS.

LARRY HARRISON: On March 3rd, the Truro Sport Heritage Society honoured athletic accomplishments of local athletes and volunteers from 2018, during its 35th annual awards dinner.

The South Colchester Academy volleyball team was honoured with the Outstanding Junior High Team Award. The SCA team successfully manoeuvred the regular season undefeated and, for the first time in seven years, moved on to the district and regional championship. One of the winning factors for the Wolves was the fact they were coached this season by a number of former players, which allowed them to achieve at a higher level while teaching valuable leadership skills.

Congratulations to the South Colchester Academy Wolves volleyball team on such a successful season.

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

BARRETT, PAUL - MUSICIAN: MENTORING/INNOVATING - CONGRATS.

LENORE ZANN: Paul Barrett, a 43-year resident of Brookfield, has had an incredible journey in his musical career.

Growing up in Truro, he came under the guidance of the late great bandleader Ron MacKay, who became Paul's mentor, a second father, and, ultimately, a business partner. Paul went on to graduate from the Nova Scotia Teachers College, attended Berklee College of Music in Boston, and followed that with a Bachelor of Education from St. F.X. and a Master of Education from Acadia.

This Christmas marked a decade of the Metro New Horizons band program, which gives seniors an opportunity to learn how to play a musical instrument. Since this program began, Paul has started 52 beginner bands and has his own band based out of Halifax-Dartmouth called the Back Alley Big Band, which highlights some of the best jazz musicians on the East Coast. Paul plays trombone first and foremost, but also piano, tuba, clarinet, and trumpet.

Congratulations to Paul Barrett. May he continue to play and teach music for many years to come.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

SMITH, OLIVER: OLLIE BOTS' \$25K DONATION - CONGRATS.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, last year I told you about a young constituent named Oliver Smith who has a rare form of bone cancer called Ewing sarcoma, and how he and his family started making and selling wooden robots as a way to raise funds to help other Nova Scotian families with travel costs if they need to travel for medical treatments.

I would like to update the House on the success of the Ollie Bot campaign. On February 25th, the Smith family celebrated the 1,400th Ollie Bot sold by making a donation of \$5,000 to the Ewings Cancer Foundation of Canada Endowment Fund. This brings their total donation to \$25,000 so far.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this moment to congratulate Oliver and his family for bringing this spark of an idea to where it is today and for helping many people through their innovation and generosity.

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

SACKVILLE SNOW DAYS: COM. SPIRIT - CONGRATS.

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the organizers of Sackville Snow Days on another wonderful and successful event this year.

Sackville Snow Days is an annual winter event which ran this year from February 15th to 18th. It includes activities like breakfast, a master chef competition, and, of course, the Sackville Snow Days Parade.

Mr. Speaker, it would not be possible without the work of the Sackville Business Association, countless community groups, local business, and volunteers that all come together to give their time to help create this fun-filled weekend. I particularly want to recognize Sackville resident Chad Lindsay, who this year reintroduced Sackville's old winter carnival mascot, Sackee, to this year's event. Community spirit, once again, is still alive and well in Sackville.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

KOCH, MASON: MALE ATHL. OF THE YR. - CONGRATS.

HON. MARGARET MILLER: The 2017 season was a personal best for Hants East athlete Mason Koch.

Mason was awarded the 18 and Under Male Athlete of the Year at the 2018 East Hants Sports Award Gala. Mason picked up a gold, silver, and bronze in the 2017 National

Canoe Championships in Welland, Ontario. His performance in teams and individually earned him a spot to represent Canada's Olympic hopefuls competing against the best in the world. Teamed with three other canoeists from Atlantic Canada, Mason brought home a bronze medal.

The significant time commitment and sacrifice athletes of this calibre must endure deserves to be recognized and honoured. Mason trains 8 to 10 times a week while attending school, and travels to Florida for a month each year where he practises daily with three sessions on the water combined with dry-land training.

I would ask all members of the House to join me in expressing congratulations and gratitude to Mason for his passion to represent our country and the sports community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

SOMMER, SHANE - SKIER: CAN. WINTER GAMES - CONGRATS.

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, Shane Sommer is a 14-year-old Alpine ski cross athlete from Port Williams who brought home Team Nova Scotia's only gold medal from the Canada Games this year. He's a very versatile athlete and spends most of his time free skiing. He's a member of the competitive Alpine circuit and hopes to see more ski racers from Atlantic Canada get training opportunities. He is now training for his next Can-Am competition at Sugarloaf, Maine.

Please join me in congratulating Shane Sommer for bringing home a gold medal for Nova Scotia in the Canada Games.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

**SUNDERLAND, CARA:
WOMEN'S ACTIVE N.S. TRENDSETTER - CONGRATS.**

GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Cara Sunderland, the 2018 recipient of the Women's Active Nova Scotia Leadership Trendsetter Award.

This award is presented to a woman who, over time, has had a significant influence on the sport, recreation and/or physical landscape for girls and women. This describes our Cara Sunderland, the Active Living Manager at the Digby Area Recreation Commission perfectly. Cara has always had an active lifestyle and has always encouraged people to try new activities. Through her work and her leisure activities she has advocated for people to adopt an active lifestyle, as well as provided opportunities for women and girls to do so.

She has organized such activities as female only ice time at the rink, the Digby Girls' Gymnastic Club, girls' camping trips, women's professional weekends, and girls'

programs at the Digby Regional High School and Islands Consolidated School. For these types of activities, she has helped alter the lingering under-representation of women and girls in organizations related to sports, recreation, and physical activity. Cara continues to encourage girls and women to step out of their comfort zone in our community and become more active and healthier.

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

BOUDREAU, LEONARD: PRESERVING MILITARY HIST. - THANKS

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Mr. Leonard Boudreau of Sydney River. Leonard Boudreau is the former adjutant of the 2nd Battalion Nova Scotia Highlanders (CB).

Recently the Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design exhibited tapestries created by Leonard Boudreau that show how all five of the Cape Breton-based regiments are linked through history and fellowship. As a hobby, Leonard started making tapestries which took 600 to 700 hours to produce, with 68,731 stitches covering a canvas that measures 6 feet by 5 feet. This he did to pass away the hours in winter, which he now is saying was a great way to preserve the history of the local infantry battalions.

I stand today to thank and congratulate Leonard Boudreau for wanting everyone to learn more about the Island's military history.

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

CHISHOLM, GARY: BOOK, *RUN BENNY, RUN* - CONGRATS.

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, the Eastern Counties Regional Libraries are promoting Read Local Month, a great opportunity to choose literary works from Atlantic Canada. I would like to offer up my suggestion of a gripping biography, in its second printing due to popular demand.

Run Benny, Run by Gary Chisholm is a book of a Guysborough County man's story of survival against insurmountable odds in his native Yugoslavia to someday build a life in Canada. He was forced to leave home at age 10, to unite with his sister in Belgrave. He had to find ways to live off the land by fishing, staying close to farms, all the while fleeing to Italy under gunfire from Yugoslavia border guards.

This harrowing tale may sound like the next Indiana Jones' screenplay but I, and the people of Guysborough County, can assure you that the story and its heroic protagonist are very real.

I am privileged to know Benny Lagundzija of New Harbour, and I am honoured to be able to promote his life story.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

DAURY, BETTY ANN: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Queens County resident Betty Ann Daury on her December 20, 2018, retirement from Penny Lane Woodworking and Enterprises after 26 years of service.

Betty is well known and much beloved for her dedication and compassion and she will be greatly missed by her co-workers and clients. Her patience, understanding, and her commitment to those with special needs are admirable. She is also well known as having been a tireless volunteer with Lunenburg/Queens Special Olympics for over 28 years.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to join me in congratulating Betty Ann and wishing her happiness and good health in her well-earned retirement. Thank you, Betty Ann, for all that you have done and continue to do for our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

**SCULLY, DANICA - CONTESTANT:
*CAN.'S SMARTEST PERSON JR. - CONGRATS.***

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Danica Scully, a Grade 7 Student attending Armbrae Academy after previously studying at Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Elementary School.

This past Fall, Danica was honoured as one of 12 students selected as a contestant on the prestigious CBC television game show, Canada's Smartest Person Junior. The competition tests the knowledge of contestants in six categories that include physical, musical, social, linguistic, logical, and visual comprehension. Contestants with the best performance continue to advance through the television episodes until the final performance between the top two competitors.

Danica has always been a competitive student and recently participated in a national debating tournament, placing second in the tournament. I ask the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Danica on her academic spirit and success and wish her success in the future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

**BOND, LISA:
CARING CLOSET, COMBATting POVERTY AT SCHOOL - THANKS**

EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Lisa Bond for making her dream of a Caring Closet into reality.

Through her son who attends T.L. Sullivan Middle School, Lisa learned many students are attending school without the necessities of life. Working with school officials, a Caring Closet was created and stocked through donations. Poverty rates for youth living in Cape Breton are among the highest in the country, and the Caring Closet has stepped up to help. Funds are also available to provide hot lunches in the cafeteria.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the creation of the Caring Closet, and I hope the idea spreads across the province.

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

MOUNT ROYAL: SANTAVILLE - THANKS

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, Mount Royal is a neighbourhood in my constituency known for its community spirit.

This winter neighbours came together once again to create a now annual fabulous event called Santaville. In a coordinated effort, members of the community decorated their homes, provided food and drink, created games for their kids, and piped music into the streets. It was a ton of fun for the children and adults alike.

Denai Spire, the main organizer of the event, said that the reason why she does these events is to bring people out of their homes to meet or reconnect with their neighbours. She believes children should learn the importance of making your neighbourhood a place of joy and connection.

I ask the members of the House of Assembly to join me thanking Denai and her neighbours in Mount Royal for making this past Christmas season one to remember.

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

HURRICANES HOCKEY: TEAMMATE SUPPORT - CONGRATS.

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring praise and acknowledgement to the Richmond Academy Hurricanes hockey team.

The Richmond Education Centre and Academy community was struck this school year with a near tragedy. A car accident left Spencer McNamara, a member of the

Hurricanes Hockey Team, in critical condition and in an induced coma. Mr. Speaker, under the direction of head coach Robert MacDonald, the team rallied around Spencer and his family. I am pleased to say, with the team and community's support, Spencer is making a miraculous recovery.

For the first time in the school's history, the Hurricanes have placed first in the Division II League, won the Cape Breton West High School Hockey League Championship, and won the Highland Region Division II Championship.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this House to join me in extending a heartfelt congratulations to the team and coaching staff for bringing home a triple crown, as well as to Spencer as he continues his journey to recovery.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

DARTMOUTH HS: VOLUNTEERING IN THE DOM. REPUB. - THANKS

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge a big group of students, teachers, and community members of Dartmouth High School who recently went on a 10-day cultural immersion trip to the Dominican Republic. While there, the group helped build a house for a local woman and her newborn baby. They farmed, collected garbage, and helped distribute live chickens to various households in the area they were visiting.

Each of the 40-some students brought with them a 50-pound duffle bag filled with items like medical supplies, school supplies, and other necessities that were distributed to the communities they visited. They were also joined by a volunteer firefighter, Robert Hebb, who brought new fire equipment with him for local firefighters to use.

The trip was organized by Dartmouth High teacher Heather Hughes and other parents from the community. I ask the House to join me in thanking this group of Dartmouthians for their generosity and dedication to a community of strangers in a country far from their daily life.

[2:00 p.m.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - YARMOUTH/MAINE FERRY: ECON. IMPACT STUDY - TABLE

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, can the ferry to Maine produce more benefits to Nova Scotia? That's really the question that's on the minds of many Nova Scotians.

There are many questions about the way this government has managed this file. This file has been mismanaged in so many ways and the only way to make this service work better is to distill it down to the facts.

I'd like to ask the Premier in the interest of transparency: Would the minister table the economic impact study that shows the many benefits of this service to Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As he would know, that ferry had been severed by the former government. We saw devastation to the tourism industry, particularly in southwestern Nova Scotia but indeed across the province. We've made that investment in that ferry. We've continued to see a record growing tourism year - its third consecutive growth - and all the positive investments that are taking place down in southwestern Nova Scotia.

In his question, he suggested that the only thing on the minds of Nova Scotians was what was in his question. The reality is that many Nova Scotians are wondering why the honourable member won't support that ferry, but he supports the one in Pictou.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I do support the service, I see the value that it can bring to Nova Scotians. The issue here is this government does a significant disservice to the long-term sustainability of the service by hiding information, by mismanaging the file.

I didn't hear the Premier commit to tabling an economic impact study, so he doesn't want to talk about the facts. If we want this service to improve, we can't hide information. We need to be showing the benefits to the Valley and to HRM. If this government truly supported it, they would provide information that Nova Scotians could absorb.

I'd like to ask the Premier again: Will the Premier table the economic impact study that shows Nova Scotians the benefits of this project?

THE PREMIER: I'd like to thank the honourable member for the question. Again, I want to tell him 50,000 people have chosen to come to our province through that ferry service and the number continues to grow. He would also know the investment by the private sector - Rodd Hotel alone. There's a few million dollars being invested back into the economy of that community.

We're hearing from tourism operators around the province who are supporting that service and recognizing it's a connection to an international market. It's one that we're

very proud of. All of the money that we have spent year after year has been disclosed, Mr. Speaker.

What the honourable member is referring to is an aspect that is proprietary information of individuals. It's no different than every day we award tenders for those who pave roads in every constituency in this province. We don't disclose how much profit they're making or what it's costing us for them to manage those particular projects. That is how they drive the best price.

That's what we call a competitive marketplace. This company competes globally. That is where we have been able to get the best price for the taxpayers of Nova Scotia. We're going to continue to drive that, but I want to remind all members of this House: the global number has been disclosed every year.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, we're going to have all kinds of time to talk about that particular situation in court where this government is forcing us to go to get the information.

What I'm asking about is the economic impact study and this province . . .
(Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order please. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor. Order please.

TIM HOUSTON: By not performing an economic impact study, which the Premier has just acknowledged they haven't, they are doing a significant disservice to this run. If they would do an economic impact study, then we could see what is possible. Maybe we could be using that service to promote the film festival and bring tourists and attractions. There is so much we could do, but this government mismanages every single aspect of this file.

I'd like to ask the Premier a third time: Has he bothered to do an economic impact study of the impact of that ferry on this province?

THE PREMIER: I thank the honourable member for the question. The reality of it is, he has not supported this ferry service nor has his Party, Mr. Speaker. In the last election campaign . . . (Interruption)

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

THE PREMIER: In the last election campaign, they ran against that service and all Nova Scotians sent them a message . . . (Interruptions)

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

THE PREMIER: The reality of it is, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party has not supported this service. He's continued to undermine the private sector entrepreneur. If we continue to follow his path we would drive the economy in the ground.

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

THE PREMIER: The reality of it is population is up, the economy is growing, more young people see a future for themselves in this province. And more importantly, the global community is wanting to come to visit and one of those ways is through that ferry service.

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

GOV'T. (N.S.): GREEN JOBS - DEVELOP

GARY BURRILL: In Canada, as a whole, there are 5.5 per cent more people working today than was the case in 2013, but here in Nova Scotia we have less than one per cent more people working today than in 2013. At the same time, we know from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that governments have 12 years to lower greenhouse gas emissions if we are to mitigate the most serious effects of climate change, and that major job-creating investments will be required for this to be accomplished.

My question for the Premier is: Will the Premier agree that there is a real need in Nova Scotia today for a plan for the development of green jobs, so we can both improve our economy and fulfill our environmental responsibility to the world?

THE PREMIER: The unemployment rate in the province is at an all-time low since they have been counting that statistic. I want to remind the honourable member the economy is moving in the right direction. More young people are attached to the workforce looking for job opportunities here. They see a future for themselves and their families.

Through successive governments, starting with the former Environment Minister from Kings North, who was a Progressive Conservative member, through the New Democratic Party and continued through our two administrations, we continue to make sure that we reduce our carbon footprint and lead the country in the reduction of greenhouse gas. Of course, part of that is ensuring we have created economic jobs associated with the green economy.

He would know that Efficiency Nova Scotia is currently a stand-alone Crown corporation that is providing good, economic jobs not just for those people who are working in that particular entity, but across the province in how we are helping individual Nova Scotians reduce their footprint.

GARY BURRILL: The Premier will also acknowledge, though, that when you exclude Halifax from the calculation, there are almost 9,000 fewer people holding jobs in Nova Scotia today than when this government first came to power. At the same time, internationally, half a trillion dollars is being invested every year in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

My question for the Premier is: Will the Premier acknowledge that a bold green-jobs plan is necessary for us, both for our environment and for us to receive a significant share of the world's investment in this field?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to tell him the policies in and around reducing individual families' and communities' footprints is not exclusive here in Halifax. That money is being distributed across the province providing economic jobs through the very initiative the honourable member is referring to.

We should be proud of the fact that we are leading the country when it comes to the reduction in greenhouse gas. We should be proud of the fact that all three political Parties in this House have continued down the same path. No matter what happened on election day, we continued down the path of improving our environment for the next generation. But he should also acknowledge the economy has never been better in Nova Scotia.

He should also acknowledge, a third record season of tourism. He should also acknowledge that the population is at an all-time high. Consumer confidence is at a high and consumer consumption is growing. That is not isolated to just Halifax; that is around our province.

GARY BURRILL: I would wish to acknowledge this. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on Global Warming last October concluded that limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees is going to require what it called a rapid escalation of the level of ambition of all levels of government, including sub-national levels like our province.

Our Party's emissions reduction target of a 50 per cent reduction from 1990 levels by 2030 puts Nova Scotia on a track for net zero by 2050. The Liberal's target does not.

My question for the Premier is: Does the Premier really think that his government's emission target qualifies as a rapid escalation of the level of ambition, as the IPCC puts it?

THE PREMIER: Again, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. He would know we are 30 per cent below 2005 targets as we speak today. The national government want us to be there by 2030.

Our government, our province, of all political Parties, will have us there today. If we continue the path we are on without doing anything else, we will be at almost 50 per cent by 2030, but we know there is more work to do and we're not going to stand still.

I'm just reminding the honourable member that we are continuing to invest through Efficiency Nova Scotia and that we will continue to drive job opportunities, not just here in Halifax but across the province.

We are going to continue to make sure we leave this province and this environment in a better place than when we received it. Our children and grandchildren depend on it.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

TIR - YAR.-MAINE FERRY: ECONOMIC ANALYSIS - CONFIRM

EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, let's be very clear, this PC caucus supports and I personally support a ferry service between Nova Scotia and Maine. The Premier can say all he wants, but that's not actually the case. Last month the minister was asked for details about the provincial economic impact of the ferry.

The minister admitted there was no proven correlation. A reporter asked: At this point, is it an intuitive rather than an actual study that proves that claim? The minister replied, that's right.

My question to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is: Beyond anecdotal and intuitive evidence, can he confirm that his department has not conducted any analysis to determine the actual economic impact of this ferry on this province?

HON. LLOYD HINES: It's a pleasure to stand in my place here today and talk about the wonderful initiatives this government has undertaken by re-establishing that vital service into Nova Scotia. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker. (Interruptions)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal has the floor.

LLOYD HINES: The economic impact is not required to be assessed by us; it is assessed by the capitalists of the province who are showing, by their investment in Yarmouth and area, that this is a successful service.

I'd like to table such evidence. It talks about the capital investment for the service and the wonderful increase in tourism numbers that we see at that site.

EDDIE ORRELL: I hope that's the economic impact study we're looking for. I think Nova Scotians just want to know how much more money they may be asked to spend. It's pretty reasonable, people want transparency around how their money is being spent. This government promised to be the most open and transparent government in the whole world.

Mr. Speaker, they want some economic metrics beyond whether room nights in the southwest region are up or down, and they want to know that our scarce dollars are getting the best bang for their buck. If the ferry is going to work, Nova Scotians need to know the details.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Is "trust me" good enough for the taxpayers wondering where their money is being spent?

LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to report that in the past three years over 127,000 visitors have come to Nova Scotia by virtue of our Yarmouth ferry.

I would also point out to the House and to the members opposite that the people in southwest Nova Scotia do not begrudge others in the province. As an example, the ferry between Pictou and Caribou, P.E.I., has a subsidy from government of \$12 million. We don't know the management fee, we don't know the passenger numbers and we never hear any complaints about that service.

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

GOV'T. (N.S.) - LONG-TERM CARE WAIT-LIST: CHANGES - IMPACT

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Premier about long-term care. Back in 2015, the government announced changes to the long-term care wait-list. Since then there has been a great deal of talk about how the wait-list had been cut for people waiting for nursing home placement, by half and so on.

A recent investigation has shown that those numbers, in fact, do not include people who are waiting in hospitals for long-term care, nor do they include adults who are in need of protection for reasons of neglect or self harm.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier admit that the changes this government introduced to the keeping of the list in 2015 have, in fact, obscured and hidden the true number of people waiting for a placement in a nursing home?

THE PREMIER: No, I wouldn't, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, the list he is referring to includes all the very people that he thinks are excluded. That list is encompassing.

GARY BURRILL: Records from a freedom of information request received by our caucus indicate that the government has no intention of building new nursing homes. The background documents related to the long-awaited continuing care strategy, which I'll table, show that the government isn't willing to get into the business of making long-term investments in new beds or facilities, that they believe an hour or two of care from a continuing care assistant is adequate for our seniors, and that anything else is just too expensive.

Mr. Speaker, is the Premier wilfully downplaying the need for more nursing home beds in order to avoid making the investments needed by the people of the province?

[2:15 p.m.]

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As he would know, we have announced we're building long-term-care beds both in New Waterford, in Northside, and I look forward to the honourable member's support. He's complained about those investments, but I want to tell you we're going to continue to invest in long-term care.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

TIR: BAY FERRIES LTD. ROLE - CLARIFY

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, the PC caucus and I personally support a ferry service between Nova Scotia and Maine. We are concerned, though, about the business management of the contract. The taxpayers of this province expect us to ask questions about where their tax dollars are used.

On several occasions this year, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal has referred to Bay Ferries Limited as the agent of the province in negotiations. On January 24th, he indicated Bay Ferries Limited acts as an agent for the province in discussions with Maine around the share of funding and, again, on the 21st and on the 28th.

My question for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal: Can he clarify the role of Bay Ferries Limited as the role they've played for the province and define business agent as he sees it?

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I would refer the member in the House to the publicly-disclosed funding agreement that exists between the Province of Nova Scotia, which clearly articulates that relationship.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: The definition of a business agent is a person who represents a person or company in matters of business who can make business

decisions for them. Should a private business be negotiating and representing his department, the taxpayers of the province?

The minister has said there is nothing nefarious here, yet the minister refuses to be open and transparent when asked about questions about the contract. My question to the minister: Is a private company making decisions on behalf of this government and does the minister not have the staff that can work on behalf of his department to make these decisions?

LLOYD HINES: The importance of protecting third-party information as enshrined in the FOIPOP legislation as a mandatory exemption. I can't say enough about first our senior staff who have negotiated this arrangement that we have to re-establish that vital service into southwestern Nova Scotia nor about the operator, who is probably one of the more experienced ferry operators in Eastern Canada, who operates several other services.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

TIR - YARMOUTH/MAINE FERRY: FUNDING TRANSPARENCY - RESPOND

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Anyone within earshot will know by now the PC caucus does support the ferry. (Applause) I accept that applause and I personally support the service between Nova Scotia to Maine, and if I can gain the floor again . . . (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, the honourable member for Pictou Centre has the floor.

PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to let everyone here know that I personally support the ferry between Nova Scotia and Maine. For some time, the Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal Department has released five-year highway improvement plans. These plans "transparently" - and I put quotation marks around transparently - lay out roads and highways the department intends to improve, repair, or expand over several years. These plans allow Nova Scotians and companies to understand where money is being spent and why.

If the ferry service is going to work, Nova Scotians need at least that level of transparency. My question to the minister: Does he feel the five-year highway improvement plan is a positive step for transparency in how taxpayers' dollars are spent?

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. Just let me remind the member, who proudly represents Pictou County, that in the Northumberland Ferries arrangement in the 2017-2018 year that the subsidy to that service was \$12,442,589 of government money.

PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I didn't realize I was talking about the ferry between Caribou and PEI. On February 14th, the minister said his department considers the ferry an extension of the highway system. I can think of one major difference: the current ferry doesn't carry any commercial truck traffic. I can think of another major difference: for highways, government releases regular reports on how work will be funded, what work will be performed, and a breakdown of where the money went.

With regard to the ferry, the minister has been asked questions on funding and timelines for several consecutive minutes and responds with: I don't know, I haven't any idea. My question is: Is the minister satisfied that his answers on ferry expenditures meet the bar for transparency set out by the highway construction?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member just proves the government's point. He just very literally laid out that we put a global number out for paving in this province. We award contracts in a competitive process, and we present the global number. I want to go back. We had a . . . (Interruption)

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

THE PREMIER: We have a competitive process for the ferry service. This contractor won the bid. We're continuing to invest. I want to remind the honourable members that, just like with highways, we disclose the entire number. But just like with highways, we don't go to every contract and disclose how much it costs to manage a project. That's proprietary. That's how we get the best price. That's why we're continuing to pave more roads and why we're investing in that international link to Yarmouth.

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

**TIR - YARMOUTH/MAINE FERRY:
MINISTERIAL KNOWLEDGE - IMPORTANT**

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, this PC caucus supports - and I'm going to continue to say this in the spirit of trying to negate a false narrative, or what we'd like to call fake news. I personally support the ferry service to Yarmouth, and I know that my caucus does as well.

The minister stated that the ferry file is an extremely important file to Nova Scotia, and I would agree with him. Yet when asked last month about who was paying for work to prepare the Bar Harbour terminal for the ferry service, he was unfamiliar with the details. The minister said: I don't know who is doing the work, I'm not sure who that would be.

Does the minister agree that he should perhaps have a passing awareness of expenditures in one of his extremely important files?

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I stand in my place today, and I can't say how pleased and happy I am to hear the resounding messages of support for the Yarmouth ferry. Finally. (Interruptions)

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, I believe I have the floor. A day after the minister admitted that he had no information on the cost of or who was responsible for the Bar Harbour renovations, we learned that the minister's department, in fact, had quite a bit of information about who was going to pay for the Bar Harbour work. An executive within Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal wrote on January 22nd: "The Province of Nova Scotia is responsible for funding the costs . . . including the costs of upgrading the Bar Harbour ferry terminal property." I'll table that document.

Again, several weeks later, the minister claimed he had no knowledge of who was responsible for costs. Can the minister please explain to this House if his department routinely makes significant commitments - millions of dollars' worth - of taxpayers' dollars without consulting the minister?

LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I just want to reemphasize that every year at the Public Accounts process, all costs associated with this service are absolutely released for public consumption. I would also say that I am very pleased to report that sales are brisk currently for the service relocation to Bar Harbour. I'd like to table the document that speaks to that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

COM. SERV. - PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: ROADMAP - UPDATE

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Services. A *Roadmap for Transforming the Nova Scotia Services to Persons with Disabilities Program* was presented to government in 2013. That report included a five-year implementation plan to address a range of issues, including the need for people with disabilities to have access to the full range of affordable and accessible housing in the community - a range that is available to all Nova Scotians.

Will the minister explain why the government has failed to implement the recommendations from the roadmap?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. In fact, I reject her premise. We are busy working on that roadmap, including the building of a number of small options homes, two of which have opened, two are about to open, and four are in the planning stages.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, the Community Homes Action Group has repeatedly given the government a failing grade on this file. It has recommended an

investment in at least 25 new small options homes each year for the next three years. The 2018 budget included funding for only eight, and now we are starting to see those eight come to fruition.

Last week, an independent board of inquiry ruled that the province had violated the human rights of Beth McLean, Sheila Livingstone, and Joey Delaney by not providing access to housing options. Mr. Speaker, will the minister be requiring each individual person with a disability in Nova Scotia to file a human rights complaint in order to ensure their human rights are respected?

KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I think she may be confusing our government with theirs, which did absolutely nothing on this particular front.

This is not an overnight process; every single person needs to have a plan going forward. You can't just stick people into residences as if they're going off to university; you have to make sure that people have complementary needs. We want to make sure they have the appropriate supports before you move out. You have to make sure their families are supportive; you actually have to talk to the people who want to move out and make sure they want to move out. And, Mr. Speaker, we're doing exactly that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

H&W - ER OVERCROWDING: YEARLY INCREASE - EXPLAIN

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, this government and the NSHA have claimed that some emergency room overcrowding can be blamed on seasonal blips, like a spike in flu cases or perhaps a lack of flu shots.

We all know regional hospitals are particularly overcrowded. For example, the Valley Regional Hospital has experienced year over year demand increases of over 400 per cent for emergency department services.

My question for the Minister of Health and Wellness: Does he maintain that these spikes are a seasonal blip, or are we living in a new normal due to increasingly poor access to basic primary health care?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Indeed, the pressures on our emergency departments in communities across the province is recognized. We work with the NSHA and our partners at EHS to find ways to improve the efficiency of the operations, while ensuring that we provide the care that's needed by Nova Scotians.

The work I can mention in terms of the improvements, we need only look across the harbour here, Mr. Speaker, to see what was implemented at Dartmouth General just

about a year ago and the improvements with their off-loading at the emergency department there.

Mr. Speaker, we look forward to seeing more improvements like that in the near future.

KARLA MACFARLANE: I hope to see so in the near future too, because daily we are hearing from Nova Scotians concerned about poor primary care resources and the domino effect this has on the rest of the province, everywhere.

Folks without family doctors are flooding emergency departments out of desperation - they don't have a doctor. We hear about walk-in clinics that are closing or worried they may have to close. People have nowhere else to turn and it's having a serious impact on the staff and patients in emergency departments.

So, my question is: Have emergency department staffing ratios for physicians and nurses been adjusted to cope with the increased load of admitted patients, as well as those presenting for care?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, the member raised a point that I've been making since my time, and I believe my predecessor did as well - recognizing the important role that primary care access plays not just in the overall health of the population, but also in reducing pressures at emergency departments.

Mr. Speaker, that's why we've been investing in recruitment initiatives, expanding access to training seats at Dalhousie for nurse practitioners, as well as expanding access to residency seats. We've expanded and re-evaluated our incentive programs and we're seeing success.

What the member hasn't highlighted was the improvements we've seen the last four months. We have actually seen more people attached and fewer people waiting, according to the data that we have, to get attached with family physicians, primary care providers. That's based upon the good work that has been under way by partners and the department for the last number of months.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

H&W - ROSEWAY HOSP.: ER CLOSURES - EXPLAIN

KIM MASLAND: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. I have been raising the issue of ER closures at Roseway Hospital for as long as I have been elected. Still we see regular closures, with no change to that in sight.

Since I last asked, the ER has been closed for 778 hours. That's 32 days. The Roseway emergency room has been closed for more than a full month since I last asked about it.

My question is: Can the minister explain why the people of Shelburne still can't rely on their local emergency room to be open?

[2:30 p.m.]

HON. RANDY DELOREY: As the member's colleague highlighted, primary care is an important role that can help reduce some of the pressures. I know that the member attended the opening of the Roseway primary care clinic, which we invested in. We built an entirely new facility there right next door to the hospital.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, I can advise the member and the members of the Legislature, we have been working with our partners to come up with new ways to incentivize physicians to cover shifts, not just in communities like Shelburne, but communities across the province. Things like our locum incentive program, which I believe about 62 days of coverage at Roseway specifically have been covered through that program. In addition to that, we have an emergency shift premium, which is also available to encourage physicians to cover those shifts. We're looking at what we can do with our incentive programs to encourage physicians and other health care providers to cover these shifts in these communities.

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, the collaborative care centre is welcomed in Shelburne County.

But in February, for one of my constituents who spent 10 days in Roseway, that didn't help her. It started with a trip to the QEII, where she joined the endless hallway full of patients of paramedics. When it was determined there were no beds available, she was sent back to Roseway in the middle of the night. My constituent could not walk, and she was forced to lie on a gurney in the ER with a spinal injury for four days while waiting for a bed. During those four days, the ER was closed twice.

My question to the minister is: Does the minister believe this is an acceptable experience for someone seeking health care in this province?

RANDY DELOREY: Certainly, that's not the desired experience as described by the member opposite. What I can advise the member, as I have already done previously, is we are taking the concerns of Nova Scotians. We are investing in our health care system. We're investing in infrastructure. We're investing in incentive programs to ensure we have the staff available to cover shifts in communities across the province. Mr. Speaker, we continue to listen to front-line health care workers to see what we can do differently to improve the situation.

The challenges being faced in these communities for filling emergency department shifts and other primary care access are being felt in communities across the country. Nova Scotia is certainly holding our own in the national context. We continue to invest because we know there's more to be done.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

H&W - FAMILY MED. STUDENTS (C.B.): RETENTION - PLAN

EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, the minister and his government keep assuring Cape Bretoners that their hospital redevelopment plans are going to help attract family physicians to our island. Potentially getting rid of the community-hospital model doesn't bode well for these plans. Dr. Stephanie Langley in North Sydney recently pointed out that without the scope of practice particular to community hospitals, there's little incentive for family doctors to train and stay in Cape Breton. I can table that article.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: How, specifically, does the minister plan to attract and retain medical students interested in family medicine in Cape Breton without a community-hospital model?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: As the member would know, we're investing in new primary care infrastructure in the communities of New Waterford and North Sydney. This infrastructure and the equipment available in these sites will provide the opportunity for new physicians and residents to have access to the equipment that they will be in training with at their medical schools and get that training, with modern equipment and modern technology in the communities, getting access to provide top-notch primary care services in those communities.

EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, under the existing community hospital model in Cape Breton, medical students interested in in-patient care and emergency medicine can put down roots. Now the government is rolling out a plan they haven't explained to us, and they're saying for us Cape Bretoners to trust them. They haven't demonstrated that the scope of medical services will bring any new family doctors once this dust settles, and doctors already practising in Cape Breton are not confident they will be able to stay.

My question to the minister is: If this government already has challenges retaining family physicians in Cape Breton, isn't this redevelopment simply, if you will build it, they will come?

RANDY DELOREY: Not at all, Mr. Speaker. In fact, as the member would know, we have been recruiting and continue to recruit physicians for the Cape Breton region. We know that in the Cape Breton region, there have been eight family physicians and seven specialists just since April 2018. (Interruptions)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness has the floor.

RANDY DELOREY: That includes two family physicians in North Sydney. That's before we have new infrastructure built into the community.

We're listening to physicians on the front lines to continue with the planning work for the infrastructure development and the very specific details that will come along with the designs.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

H&W - MENTAL ILLNESS: ACUTE CARE SERV. - PRIORITY

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, our caucus has heard stories of people who have gone to the emergency department with suicidal thoughts, and they have sometimes not been seen by a doctor or nurse for up to 24 hours. Someone comes to the emergency department in this province with thoughts of suicide or has even attempted to take their life, and sometimes no treatment is given. Emergency doctors in this province have no acute care beds, not enough acute care beds, or not enough psychiatrists for their patients to be seen.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Why does this health care system not have services for acute care mental illness?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for bringing to the floor a very important topic in the health care system, and we all know very much how important it is. That, of course, is mental illness.

I can assure the member that her statement is categorically false with respect to the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the availability of acute mental health services. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the province does provide acute mental health services across the province. We provide services through the crisis help line, as well as in our emergency departments.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Categorically false? I challenge the Minister of Health and Wellness to talk to the emergency physicians in this province. It's embarrassing to have you say that. Emergency physicians and nurses are failing every day because they have no places to put their acutely suicidal mentally ill patients.

I had someone two weeks ago who was sent home twice - after overdosing. Their mother took them to the Moncton hospital where they were admitted for one week and seen by a psychiatrist every day. They can't get that same care here in Nova Scotia. We have failed our people, and I can't believe he said that.

When will mental illness be given a priority in this province?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, and I have spoken to this in the past, the fact of the matter is, we do take mental illness very seriously. We continue to invest heavily to improve access, identifying issues early, providing the care, and helping people develop the coping mechanisms and supports they need to live healthy lives.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the clinical assertions, what I have been advised, particularly in the emergency room context, is that there are changing clinical practices. These are practices where people may present at an emergency department looking for admittance, but the clinical assessments and recommendations that are assessed personally in those instances - they make the clinical decisions as to whether to admit or to receive care in the community. We rely on that clinical advice and practice that they bring to the people of Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

H&W - KIDS HELP PHONE: CRISIS SUPPORT (N.S.) - NECESSITY

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Young people in Nova Scotia using the texting support service offered by the national Kids Help Phone discussed suicide the most out of any other province or territory during the first six months of this service. In the first part of 2018, 2,565 young Nova Scotians used the service, many of whom were an immediate danger to themselves or to others.

Does the fact that more than 2,500 young people needed crisis support in the space of six months not raise a huge red flag to this government?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, again, I assure the member opposite and all members of the Legislature that the situation for youth who find themselves in such a situation is of concern. That's why we have been investing heavily. We've been investing not just through the Department of Health and Wellness and our partners at the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK, but through the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Department of Community Services and others.

What I think is important is that those young people felt comfortable enough and confident enough in Nova Scotia to reach out and that we provided the access to that service for them to reach out to, to be connected so that we could connect them to the help that they needed.

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, since when is texting or calling somebody the answer to somebody's attempt at suicide? That is a disgrace. Three and a half psychiatrists out of 16 is what we have in Cape Breton - just saying.

When young people contact the Kids Help Phone, they are connected with someone who is trying to keep them safe. If the child cannot stay safe, the volunteer can refer them to the RCMP or local police to take over the situation. But what happens after the police get involved? When does that child get access to sustained support in their community? I know in Cape Breton it's a very, very long time, and a phone call to the IWK doesn't cut it.

Integrated youth services can provide that point of contact and keep kids from falling through the cracks. When will the minister ensure that all young people in our province can access mental health supports in person close to home?

RANDY DELOREY: Again, I'm pleased for the member raising her concerns. I hope she appreciates the investments we are making to do just that.

One of the recommendations that came to me very shortly after coming to this role was actually a recommendation to expand a program that started in Cape Breton, in the member's region, called CaperBase. This is an adolescent outreach model that provides direct access to youth in community, in partnership through our school systems.

Just a couple of weeks ago, I was pleased to announce that expansion in other parts of our province. I believe it's been rolled out to over 40 additional schools providing that care and that support, which builds upon other services like the Kids Help Phone and the Strongest Families program to provide virtual contact points for those youth.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

H&W - ADDICTION SERV.: DAY DETOX RELIANCE - EXPLAIN

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. The NSHA has been increasingly moving away from overnight detox and relying on day detox programs. However, people suffering from drug and alcohol addictions desperately need detox to safely set themselves up for recovery. Spending a day in detox and then heading right back to the same community that was part of your addiction is not a recipe for success.

My question is: Why was the decision made to switch from overnight detox to day detox?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. As I was mentioning in our discussion about mental health clinical practices, the member raises the point as it relates to addiction services. The fact of the matter is, as I've been advised, the clinical research has demonstrated that, in fact, while detox programs have been the norm for many years, growing clinical evidence shows that community-based

treatment services are far more effective. That would be what was driving any changes to the treatment in both mental health and addictions services.

[2:45 p.m.]

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the minister to table that. I can tell him that the people I talk to on the ground, who are doing this type of work in the province, would say that night detox is desperately needed.

In fact, we know that detox requires support and guidance and that going into withdrawal can be fatal. Being sent home at the end of the day and relapsing also can be fatal for an addict, so overnight detox is an important program to offer to ensure that Nova Scotians are really able to begin the process of recovery.

So my question is: Will the minister consider reinstating the overnight detox program?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that for those patients deemed clinically necessary to be admitted for detox, that service is still available. But there is a fine line, or rather a distinction perhaps, between individuals who present requesting that service and those for whom the clinicians providing the decisions and making the care decisions would choose that that is clinically the right course of treatment.

So, again, for those who are clinically deemed appropriate for detox, my understanding is that that is still available in hospitals.

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

H&W - HEALTH CARE WORKERS: INJURIES - ACTION

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a comment before I ask my question. When my father ran MSI, he could always tell us how many doctors were working in the province at any given time, and he knew which ones had died, retired, moved away, or just gotten fed up and stopped working. I am going to ask the minister to perhaps ask some of the people in his department if they can pull together that same information that my father had access to.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. A few weeks ago, when the tentative deal was made between the VON and the government, a committee was also struck to prevent VONs from getting injured at work. VON nurses have the highest rate of injury among any nurse category, and of course, there's a variety of reasons. The statistics around VON injuries are not new to this province, so it should not have taken four years for the Nova Scotia Health Authority to set up a committee to look into it.

My question to the minister is: Can the minister tell the House what he has done to reduce workplace injuries for health care workers in Nova Scotia?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, while the member raises specifically the question of a specific group, the VON staff, the fact is that we do know, and we recognize that, in recent years the growth of injuries and the pressures and the issues that creates broadly in health care and, in particular, in our continuing care sector.

Mr. Speaker, contrary to the suggestion of it taking four years to establish, in fact it has been established since I've been in - not just as recently as the contract that joint efforts of the department, the Health Authority, Labour and Advanced Education, Worker's Compensation Board, all working together to find ways to improve the situation and reduce the injuries of our health care workers.

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer, but it raises another issue. There's an awful lot known about injury prevention in this province, so the injury rate should in fact be going down instead of up.

The CEO of the Human Rights Commission has advised us that 65 per cent of all human rights complaints in this province centre around the employer's failure to accommodate for those who have physical or mental disabilities. The greatest complaint is made against the Nova Scotia Health Authority, followed secondly by the province and then HRM. This makes sense, as they are large employers, but I believe the authority responsible for the health of Nova Scotians should also know and do better, because the injury rate for all health professionals is on the rise.

The question for the minister is: Can the minister tell this House what, if anything, his department has done to address the failure of the Nova Scotia Health Authority to accommodate injured and disabled workers and to ensure that staffing levels are sufficient to prevent new Nova Scotia health care workers from getting injured at work?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, again, I thank the member for bringing the question forward. As I mentioned, we have invested in programs for education and equipment . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please.

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

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. 103.

Bill No. 103 - Justices of the Peace Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of Bill No. 103, the Justices of the Peace Act be read a second time.

It's my pleasure to speak to this bill today. This legislation will update the independent review process for determining the remuneration for presiding Justices of the Peace.

These amendments will allow government to confirm, vary, or reject the recommendations of the Independent Review Commission. Currently, the commission's recommendations on hourly rates of pay and cost-of-living increases for presiding Justices of the Peace, or PJPs as they are commonly referred, are binding on government. As members of the Legislature would know, government made similar changes with the review process for Provincial and Family Court Judges in 2016.

The changes we are proposing with this bill will quite simply align the review process for PJPs with that of provincially-appointed judges. Nova Scotia has 10 presiding Justices of the Peace working across the province. Eight work out of the Justice of the Peace Centre in Dartmouth and two sit in traffic court in Sydney. Each of them is an experienced lawyer who play an important role in the justice system.

Like their title suggests, they preside over a variety of court matters including night court where they deal with motor vehicle offences and summary offence tickets. They perform some of the other functions of judges. They have the authority to issue search warrants and to hear after-hours judicial interim release matters. They also take emergency protection order applications in domestic violence situations and they can hear peace bond applications. Because of the type of work they do, it's important that the process used to examine their remuneration remain open and transparent.

These amendments we are proposing will preserve the independent role of the Independent Review Commission by allowing it to thoroughly review and make recommendations to government.

At the same time, it is appropriate because of the quasi-judicial nature of the work PJPs perform, that the process align with the review process in place for provincially-appointed judges. By making the commission's recommendation nonbinding on government, it will ensure the province remains accountable for public spending.

Before I close my remarks, I'll also add that this bill also contains one minor housekeeping amendment. This change corrects a drafting error in Subsection 11H(2), where it refers to a second commission when, in fact, it should refer to the second report of the commission.

With those few comments, I look forward to the comments of my colleagues.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank my colleague for his remarks on Bill No. 103, the Justices of the Peace Act. This bill deals with compensation, remuneration of our JPs.

It attempts, I suppose, to control the wages of JPs. JPs, as we know, approve search warrants; they hear peace bond applications; they facilitate emergency order protections; and, they hear after-hours judicial interim release matters. It's a very important position.

In the past, an independent - and I stress this - an independent commission, determined the hourly rates for the Justices of the Peace. This bill changes the committee's mandate "to determine compensation" to "recommending" to Executive Council compensation, to recommending. So, we're going from the power to determine, to just recommending. The bill will allow Executive Council to accept, vary, or reject proposed compensation.

Now, I would like to take a few moments and look at this bill from the lens of a lack of transparency. Less transparency - a trend we are seeing with this government. This is a view that seems to become clearer and clearer, over the last few days. As we see the actions of this government as they try to justify the control over the committees that they're exerting; they try to justify interfering with the independence of commissions with binding powers. So, this bill, I believe, continues a trend towards ministerial control that we've seen with this government; ministerial control over the independence of judicial committees and commissions of independence in making recommendations that have been traditionally binding.

This is a slippery slope. This government will continue to be called out on this trend by this Opposition for what seems to be its pursuit of more and more control. I find that to be very alarming. Like many things with this government, it's not what is on the surface, it's when you look into the details that you see an approach that is very, very, at times, some would say authoritarian. Putting more and more power with Executive Council.

We saw last week the Opposition call out the Minister of Justice, who saw fit to overrule the independent committee in the appointment of the Chief Judge of the Provincial and Family Courts. As a matter of fact, in *The Chronicle Herald*, Jim Vibert, on the weekend, called out this government by stating the government and the minister are limiting the judiciary. He noted in his article that the government has used its majority to limit the scope of legislative committees and is now extending its authoritarian reach to judicial appointments.

What's clear, the minister and this government and their choice for the Chief of the Provincial Court was decided before the committee was struck. If he expected the Chief Justice of Nova Scotia to provide judicial cover for that predetermined outcome, I believe he was sadly mistaken. I'll table that article from *The Chronicle Herald*.

Nova Scotians, I believe, are getting wise to the erosion of democratic institutions and the judicial institutions of our province. People are starting to take notice of their determination to limit the ability of Opposition to ask questions. I find that alarming that we are seeing a trend where those in the Opposition are being limited the opportunity to ask some fundamental questions.

In 2016, we know that the government unilaterally made changes to the Provincial Court Act, which were very deep in the omnibus Financial Measures (2016) Act. I want to take a moment to read the opening statement made by the tribunal, which was responsible for the next report for the determination of salaries and benefits for Provincial and Family Court Judges. Once I read this, I will table that document.

This is the report of the 2017-20 Tribunal for the Determination of Salaries and Benefits for Provincial and Family Court Judges with recommendations proposed for the period from April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018, and I'll table that, Mr. Speaker:

“The Tribunal is established under sections 21A through 21M of the *Provincial Court Act*, R.S.N.S.c.238 as amended, particularly by section 9 (and related sections) of the Financial Measures (2016) Act, . . . which repealed and replaced Sections 21J and 21K of the former Act. The upshot of these amendments is to create a system whereby the recommendations of this and subsequent salary and benefit tribunals under the *Provincial Court Act* may be confirmed or varied by the Governor in Council rather than being binding on the Government as has been the case since 1999. The role and procedures of the Tribunal in making its recommendations, however, remain unchanged, as was acknowledged by counsel for both the Government and the Provincial Judges Association, and is accepted by the current Tribunal. In other words, the duties of the Tribunal under section 21E(1) of the *Provincial Court Act*, and the factors under Section 21E(3) of the *Act*, which the tribunal must take into

consideration when making its recommendations, have not been altered in the 2016 amendment process. But while the new section 21K(3) provides that, where the Government varies or rejects the Tribunal's recommendations, it must 'provide reasons for doing so to both the tribunal and the Association,' Section 21K(4) nonetheless provides that: "The Governor in Council shall, without delay, cause the confirmed and varied recommendations to be implemented . . ." Moreover, the latter section provides that such '... recommendations have the same force and effect as if enacted by the Legislature once implemented and are in substitution of any existing legislation relating to those matters.' The current Tribunal has no desire or need to comment on these new amendments. We shall simply proceed to carry out our duties under section 21E(1) of the *Provincial Court Act* in accordance with the factors in section 21E(3) of the Act which govern our deliberations, as shall be explained below."

[3:00 p.m.]

We're now handed a bill, Bill No. 103, that takes the binding recommendations of the commission, reviewing the wages of the Justices of the Peace of this province and now makes it non-binding, based on the fact that it was done to judges in 2016. There have been no new appointments to the justices of the peace since 2002.

Sooner or later we'll need to add to their numbers. Increasing responsibilities and attracting candidates is harder, Mr. Speaker, when people do not feel appreciated and they feel their compensation isn't up to the expected standards.

This December a commission is to report to the Minister of Justice on the remuneration for the Justices of the Peace, after consultations, deliberations, and to make recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, will it really matter what work this commission does when this government has all the answers before they ever look at the report? This government and this minister have decided to set themselves up as judge and jury for the judiciary of this province, and I fear will use its majority to get whatever it wants.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable New Democratic Party House Leader.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I will keep my remarks very brief.

I appreciate the remarks of my colleague. I share his confusion about why, given the conversation around the concerning issues with the appointment of the Chief Judge of the Provincial Court, the government would choose this moment to introduce legislation overriding the work of an independent committee. That's obviously concerning.

I think my colleague has well laid out many of the ways in which that would function in this Act; I don't think I need to repeat that. At this juncture in second reading I look forward to the folks who will surely come forward at Law Amendments Committee. I feel strongly that the judiciary is an important branch. I don't want to speak for what their reaction to this bill will be; I think I feel fairly certain they will make themselves heard on that issue. I look forward to hearing that feedback and to having further discussion upon third reading.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. MARK FUREY: I thank my colleagues for their comments and rise to close debate on Bill No. 103.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 103, the Justices of the Peace Act. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 105, the Judicature Act.

Bill No. 105 - Judicature Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 105 be now read a second time. It is my pleasure to rise today and speak to this bill.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will provide greater support and improved access to justice for families dealing with separation and divorce. Most family law matters are currently heard in two separate courts. As an example, one family may have their parenting issues addressed at Family Court, at the provincial level, and their property issues addressed at the Supreme Court Family Division.

Mr. Speaker, this division can be a challenge for families who are already dealing with very difficult circumstances. This parallel system can also create confusion, contribute to delays in processing cases, and result in duplication of higher legal expenses.

Mr. Speaker, the changes we are proposing today will allow for the expansion of a Unified Family Court system, one that provides Nova Scotians with access to a single, specialized court for all family law matters including separation, divorce, custody, and family property. Unified Family Court sites are overseen by federally appointed judges. The federal government has committed to appointing more judges, so this court can be expanded, a commitment that we fully support. Changes to the Judicature Act will enable the necessary increase to the number of federally appointed Supreme Court judges to allow for the expansion to occur.

Unified Family Court sites currently exist in Halifax, Port Hawkesbury and Sydney. By expanding the court, we will ensure all Nova Scotians have access to a single court for family law matters. What's more important, the unified Family Court will provide Nova Scotians with access to a specialized bench and a range of programs and support services, including alternative dispute resolution, to help families come to their own agreements outside of the court process. Those who are turning to our courts are already dealing with very difficult circumstances. It's up to us to ensure that their experience with our justice system is supportive and responsive to their needs and that their matters are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Mr. Speaker, this is a great example of how the Department of Justice and stakeholders have worked with the senior levels of our Supreme Court, Family Courts, and Provincial Court - Chief Justice MacDonald, Chief Justice Kennedy, Associate Chief Justice O'Neil, and Associate Chief Justice Smith, who provided outstanding leadership and support in moving this particular initiative forward.

With those few remarks, I believe these changes will go a long way in seeing these outcomes. I look forward to the comments of my colleagues.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

TIM HALMAN: Certainly, as the minister has indicated, more or less, this really is an access to justice issue. When it comes to access to justice, I know all MLAs in this Chamber are committed to that, having our judicial systems and our court systems much more accessible to the public.

My understanding is that the aim of this bill is to provide a Unified Family Court for those wishing to divorce or separate. As it stands, in some parts of Nova Scotia, it's divided into two courts, the Supreme Court and Family Court. I have heard stories of delays, higher legal fees, and often confusion.

I believe the bill will allow these matters to be dealt with in one court rather than two. It appears this process simplifies court procedures, especially in parts of rural Nova Scotia where we have seen these problems.

We look forward to the Law Amendments Committee and look forward to hearing from stakeholders on Bill No. 105.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I would echo the comments of my colleague. We in the NDP caucus - and I think all members of this House - are broadly supportive of increased access to justice, particularly in the Family Courts. From what we can see, this will be a very helpful change for families and will increase that access to justice. We're broadly supportive of this Act. I look forward to hearing the people come forward at the Law Amendments Committee, and I thank my colleagues for bringing this bill forward and for speaking to it.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. MARK FUREY: I thank my colleagues for their comments. I rise to close debate on Bill No. 105 - The Judicature Act.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 105. 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: That concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise to sit again tomorrow, Wednesday, March 13th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. As Wednesday's tradition provides, it is Opposition Day, so I have the pleasure of turning it over to the Official Opposition House Leader for the first time. He will call business for tomorrow. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader for the Official Opposition.

ALLAN MACMASTER: I promise the members that we'll have robust debate tomorrow. After daily routine and Question Period, we'll be calling Bill Nos. 85 and 88 for second reading.

I now move that we rise and meet tomorrow at the prescribed hour of 1:00 p.m. until 5:30 p.m.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for the House to adjourn and to rise tomorrow March 13th at the prescribed hour at 1:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

The House now stands adjourned.

[The House rose at 3:10 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 829**

By: Kim Masland (Queens-Shelburne)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities, author Edna J. Leshan wrote; and

Whereas on March 10, 2019, Tiffany Whynot and Cody Frank welcomed their son, Dante Darcy Allen Frank, into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tiffany and Cody on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 830

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Detective Constable Christina Marie Trenholm, a resident of Timberlea, was presented with the 15 Year Long Service Award on September 25, 2018 by the Honourable Mark Furey; and

Whereas the award recognizes the work police officers do to protect the public, detect and prevent crimes, and perform other activities directed at maintaining law and order; and

Whereas Police Officers also provide emergency assistance to victims of accidents, crimes, and natural disasters;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing the 15 years of service of Detective Constable Christina Marie Trenholm has

served to competently work through all of the trails and challenges, "To Serve and Protect" our citizens.