



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2019

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 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. Before we begin the daily routine, I'd like to read the topic for late debate, if I could, as submitted by the honourable member for Yarmouth:

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia to Maine ferry is of critical importance to the economic growth of Nova Scotia and that the Opposition rhetoric ignoring the importance of the service has created uncertainty to all Nova Scotians and international investors.

That will be the late debate at the moment of interruption.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a point of privilege and do so at the earliest opportunity.

Yesterday in the House of Assembly, I was subjected to a series of threatening incidents involving the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development who is also the member for Yarmouth.

Mr. Speaker, the matter at hand is strikingly similar to an incident in this House from May 2013, between the then member for Preston, now the member for Preston-Dartmouth, and the Minister of the day of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, who was also the member for Waverley-Fall River at that time. As such, I am relying heavily upon that point of privilege for reference.

Yesterday, I was placing a phone call inside one of the phone booths near the members' cloakroom outside the main Chamber. While I was in the phone room, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development forced himself into the same booth and physically grabbed me by the shoulders while attempting to dissuade me from continuing any line of questions regarding the Nova Scotia to Maine ferry service. It was only after the Minister of the Public Service Commission intervened that the member for Yarmouth composed himself and retreated. The incident was witnessed by the member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley as well. This occurred during the daily routine.

Later yesterday, while the members were exiting the Chamber at the conclusion of the day's business, the same member again made profane, aggressive, and threatening remarks regarding my potential appearance at this morning's meeting of the Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee.

Mr. Speaker, O'Brien and Bosc defines a specific category of privilege which speaks directly to this event to describe this as a "Freedom from Obstruction, Interference, Intimidation and Molestation" and states, "Speakers have consistently upheld the right of the House to the services of its Members free from intimidation, obstruction and interference."

Furthermore, Maingot states that "Members are entitled to go about their parliamentary business undisturbed. The assaulting, menacing, or insulting of any Member . . . while he is coming or going to or from the House, or on account of his behaviour during a proceeding in Parliament, is a violation of the rights of Parliament. Any form of intimidation . . . of a person for or on account of his behaviour during a proceeding in Parliament could amount to contempt."

These incidents, individually and in totality, clearly constitute the execution of a threat and intimidation in an attempt to prevent me from performing my function as a legislator, as an elected representative for my constituents, and as a member of this Assembly.

Further, Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege as a member of this Assembly and my duty as Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition to pursue avenues of criticism of the legislation, policies, and practices of the government within the guidelines of conduct for this House. It is critical to the function of this House and the Westminster tradition that I be permitted to pursue these avenues free from threat or intimidation by or from government members.

With the above explanation, it is to you as Speaker, that I have raised this *prima facie* question of privilege. I shall move the following resolution:

Therefore be it resolved that the matter be referred to the Committee on Internal Affairs and that the committee's findings be reported back to the House without delay.

In light of the urgency of this matter, Mr. Speaker, I would please ask you to temporarily suspend the proceedings of the House until such time as you can rule on this matter. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the chance to respond to these allegations. My perspective on a heated verbal exchange that I did have yesterday with the Leader of the Official Opposition, one that I will remind the member was initiated by him is, when I entered into the Chamber, the member said, "I've got you on the ropes; you might save your seat, but that ferry is going to take down your government."

That led to me informing the member that we lost investment in our area as a result of the language he's used around this ferry service. This happened before the member entered into the Chamber with the telephone. So, we did engage in this conversation as the member led into there.

The only time I did touch the member was to shake his hand when things began to escalate, and said we need to calm down. That was in the first interaction that the member referenced.

The second time was to shake his hand when the member was leaving the Chamber, and that was done in an attempt to get back to a level of discourse that I think the member would say he and I are used to, which is more jocular and friendly outside of the Chamber.

I very much believe that we did have a very heated verbal exchange that, from my perspective, was reciprocal. The initiation did happen when the member approached me to say - I think verbatim - what I said earlier. I need to express to the House that this is an issue of great passion for me. I don't take threats to the service lightly. My community's passionate about it. My community suffered through the loss of this service in a very real way - income, jobs, facilities closing down - and their passion does fuel my passion in this regard.

But I do not agree with the member's assertions that anything close to assault or anything like that would have happened. I would interpret this to be a heated verbal exchange. I believe it was reciprocal, was initiated by the member, and led to me being upset and taking issue with some of the things he said. The member said that it was B.S.

that we lost investment in Yarmouth as a result of his comments. That is not true, and I expressed that to the member in no uncertain terms.

I do want to reiterate that myself and the member have had, for the most part, I think, a mutually respectful relationship that has allowed us to debate things vigorously in the House, which we both have enjoyed doing, but has also allowed us to speak reasonably to one another outside of the Chamber. This issue, from my perspective, elevated passions on both sides of the conversation that did steer us away from that normal decorum that we adhere to from a conversational perspective. But I do not agree with the member's assertions that this was anything more than that.

With that, I will take my seat.

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

LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, I know six years ago when I came into this House, I wanted to do three things: one was to respect this House and what it stands for; the second was to respect the process; and the third was to respect all the people I would be working with for the next X number of years. I think I've tried to hold to that. I really do.

Yesterday I did witness the encounter. It was as the minister said. It was loud and it was extremely pointed. But at one point there was a door slam, which I thought was a little over the top, and I did hear the Leader of the Opposition say at one point, "Take your hands off me."

As I said, I didn't see anything. I just heard that response when Zach entered into the phone booth.

Again, it was a very heated discussion. I'm sorry it took place because it should not have taken place at that level, but it did. I just had to tell you what I witnessed.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. I'll take a recess at this time and consult with the staff on the matter as to how to proceed, and I'll report back. In the meantime, we will suspend the proceedings of the House until we can come back with a decision.

The House is now in recess.

[1:14 p.m. The House recessed.]

[1:18 p.m. The House reconvened.]

THE SPEAKER: Order please. I've been advised by the Government House Leader that, as the Leader of the Official Opposition has referenced, there was another party who

was named in the case for the point of privilege earlier, and I think it is fair that that party have an opportunity to make a contribution at this point to the situation.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Portland Valley.

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, yesterday as I left the Chamber I stopped out in the hallway near our mailboxes and, as I was standing by the mailboxes, I heard an exchange between the member for Yarmouth and the member for Pictou East.

The exchange was pretty heated, but I didn't pay much attention as I thought they were joking, until I heard my colleague say, "Calm down." That's when I walked around the corner, or stepped to the side, intervened and asked my colleague to come with me.

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

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for not bringing this up when we had the short recess, but I know there are other members who witnessed events yesterday. I don't know if you would be open to hearing their statements as well, but in advance of them perhaps getting up, I wanted to forewarn you that there are others who may wish to say something about what they witnessed.

THE SPEAKER: I think I will take a recess and consult with the staff. If we need to hear from them when we come back, we will.

The House will now recess.

[1:21 p.m. The House recessed.]

[2:03 p.m. The House reconvened.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. After review of the authorities it is apparent that the decision I am called upon to make is whether or not a prima facie case of breach of privilege has been raised. It is not for me to decide whether the action complained of actually happened or not. All I am to consider is whether the alleged action would constitute a breach of privilege if it were true.

The finding is not made by the Speaker, but by a committee that can hear from all witnesses. It is apparent there are other witnesses to what transpired, and the committee would be in the best position to hear from the witnesses, question the witnesses, and determine what took place.

The committee would report back to the House with its findings. Accordingly, I will now ask the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition to restate his motion for consideration of the House, and the motion is debatable.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I shall move the following resolution: Therefore be it resolved that the matter be referred to a Committee on Internal Affairs and the committee's findings be reported back to the House without delay.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, considering the severity of the allegation the member is making, I welcome the committee to investigate this further. I do reject the allegation entirely. This was a verbal dispute that was initiated by the Leader of the Official Opposition, not me. The only time I initiated any contact with the member was to shake hands and try to consolidate what was happening.

I just have to say for the record I don't agree with the assessment. It's hard for me to not view it as a political move concerning the member next to me, the Minister of Justice, was just accused of corruption. It's hard for me personally to not interpret it that way. I don't agree with the representation of the facts as they've been presented by the opposite, and I previously stated my perspective and recollection of the event.

THE SPEAKER: So, we'll have the vote on the motion.

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

The motion is defeated.

We'll now move on with the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

LENA METLEGE DIAB: Thank you very much. With us today in the East Gallery are two individuals: Christine Halef, a local pharmacist and president of AtlantiCann Medical Inc. She is joined today by her father and partner of AMI, Besim Halef. The Halef family are my constituents, successful entrepreneurs, and believe in giving back to the community. I would ask all members of the House to please join me in giving them the warm welcome of the House.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

MED. CANNABIS: CULTIVATION/EXTRACTION FACILITY - CONGRATS.

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, in October, I attended the launch of a new state-of-the-art medicinal cannabis cultivation and extraction facility here in HRM. The 48,000-square-foot facility in Lower Sackville was built to produce high-quality cannabis for both the medicinal and retail markets.

This launch was a result of a partnership between MJardin Group Inc., a Canadian company that operates a complete seed-to-sale cannabis platform, and Halifax-based AtlantiCann Medical Inc., as well as the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs. This is exciting as the assembly recently signed a letter of intent and memorandum of understanding with GrowForce and AMI, creating a pathway for them to participate in the cannabis industry.

I want to congratulate Christine Halef, president of AMI, and her partners, Besim Halef and MJardin Group Inc., as well as GrowForce, Bridging Finance Inc., and the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs, on their roles in bringing this project to fruition.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, with the indulgence of the House, I would like to revert back on the order paper to Introduction of Bills.

THE SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill No. 125 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 7 of the Acts of 2011. The Fair Drug Pricing Act. (Tammy Martin)**

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that this bill be read a second time on a future day.

We will now revert back to Statements by Members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: May I make an introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I would like to bring the House's attention to some very honoured guests that we have in the gallery opposite today. Some of the hardest working people in the province: social workers. We have with us today four members of the Child Welfare on the Brink campaign and I'd like you to stand, if you would, while I say your name. We have Alec Stratford, who is the Executive Director of the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers. We also have Lynn Brogan, Brian Crawford, and Patricia Stephens-Brown, so welcome to the House.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

CHILD WELFARE ON THE BRINK: CHILDREN AT RISK - LISTEN

SUSAN LEBLANC: If the Premier had checked his inbox over the past couple of weeks, he'd have found many messages calling for new funding for child welfare programs to help relieve an overworked and overstressed foundation of social workers. It appears these calls have gone unanswered in the budget tabled yesterday.

The Child Welfare on the Brink campaign, initiated by the NSGEU and the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers, invites us to consider what happens when child welfare services are underfunded and neglected. It is troubling because the children of Nova Scotia are the ones who suffer.

Even as social workers go above and beyond to try to keep a broken system together, much of their time is spent on administrative work instead of building the relationships required to keep children and their families safe. The result, the most vulnerable and marginalized children of our province are at risk.

The children are the victims of the government's choices to improperly resource the work of their social workers. Child welfare is on the brink and social workers are crying for help. It appears that this government is not listening.

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

BLACKIE, SKYLER: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

BILL HORNE: It is with tremendous sadness that I rise today to express the profound loss on behalf of our community of one of Fall River's outstanding young citizens, Skyler Blackie.

Skyler Blackie's presence, and now his tragic loss, has been felt by the community and province-wide. If one had the opportunity to meet Skyler, you were guaranteed to always remember him.

His impact on the community began well before his dedication to firefighting. He was a well-loved lifeguard, swim instructor, and camp counsellor at the local Windsor Junction Community Centre impacting his campers, their families, and his fellow coworkers who are now broken hearted.

On behalf of our community also I offer condolences to his wife, the Blackie family, his Fall River and Truro firefighting families, and to our community who will miss the outstanding young man. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**MACDONALD, LYNN - SOCIAL WORKER:
SENATE 150 MEDAL - CONGRATS.**

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, as already noted in this Chamber, March is Social Work Month. Today I would like to acknowledge the work of Lynn MacDonald, a social worker with the Halifax Regional Centre for Education and the IWK Health Centre.

This morning at Joseph Howe School in Halifax Needham, Lynn was presented with a Senate 150th Anniversary Medal by Senator Colin Deacon. The medals recognize Canadians or Permanent Residents who make their communities better places to live. Lynn is richly deserving as she is dedicated to improving the lives of others and fostering positive social change, particularly in the North End of Halifax.

Lynn is a Director of the North End Opportunities Fund, she is also its throbbing heart and propulsive energy. She rallied good people to form the NEOF after the Rainbow Haven Opportunities Fund ceased to operate in 2013. In 2018, the NEOF facilitated a staggering 96 youth to attend athletic, academic, artistic, leadership, and outdoor programs

of their choice with support from the Halifax Community Investment Fund and the Halifax Assistance Fund as well as all sorts of fundraising.

Lynn never seeks recognition, but she absolutely deserves it. Please join me in recognizing her work as both a social worker and volunteer.

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

**BUSSEY, MALCOLM:
ALL STATE NEW HAMPSHIRE RUNNING BACK - CONGRATS.**

BEN JESSOME: I would like to recognize Malcolm Bussey, a resident of Hammonds Plains now attending school in New Hampshire. Malcom was named a USA Today second team All State New Hampshire running back for the 2018 season, plus he attends St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire where he is a sophomore. This season Malcolm rushed for 863 yards and scored 11 touchdowns.

Malcolm began playing football with the Timberlea Titans and was a star player on various Team Nova Scotia provincial teams.

Mr. Speaker, I'll ask all members of the House of Assembly to please join me in congratulating Malcolm Bussey for being named a USA Today All-State New Hampshire running back and wish him well in his future endeavours.

[2:15 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

BUS STOP THEATRE: THREAT OF CLOSURE - GOV'T. RESPOND

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, today is World Theatre Day and I rise to voice my support for the Bus Stop Theatre. In his book, *The Empty Space*, Director Peter Brook states, "I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage."

The Bus Stop began in 2003 as a boarded-up pharmacy on a then dilapidated lot on Gottingen Street. Since its founders saw the potential in its empty space, countless artists from diverse communities have walked, crawled, wheeled, danced, and rolled through it bringing it to life and transforming it into a vital performance and meeting space; a place where people have come to engage with art and with each other. Thousands of people have laughed, wept, been challenged to consider new ideas, discovered secrets, uncovered truths, and maybe even fallen in love within its walls.

The Bus Stop, like many affordable and well-used spaces before it is now under threat of closure and if it does, it will be a devastating blow to an already vulnerable population of artists in Nova Scotia.

Something must happen to save the Bus Stop Theatre and to ensure it continues to be an anchor for art and culture in our province. Our government must show leadership in this essential endeavour.

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

BLACKIE, SKYLER: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, everyday across the province first responders put their own physical and mental health and safety on the line as they protect Nova Scotians.

On March 20th, Skyler Blackie, a career firefighter and member of the Truro fire service succumbed to injuries suffered during a training session on March 9th.

I ask all members of the House to rise with me and observe a moment of silence to honour the work and sacrifice for firefighter Skyler Blackie.

THE SPEAKER: I like to ask all members to rise and observe a moment of silence in honour of fallen firefighter Skyler Blackie.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

PURCELLS COVE SOC. CLUB: COM. HUB - THANKS

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to recognize a group, an association, a club that has been a mainstay of our community since the 1950s - the Purcell's Cove Social Club. The Club has always been a great place to socialize, have a cold drink and a great meal, and to catch up with good friends.

I want to take a moment to recognize the entire executive committee and President Martin Campbell for all their volunteered time to keep the club running. I would also like to thank the staff, Robert Tufts, who cooks up some fantastic food and the bar staff, Cindy Campbell, Gary Hendsbee, and Ashley Murphey. They are there for a cold beer and great, warm conversation. The PC Club will always be home.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

HOPE BLOOMS: SENATE 150 MEDAL - CONGRATS.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, in keeping with my resolution to talk about climate change in this Chamber, I want to hold up a very local and very celebrated example of what the transition of our economy could look like.

Hope Blooms addresses food insecurity, structural racism, social isolation, and educational outcomes. It opened a solar-powered greenhouse in 2015, allowing it to grow some 5,000 pounds a year of produce for the families and community members of the youth who participate.

Today Hope Blooms was recognized with a Senate 150th Anniversary Medal at Joseph Howe School where many of its young participants are either current students or graduates. Many of its participants are also now high school graduates and university students and scholarship winners, despite the barriers that they have faced.

Hope Blooms' motto is, "When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change." That is, in fact, the great challenge of the transition that we must embark on and I thank Hope Blooms for the example that it provides.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

ERNST, TOM: LCSHS WALL OF FAME - CONGRATS.

SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, the Lunenburg County Sports Heritage Society recognizes individuals who have made a distinct and valuable contribution to sport through their connection to Lunenburg County. Inductees are commemorated by having a plaque hung on the sports Wall of Fame acknowledging their accomplishments.

I rise today to congratulate Tom Ernst of Mahone Bay, who was inducted in to the Lunenburg County Sports Wall of Fame Sunday, November 4th. Tom dedicated his life to helping youth in the Mahone Bay area. He was a program leader with the St. James Church boys' league for 60 years, and also was its creator. He coached the St. James CBL Jets hockey teams for 20 years, the CBL Jets baseball team for 25 years, and was also a Boy Scout leader for 19 years. Tom also co-created the Mahone Bay and District Minor Baseball Association.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you and all members of this House of Assembly please join me in congratulating Tom Ernst on being inducted into the Lunenburg County Sports Hall of Fame.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

BOND, JEANINE: COM. VOLUN. - COMMEND

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, in honour of yesterday's Purple Day, I would like to acknowledge another constituent who has devoted her spare time to great causes.

Jeanine Bond has been working with the Epilepsy Association of Nova Scotia for two years and is now a board member. After attending many fundraising and gala events, she knew it was a great fit for her. Jeanine organized two barbecue fundraisers and a pie-in-the-face event just this past holiday season. She acted as a team captain for seven years with the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Big Bike. She has also volunteered with Feed Nova Scotia, Steps for Life, and Run for the Cure.

Mr. Speaker, would this House of Assembly join me in applauding Jeanine on her exceptional volunteerism?

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

GASPEREAU PRESS: BUS. SUCCESS - CONGRATS.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, there's a saying, never judge a book by its cover. But when it comes to a world-class Gaspereau Press publication, maybe one should.

Founded in 1997 by Gary Dunfield and Andrew Steeves, Gaspereau Press produces high-quality books ranging from Smyth-sewn trade paperbacks to cloth-bound hardcovers to letterpress-printed limited editions. From editing, typesetting, and production to sales and promotion, their hands-on approach and unwavering commitment to quality carries through every aspect of a book's creation, resulting in a process which is as culturally enriching as the books it fosters.

Their remarkable work has received a myriad of honours, including being voted best small-press publisher in Canada three times by the Canadian Booksellers Association. Most recently they were the only North American book designer invited to exhibit their work at the Plantin-Moretus Museum in Antwerp, Belgium, one of the premier museums of printing in the world.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Gaspereau Press on their extraordinary success and the world recognition they have received as an exceptional publisher.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

MOOD, JULIE: YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YR. - CONGRATS.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: The Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce celebrated our local business community at its 2018 Business Awards, and the award for Young Entrepreneur of the Year went to Julie Mood.

Julie is the creator and owner of Jenesis Interiors, a furniture and interior design studio in Yarmouth. Julie builds custom designs of any scope and size and refinishes customers' existing pieces. She also provides interior design and staging services, and hosts very popular Board and Brush nights at her studio.

I ask this House to join me in congratulating Yarmouth's Julie Mood on winning the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce's Young Entrepreneur of the Year award and wish her continued success in her business endeavours.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

SEAHAWKS: FOOTBALL N.S. PEEWEE TIER 1 CHAMP. - CONGRATS.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Seahawks Minor Football Club's peewee team.

The peewee Seahawks overpowered the Truro Blue Bombers 40-0 in the semi-finals held November 11th at Bridgewater Kinsman field. The following week at Saint Mary's University, they defeated the Dartmouth Destroyers 16-14 in a close battle to claim the Football Nova Scotia Peewee Tier 1 championships.

Head Coach James Dickens said we have some pretty special young men and women on the team of 24. They worked hard all season and left everything out on the field. Coach Dickens also gives credit to his coaching staff of Dan Macphee, Shane Slauenwhite, and Samantha Dickens; and junior coaches Christian Dickens and Eli Langille.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in congratulating the Sea Hawks Minor Football Club Peewee team for winning the association's first Tier 1 Championship.

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

WORLD THEATRE DAY: BRIDGING DIFFERENCES - THANKS

LENORE ZANN: Today, March 27th, is World Theatre Day, first celebrated in Paris on March 27, 1962. It was kicked off with an international message written by

legendary playwright Jean Cocteau. Ever since, on that date each year, World Theatre Day is celebrated on a global scale.

The goals of World Theatre Day are to promote the art form across the world; to make people aware of the value of live theatre; to enable theatre communities to promote their work on a broad scale so that opinion leaders like ourselves are aware of the value of these forms and support them, including investing in them, Mr. Speaker; to enjoy the art form for its own sake; and help promote a culture of world peace by bridging cultural differences, eradicating discrimination, and building respect and understanding.

I'd like to thank all the theatre members of Nova Scotia for the great work they continue to do.

THE SPEAKER: Just for those keeping track, Question Period will start at 3:06 p.m.

The honourable member for Bedford.

**PATTERSON, JACK:
FISU OLYMPIAD & JAMES-BAUN AWARD - CONGRATS.**

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate Bedford resident Jack Patterson on some recent news.

Jack plays varsity hockey for the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) Ridgebacks. He was recently selected for the Canadian team for the International University Sports Federation (FISU) Winter Universiade in Russia this month.

Jack was also awarded the Ridgeback's James-Baun Cup in April last year in recognition of his outstanding efforts in hockey, academics, and in the community. The James-Baun Award is presented to the student athlete who best exemplifies academic responsibility, leadership, and sportsmanship in the pursuit of excellence. The recipient is selected by their coaches, who describe Jack as the ultimate team player, a "heart and soul player."

I want to congratulate Jack Patterson on winning the James-Baun Cup and on his selection to the Canadian team at the FISU Winter Olympiad in Moscow, and wish him the very best of luck.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

FISHER, BRENT: SCOTT'S BAKERY EXCELLING - BEST WISHES

HON. KAREN CASEY: In 2016 Brent Fisher, who was working at Foodland in Bible Hill, made a big change in his life - he became the owner of Scott's Bakery in Kempton, Colchester North. It has become a family business with Fisher doing 100 per cent of the baking. He has expanded his wholesale business to include two Sobeys outlets, two seasonal outlets, Foodland in Stewiacke, and the Pork Shop in Denmark.

In 2017, Scott's Bakery started to offer catering service and to provide lunch items for his customers. The customers love the homestyle recipes that are free of preservatives and fillers. Everything he bakes from scratch and in small batches to preserve quality and consistency.

Fisher bakes six to seven days a week, delivers to shops in Truro every day and business is continually improving, including a number of drop-in customers - an additional baker may be necessary by summer.

Brent Fisher is an excellent example of a hard-working, dedicated, successful Nova Scotian entrepreneur, and we wish him continued success.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

CRAWFORD, JENNIFER: MASTER CHEF CAN. - BEST WISHES

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I rise today to congratulate Kingston-raised Jennifer Crawford and wish her the best of luck as she competes in the Master Chef Canada kitchen. Beginning at a young age Jennifer has many wonderful food-focused memories with her family, including cooking recipes out of her favourite cookbook belonging to her mother, which would serve as one of her biggest inspirations.

Jennifer continues to carry on her love of cooking as she is ready to embrace the challenge that comes with cooking on a national stage. I know Jennifer will represent Kingston and the province well, and I look forward to following her journey which premieres on April 8th, just days after her 38th birthday.

Mr. Speaker, I request that all members of this House join me in congratulating Jennifer Crawford, passing along our best wishes as she enters this competition of a lifetime.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

**ANTIGONISH AFFORDABLE HOUSING:
FUNDRAISING SUCCESS - CONGRATS.**

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, the Antigonish Affordable Housing Society is a group of volunteers that has been working for many years to create good quality, safe, accessible housing for people living with low incomes. They have worked tirelessly to raise funds and awareness. They opened their first four housing units in 2016. After they raised more money, they opened another 10 units in 2018, for a total of 14 homes.

[2:30 p.m.]

Next, they launched a capital campaign with a goal of raising \$250,000 so they can pay down their mortgage to give them more security and ability to refinance so they can create even more affordable housing. The goal is about sustainability of the homes, both for the people who live in them and for the society.

I'm happy to say that the Antigonish Affordable Housing Society recently announced it has reached its fundraising goal.

May I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Antigonish Affordable Housing Society on its fundraising success and show appreciation for local citizens and community organizations and businesses that provide financial and moral support for the campaign, really all the work of the society. I look forward to hearing about the next phase.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

BROOKS, DAKELLE: UPEI BASKETBALL SCHOLARSHIP - CONGRATS.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Dakelle Brooks of East Preston, son of Maleetia Brooks, and grandson of Kevin Brooks and Linda Clayton Brooks, who won a full scholarship in basketball to the University of Prince Edward Island in 2017 to study a Bachelor of Arts. He started his basketball career with the East Preston Pacers and went on to play with the Auburn Drive High School team. He received excellent coaching all through his career that enabled him to obtain this key role on the UPEI team.

I want to recognize and congratulate Dakelle Brooks on his many achievements in basketball and wish him every success, both on and off the court, at the University of Prince Edward Island.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

E. HANTS SPORT HERITAGE SOC.: HONOURING EXCELLENCE - THANKS

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to tell you about a fairly new organization in our area, the East Hants Sport Heritage Society, founded in 2014. The mission of the society is to recognize and honour sports excellence in both the past and present in East Hants. Seven inductees became the first to receive the honour of being placed in the East Hants Sport Hall of Fame.

Since that opening ceremony, 29 athletes have been recognized and inducted into the hall of fame as a testament to the glory of the sports and the level of athletic talent in East Hants. The hall occupies a distinctive place in the East Hants Sportsplex and it welcomes visitors. The endeavour is hugely supported by the community, local businesses and is run by a dedicated volunteer board of directors.

We are very proud of the East Hants Sport Heritage Society and the sport hall of fame and would like to offer our appreciation to the board of directors and community members whose proclaimed mission is to have the best sport heritage society in the province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

LOST AT SEA MEMORIAL: UNVEILED - RECOG.

GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the efforts of the group who have worked for years to erect a monument dedicated to the people from Clare who were lost at sea. Located at Cape Saint Mary Lighthouse Park on the cliffs overlooking the bay, the monument was unveiled last summer at the park's grand opening. Unfortunately, in our province, these monuments are not an uncommon sight given the important role of oceans and how they play in the livelihood of many Nova Scotians and the dangers also associated with working at sea. For the people whose family members are listed on the monument, this was a bittersweet moment. They were happy to see the project completed, which immortalized their family members, while still feeling the loss. Other visitors will be able to see the monument in the park and learn a bit about the area's history.

The monument was only possible because of the efforts of such groups as the Municipality of Clare, the *Société acadienne de Clare*, the *Société historique acadienne de la Baie Sainte-Marie*, and the Centre acadien at the Université Sainte-Anne. I'm proud to say that the province contributed to this project and I thank them all very much.

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

HART'S OF BOYLSTON GEN. STORE: GRAND RE-OPENING - CONGRATS.

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Hart's of Boylston General Store for their grand reopening. For 70 years it has been a beloved institution in the community, and thanks to the youngest generation of the Hart family, it will continue being that local hot spot for many years to come. A grand acknowledgement needs to be given to the family matriarch, Mrs. Audrey MacPherson, the very heart of Hart's store. Her skilled hands filled the shelves with preserves, pickles, jams, jellies, knit socks, and a variety of vegetables picked fresh from her garden. No one can resist stopping in for her famous fish cakes and baked beans.

Audrey was seven-years-old when Hart's of Boylston General Store first opened, and at 77, she shows no signs of hanging up her gardening gloves or apron, and understandably so. She is surrounded every day by a wonderful legacy, not just in Boylston's favourite gathering place, but in her loving children and grandchildren.

Congratulations to the extended Hart family, and here's to many more years of continued success.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

**DELMORE BUDDY DAYE INSTIT.:
HIST. CHALLENGES AWARDS - COMMEND**

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, on Friday, I am pleased to once again be joining the African Nova Scotian History Challenges Award, being hosted in Halifax Armdale at École Chebucto Heights Elementary, alongside students, teachers, administrators, and parents from across the province.

These awards conferred by the Delmore "Buddy" Daye Learning Institute are given to students in recognition of their submissions for research and artwork made in response to one of several history challenges related to African Nova Scotians. These include creating mock video news reports, short essays, original stories, and more.

Delmore "Buddy" Daye was an icon in this Legislature, and I was proud to have worked here during the time that he served. I'm pleased to see his legacy live on in the Delmore "Buddy" Daye Learning Institute. As an Afro-centric institute, they help create educational change and genuine opportunities for learners in communities of African ancestry to reach their full potential.

Their research, support for students, and outreach to Black youth is vital to closing the achievement gap, and I applaud them for their important work.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

MUNROE, BRUCE: IATC HOCKEY TOURN. - THANKS

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Bruce Munroe of Hubley. Bruce, a retired air traffic controller, is one of the primary organizers of the International Air Traffic Controllers Hockey Tournament.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, controllers from Boston and Montreal would travel back and forth between the two countries playing hockey and softball. In 1972, Boston hosted the first ATC tournament in Nashua, where Boston's ATC centre is located. For the next several years, the tournament criss-crossed back and forth between Canadian and U.S. cities.

In 1996, the tournament grew to 31 teams with over 500 players. The tournament has been held in Russia, Finland, Slovenia, and a host of Canadian and U.S. cities. Over the years the tournament has donated thousands of dollars to charity. This year, the organizers have chosen to support Feed Nova Scotia as they welcome 400 hockey players from Canada, the U.S., and Russia to Nova Scotia.

I ask the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in thanking Bruce for organizing an event that brings people from the same profession together for an exciting, fun, energetic event that also supports local charities.

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

COMMON ROOTS URBAN FARM: UPCOMING MOVE - WELCOME

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, community gardens are incredibly important projects for several reasons. Many gardens are used for demonstration and educational purposes, for transforming an urban concrete block into a beautiful landscape display, or quite simply, for personal consumption. They create a sense of community through collective upkeep and sharing of knowledge.

When I heard that the Common Roots Urban Farm, currently located next to the QEII, was moving to the Bi-Hi Park in my riding, I couldn't be more excited. Common Roots Urban Farm has been a central landmark for seven years now, and I'm looking forward to seeing what the new location will bring for the members of my community and surrounding areas.

I ask that the members of this House of Assembly join me in wishing Common Roots the best of luck in their uprooted move.

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

DEMONE, OLIVIA: CHILDREN'S WISH FDN. - BEST WISHES

BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, the Children's Wish Foundation granted their first wish in 1985 and has created joyful experiences for more than 25,000 children coping with life-threatening illness.

This month, their program and supporters were able to brighten the life of a young Lake Fletcher girl and her family. Olivia DeMone, a student at the Holland Road Elementary School, suffers from a rare neo-degenerative disease that causes severe disability. Olivia's wish will take her and her cousin Rosealie to Disney. She's excited to see Mickey, the princesses, and the rides. While at Disney, Olivia will also have a special meet-and-greet with Mickey.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish Olivia and her family a wonderful trip, and thanks to the Children's Wish Foundation for making wishes come true.

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

#NOGOODWAY CAMPAIGN: MAKING CHANGE - SUPPORT

BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, today we stand with thousands of Canadians with intellectual disabilities to bring awareness to the harm and ignorance associated with the use of the R-word.

The #NoGoodWay campaign coincides with the Motionball initiative that visits Halifax and cities across our great nation in support of our Special Olympians. Together with the help of our friends, families, neighbours, and co-workers, we can make a difference and work to eliminate the use of the R-word in conversation.

Together, Mr. Speaker, today and all other days, let's bring awareness to the #NoGoodWay campaign and get rid of the use of this terrible word.

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

TOURISM CHESTER: MOBILE VISITOR INFO. KIOSK - CONGRATS.

HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Tourism Chester on their innovative new visitor information model. After a review of its visitor services, the Municipality of Chester decided that a mobile centre would reach a greater number of visitors than would a static information centre.

The Mobile Visitor Information Kiosk moves around to attractions and events throughout the Municipality of Chester. The kiosk is set up in high-traffic areas throughout the summer season. Last year, these included visits to beaches, special events, and farmers'

markets. Staff also took the kiosk to out-of-municipality high-traffic venues like Peggy's Cove and the Tantallon farmers' market to encourage visitors to explore the Municipality of Chester, from Hubbards to Western Shore, around the Aspotogan Peninsula, upland to New Ross, and of course the Village of Chester.

Recently-hired tourism leader Stephanie Beaumont has brought her experience in media, entertainment, business, and marketing to Tourism Chester. In addition to the Mobile Visitor Information Kiosk, Stephanie has added a comprehensive website and local business partnerships to the marketing strategy.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Tourism Chester. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

FIRST RESPONDERS: COM. HEROES - THANKS

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, on March 12th a fire destroyed a family and ripped out a community's heart. We've all heard the stories of the tragic events of March 12th.

I want to take a moment to recognize all the first responders who responded that night, in particular all the firefighting men and women from Station #6 in Spryfield, who were first on the scene that tragic night. Thank you all for being the heroes we take for granted and for being the rock that we all lean on. Much love.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

THE BARN COFFEE HOUSE: HOSPITALITY AWARD - CONGRATS.

SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, the Lunenburg Queens Business Excellence Awards are hosted annually to recognize, celebrate, and inspire business excellence throughout the region. I rise today to congratulate the Barn Coffee and Social House in Mahone Bay for recently winning the 2018 Hospitality Award at the Lunenburg Queens Business Excellence Awards.

The Hospitality Award goes to a business that demonstrates a reputation for excellent customer service and hospitality, and the Barn does just that. Mike and Amelia Bishop have created a friendly atmosphere in a uniquely-restored barn. They serve a varied selection of beverages, pastries, and other treats. Two years after its inception, the Barn has become a popular gathering spot for both residents and visitors passing through.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you and the members of this House of Assembly to please join me in congratulating the Barn on their Hospitality Award and wish them continued success in their future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

MCDONALD, BOB: WILDERNESS PRESERVATION - CONGRATS.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce a man in my riding who has helped preserve the wilderness and trails in his riding of Clayton Park West. Bob McDonald is an active member of the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes society, and has been for over 15 years. Bob is a former professor from Mount Saint Vincent University, but has always had a deep passion for the outdoors, showing interest in natural history and conservation. He has been an executive member of the Bird Society for the past 10 years, and a member of the Halifax Field Naturalists since 1975. In 1974, he organized a national nature conference in Halifax, and he has been involved in the Halifax North West Trails Association for over a decade.

Mr. Speaker, would this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Bob McDonald? We are so lucky to have passionate community members such as Bob and his wife, Wendy, as they work tirelessly to preserve the treasures in our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**D'ENTREMONT, VINCENT - GYMNAST:
CAN. WINTER GAMES - CONGRATS.**

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, Vincent d'Entremont from Hebbville is a member of the Nova Scotia men's gymnastics team, who won bronze at the 2019 Canada Winter Games, held in Red Deer, Alberta. Vincent has been in gymnastics since he was three years old and has trained with the Halifax ALTA Gymnastics Club since he was 11. He makes the trek to the city five days a week, training for 20 hours.

Vincent's team made history winning Nova Scotia's first team-event medal for men's gymnastics at a Canada Games competition. The win, he said, validates all of his and his teammates' hard work. Competing at the Canada Games was one of Vincent's goals - his dream, Mr. Speaker.

Vincent's mom, Aline Couturier, and his two sisters, Cassidy and Karine, were there for the win. Aline said that it was a moment filled with pride and emotion. Just knowing that he had reached and surpassed his goal filled their hearts with joy. This fall, Vincent hopes to be enrolled in engineering at the Royal Military College.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in recognizing Vincent d'Entremont for his hard work, determination, and success.

[4:45 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

HART, DAVID - UNITED CHURCH PASTOR: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate a Bedford resident on his retirement. Reverend David Hart was lead minister at Bedford United Church for 25 years. He led the congregation through many changes. Bedford United Church was the first church in Nova Scotia to become an affirming congregation, welcoming all people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. David also saw the congregation through physical changes supporting several renovations inside and out and, in recent years, David reached out to the local Islamic centre down the street and became friends with their Imam. To celebrate Canada's sesquicentennial, members of Bedford United Church and Al Rasoul Islamic Centre worshipped together, forming a human chain from one place of worship to the other.

David's sermons were always entertaining and thought provoking. He spoke without notes - every week. He was always available for a chat if you were grappling with a difficult issue. At a time when many churches are shutting their doors because of dwindling numbers, Bedford United Church continues to thrive, in no small part because of David Hart's leadership. I can't wait to see what he'll be up to next.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

KARE KOMBUCHA: BUS. EXPANSION - CONGRATS.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, three months after its launch in North River, Colchester North, 60 litres of the fermented flavoured tea drink, kombucha, was being produced per week for local businesses before Christmas. They have since purchased new equipment that will allow the company, Kare Kombucha, to quadruple its capacity.

This company was started by Guatemalan immigrant Sergio Garrido and his two friends, Will McClafferty and Ben Brush. Garrido, who grew up in Guatemala City, immigrated to Canada eight years ago. He said Guatemala has a vibrant entrepreneurial scene and his family is very much a part of that. It was a natural process for him to carry that on in Canada and in Nova Scotia. Their other business, Aroma Maya, is known for its excellence and they're anxious to achieve the same standards as those they have had before with their success.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

COLLEY, JACE: HOLLAND COLLEGE HURRICANES - CONGRATS.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Mr. Jace Colley of East Preston, son of William and Leslie Colley, who has been named Atlantic Collegiate Athletic Association rookie of the year and all-Canadian last season. He played for Auburn High School's junior varsity basketball team and is now a top-rated six-foot-seven wing player on the Holland College Hurricanes team. He has received offers from Chicago State and Binghamton Universities in the United States and has been contacted by a number of division one schools.

I want to recognize and congratulate Jace Colley for his persistence and drive to become a highly-recognized and sought-after member of the Holland College Hurricanes.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

BURKE, JEWLIA: RUGBY SUCCESS - CONGRATS.

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Jewlia Burke jumped into the sport of rugby in Grade 9 and has been an impressive force on the pitch from day one. In 2018, Jewlia was named the under-18 female athlete of the year at the East Hants Sport Awards gala. She captained her team in the 2016-17 season and they captured the 2017 NSSAF Northumberland Region Division 2 Championship. While playing with the Nova Scotia Keltics rugby team, a gold in the 2017 Eastern Canadian Championship and a silver at the Canadian Rugby Championships were won. That is the highest a Nova Scotia team has ever placed at a national level. Jewlia's abilities were noticed by Acadia University varsity scouts and she suited up for their team in the fall of 2018.

I would like to ask members of this House to join me in offering congratulations to Jewlia Burke for her athletic abilities and commitment to her sport, and we wish her all the best of success at Acadia University and in all of her endeavours.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

CASA NOVA FINE BEVERAGES - MEDALLISTS: BEER AWARDS

GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate Karen and Brendan Enright of Casa Nova Fine Beverages of Beaver River, double medallists at the recent Atlantic Canadian Beer Awards. The company won a silver and a bronze medal at the Atlantic competition, both in the category of Standard Cider and Perry. Its silver-medal winner, the 1606 Good Cheer Craft Cider, commemorates the founding of the Order of Good Cheer at Port Royal in 1606. The two are the very first two ciders the company produced and are always popular with their customers.

The company also medalled in the all-Canadian competition, receiving a bronze for their Buddy's Original Craft Cider. The cider market is continuing to expand, and we can expect the Enrights to continue to launch new and different ciders. They recently launched a blueberry cider and a cherry cider, because of the importance of the blueberry crop to Nova Scotia and, the second, recognizing Bear River's own Cherry Festival, which has been going strong for over 125 years.

We should continue to expect great things from this company that continues to innovate and produce their unique brands of ciders using Nova Scotia fruits.

Again, I'd like to congratulate Karen and Brendan Enright of Casa Nova Fine Beverages of Bear River.

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

SPEAK-OUT PUBLIC SPEAKING: SKILLS COMPETITION - CONGRATS.

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, the St. Mary's District Lions Club recently hosted the annual Speak Out public speaking competition in Sherbrooke, and I would like to congratulate the winners - Miss Kyla MacDonald of Sherbrooke, placing second, and Ms. Emma Langille of Ecum Secum, earning the first place. Both students of St. Mary's Academy, in Sherbrooke, are to be commended for their strong public speaking skills.

Public speaking is an important skill set that is present in every facet of the workforce. I am so pleased to see it being offered to these young minds. They will be equipped with confidence, eloquence, and perseverance, skills that will carry them through their high school years and into their chosen careers. I wish them both the very best of luck in their bright futures.

Mr. Speaker, a special thank you also to Deanna Jewers, their school guidance counsellor, whose inspiration, guidance, and support helped both ladies to prepare their speeches for this event - and I would be remiss if I didn't thank the many area residents whose efforts in judging and questioning made the event possible.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

PENNEY, STEPHEN: PERS./PROF. SUCCESSES - CONGRATS.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Stephen Penney from Timberlea.

Steve is a dedicated, determined and hard-working employee with the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation. His career with the NSLC started in 1998 at the Tacoma Drive store.

In 2005 he was transferred to a position at the NSLC's Distribution Centre in Bayers Lake, a centre that operates 24/7.

Steve is always striving and setting high performance standards in both his career and at the gym. His strong work ethic and dedication to his job, along with his team spirit and role as a safety ambassador, earned him the prestigious CEO Award of Excellence in 2013, a most welcome bonus that accompanied the award with an all-inclusive trip to Jamaica.

Steve's love of a fast-paced work environment and self-discipline is evident at the gym as well. As one of Canada Games Centre's most dedicated members, Steve can be found in the fitness centre daily at 12:45 p.m. sharp and attributes his success of no sick days over the last 10 years to his consistent fitness routine and healthy lifestyle.

I ask the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Steve on his success, achievements, and for demonstrating the benefits and accolades of a good work ethic.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Whitney Pier.

CBRH FDN.: IMPROVING HEALTH CARE - RECOG.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and congratulate the amazing work done by the Cape Breton Regional Hospital Foundation. The Cape Breton Regional Hospital Foundation is an organization that is dedicated to supporting the important health care infrastructure and services that Cape Bretoners receive on a daily basis.

The hospital foundation has been involved with raising millions of dollars for important equipment for Cape Bretoners, to ensure that we all do whatever we can as a community to ensure that we have the best health care possible for residents on the Island.

I want to recognize CEO Brad Jacobs and his entire team for the amazing work they do in our community on a daily basis to support the health care needs of Cape Bretoners, and I congratulate them on their next big endeavour, which is to support our new cancer centre that is going to be located at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital.

I am honoured to rise in my place to recognize the work of the Cape Breton Regional Hospital Foundation and the amazing work they do in our community.

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

SALVATION ARMY: MOBILE COM. RESP. UNIT - THANKS

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, winter can be a tough time of year for many people, emotionally and financially. Fortunately, organizations like the Salvation Army are there to support members of the community in various ways.

Last Fall, the Salvation Army introduced a new outreach program call the Mobile Community Response Unit. For two nights a week volunteers toured the neighbourhood, passing out hot beverages, food, and warm clothes. Not only do volunteers provide the necessities, they are also committed to being a comforting presence and a listening ear.

During the holiday season the Salvation Army also provides food and toys for thousands of families. In Fairview alone, 477 households, including over 900 children, were assisted just this Christmas.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of this House of Assembly to join me in thanking the Salvation Army and its volunteers for the incredible impact they are making on my community every day and beyond.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Whitney Pier.

MEMBERTOU CORP.: THE LANES - THANKS

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I rise in my place to recognize the Membertou Corporate Division for the grand opening of one of their newest endeavours which is the Lanes at Membertou.

Membertou brought the sport of bowling back into our community with the construction of this facility and as a result of it, hundreds of residents in our community can now go back to bowling as a pastime.

The Lanes is one of many successful endeavours that Membertou Corporate has been involved with and, as we've seen, they've been recognized for their corporate leadership across the country. I rise in my place, again, to congratulate Chief Terry Paul and all of his leadership team and the community of Membertou for continuing to provide not only economic opportunities, but social opportunities, for the residents of all of CBRM.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

SPURRELL, KATHY/SPURRELL, AMY: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: When I take time to reflect on leaders within my community, a particular mother and daughter duo come to mind. Kathy and Amy Spurrell are both pillars in our local business and volunteer community.

The local Pharmasave in Kingston goes above and beyond in providing critical services to local residents under the shared leadership of Kathy Spurrell.

Pharmacist and beloved community member Kathy has held volunteer positions with the Kingston Apple Blossom Festival Committee and many other local organizations.

Unsurprisingly, Amy Spurrell has followed in her mother's footsteps and has held volunteer positions as AVABF Kingston Community representative, co-chair of the Amanda Forster Memorial Soccer Tournament, manager with the Kingston Greenwood Soccer Club, and several committees as president and a member when she attended West Kings District High School. Amy does all of this while elevating the public relations of local business, Wheatons.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing Kathy and Amy Spurrell on their community dedication and leadership which is an example of how incredible women continue to inspire other women to make their impact on society.

THE SPEAKER: In the absence of further Member Statements, the House will now recess until 3:06 p.m.

[2:57 p.m. The House recessed.]

[3:06 p.m. The House reconvened.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

PREM. - BUDGET 2019: MIN. WAGE INCREASE - PALTRY

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, there are two economies today in Nova Scotia. There is the economy that was portrayed in yesterday's budget, which takes the American bond rating agencies Standard & Poor's and Moody's as its points of reference. Then there is another economy: the economy of the urgent situation of daily life, which takes as its points of reference the mortgage, the landlord, and the groceries.

The budget omits the key indicator from the real economy, that our province has the lowest median income in the country. Yet the government trumpets in the budget an

incremental and paltry minimum-wage increase of 55 cents as though they were accomplishing something epic.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier actually think that 55 cents an hour is going to lift us out of having the lowest median income in the whole country?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Before I answer the question, I have always had great admiration for the Leader of the New Democratic Party. I want to commend him on showing great leadership today by being in Question Period. (Applause)

I want to respond to his question, Mr. Speaker. The issues that he raises here are serious ones impacting families. That's why we continue to raise the basic personal exemption for low-income Nova Scotians. It's why we continue to make sure rent supplements are in place to ensure low-income Nova Scotians have access to affordable housing. The investments in the budget that will look at our own housing stock across the province and then working with those in the private sector to provide affordable income rentals are positive things.

We know we're more towards the middle of the pack when it comes to average income in the province across the country. But that doesn't help those who require support on low income. That's why, if the honourable member looks back, all of our investments have been targeted towards those citizens who require our help the most.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, for the Premier to compare the personal tax exemption change with what would happen with a \$15 minimum wage is like comparing a pea with a giant pumpkin. It's a \$13-a-month increase on the tax exemption or \$640 a month for people making \$11 to get up to \$15.

Here's another key indicator from the real economy: Nova Scotia has the fastest-rising rate of food-bank use in the whole country. This is an open wound for us, and it's not something that calls just for a little band-aid. Yet yesterday in the budget, we have the band-aid of an increase of just \$11 a month in social assistance rates for single people on the caseload. There's no economist in Nova Scotia who's going to think or say that an \$11 increase a month is going to change the number of people we have who can actually get their food out of a store instead of having to get it charitably from a food bank.

I want to ask the Premier: Does he really think that an income-assistance increase of \$11 a month is going to lift us out of the state of being the food bank capital of Canada?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, you can't look at one particular announcement. As part of that budget, he would also know about the increase in rent supplements for low-income Nova Scotians, to allow them to live in affordable housing. He would also know the amount of investments we're making in housing across the province. That is a real cost

for low-income Nova Scotians. How do we support them to leave more money with their families?

He also recognized that there is an increase in minimum wage in this province. We continue to make sure that we have that increase. We're following the formula that was set out by the New Democratic Party - except this, Mr. Speaker. In this budget, we actually went beyond that and increased it more than what was actually recommended. That is a positive thing.

We know there is still more work to do. He also would know in this budget, this coming year will be when we put the standard household rate in, which will have the largest impact on Nova Scotia families on Income Assistance on any decision that any government has made in this province.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, there is a third indicator from the real economy. This indicator was also omitted from the budget. That there's only one province in our country where child poverty is getting worse instead of getting better and that's Nova Scotia. This is something that ought not to be admitted in any economic consideration - the fact that in our little province, we have 27,000 children who are living below the poverty line.

Does the Premier understand how disappointing it is that he has brought forward a budget that is more worried about Standard and Poor's, more worried about Moody's, than it is about feeding the children of our province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I don't agree with the premise of his question. I do believe it's important that we can be able to afford the things that our families and citizens across this province require. It's why we've invested \$5 million in poverty reduction. It's why we continue to make sure that child support payments are not put into the system and calculated when it comes to those who require our supports. Those are all real investments made back into families across our province.

I also want to tell the honourable member the most important thing that we can continue to do in this province is to continue to grow an economy that provides employment opportunities for our citizens. We are at an all-time low when it comes to unemployment levels. That is a positive sign. I do agree with the honourable member on one thing, that there is still more work to do, but every trend in this province is headed in the right direction.

To go back to the question when he talked about child poverty, I too was alarmed when I saw those numbers because when you dig into the conversation, seniors on low income I find that number continues to reduce. Single-parent families that have children in them, that number is continuing to reduce. So the numbers don't add up. We're looking to see where they brought those stats and what has made the difference. We are concerned.

That's why when you look inside this budget, those investments are targeted directly towards those citizens who require help the most.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

JUSTICE - STREET CHECKS: IMPLEMENT BAN - RESPOND

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. The Human Rights Commission's Street Check Report released today overwhelmingly confirmed that street checks are an instance of systemic racism. They damage and disrupt the lives of African Nova Scotians and other racialized people. African Nova Scotians have been saying this for decades. The report is clear. Whether it is ultimately banned or regulated, there should be an immediate moratorium now.

As the Decade for People of African Descent Committee says, street checks are illegal, and we do not regulate illegal activities. Street checks need to stop now. Will the minister tell this House that there will be a ban on street checks before this sitting is over?

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. She joined us this morning for the release of Dr. Wortley's report. I want to acknowledge the content of that report we've just received; it will take some time to go through it. We do recognize that what's contained in the report is troubling. The outcomes that we're seeing are simply unacceptable, and this government will take appropriate steps with prudent analysis of the report and its findings before making any determination.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, our province has been talking about the racist impact of street checks since at least 2003. This report today was 16 years overdue. Ending street checks is at least 16 years overdue. To echo one community participant, it shouldn't take a white man from Toronto to convince government to hear what African Nova Scotians have been saying for decades. Trayvone Clayton, 20, spoke this morning about being thrown to the ground with a knee in his back as a 16-year-old leaving a party in a white neighbourhood. He asked the minister for action today. The DPAD Committee asked the minister for action today.

This information has been available for years and the situation has been known for decades. Will the minister follow the recommendation of Dr. Wortley's report and of the African Nova Scotian community and at the very least put an immediate moratorium on street checks while he determines what to do next?

MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear, Dr. Wortley did not phrase the findings of his report in the form of a recommendation. He presented two options with . . . (Interruptions)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Justice has the floor.

[3:15 p.m.]

MARK FUREY: He presented two options, Mr. Speaker, with multiple elements to each of those options, and he has left those decisions to government and stakeholders to make. We will engage those stakeholders. I committed today to engage the communities to have a broader discussion because this review was restricted to only HRM, and none of us are naive enough to think that these circumstances don't exist in the rest of the province.

I also committed, Mr. Speaker, to directing police to cease the process of using street checks as a performance measure element, and I will give direction to police to cease the use of street checks as quota items. These behaviours are simply unacceptable, and this government will take action to correct that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

COM. SERV. - ESIA REC.: CPP BENEFITS - CLAWBACK

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Services.

According to the ESIA policy manual, any ESIA applicant who may qualify for Canada Pension Plan benefits must apply for those benefits. If eligible, those benefits are then charged at 100 per cent against their monthly ESIA entitlement - and I can table that.

CPP is a contributory benefit that Nova Scotians pay into over their working lives. Mr. Speaker, does the minister think it is appropriate that this government is clawing back 100 per cent of the CPP benefits of vulnerable seniors?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. We have been engaged in the process of improving our ESIA system, Mr. Speaker. Throughout this process we have looked at a number of different benefits that come to our clients from other jurisdictions. For example, the Canada Child Benefit is not clawed back, et cetera.

So, I do want to thank the honourable member for the question, but I do have to say that yes, we do require that folks who are able to get income from other sources actually do get that income from other sources.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, based on experiences with constituents in my office and in the offices of my colleagues, we've learned that the policy of this government is to require older individuals to apply early for reduced CPP benefits in order to access ESIA.

Mr. Speaker, CPP is reduced by 7 per cent for each year you receive it before age 65. This means that an individual who starts receiving their CPP retirement pension at the age of 60, will receive 36 per cent less than if they had taken it at 65. This has a very negative long-term impact on the economic security of seniors.

At a recent event in Dartmouth the federal Minister of Seniors said that they are advising seniors to delay applying for CPP to age 70, if at all possible. Mr. Speaker, will the minister acknowledge that this misguided policy of her government is harmful to the economic security of vulnerable seniors?

KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I do think she is under somewhat of a misapprehension. She refers to this as a policy of my government, in fact it was the policy of their government as well.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

H&W - C.B. REG. HOSP.: ADDITIONAL BEDS - NET LOSS

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the changes announced to the Cape Breton Regional Hospital on Monday include opening 12 additional critical care beds, to bring the complement of the Regional to 36, up from 24. While the new beds at the Regional are a good thing, under this government's plan our communities will lose 66 in-patient beds between New Waterford and Northside hospitals in exchange for the new ones at the Regional.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister really think that a net loss of 54 beds in Cape Breton is what we need right now?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I appreciate the member acknowledging the important and significant investment that was announced on Monday at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital, to modernize health care infrastructure at that site, doubling the emergency department, doubling the new cancer centre, and almost tripling the size of the critical care services there.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to remind the member that we've only announced one portion of the entire Cape Breton Regional Hospital redevelopment project on Monday, so I think she is jumping to conclusions as to the net impact of this redevelopment project.

In the Budget Speech yesterday, Mr. Speaker, there's an indication of an increase even above the increase we had previously announced for long-term care beds in both New Waterford and North Sydney.

TAMMY MARTIN: To be clear, I wasn't referring to long-term care beds and the proposed increase. What I'm referring to is the minister's announcement that there would

be no in-patient beds in New Waterford or North Sydney, and that was discussed at the announcement when it was first made.

Mr. Speaker, the in-patient beds in New Waterford and Northside hospitals are currently in use. They do things like allow people to recover from orthopaedic surgeries or provide a place for elderly residents to recover from pneumonia close to their loved ones. These beds serve a purpose, and in a time when our health care system is in crisis, Cape Bretoners cannot fathom why this government would want to cut our services in those hospitals rather than expand them. While the expansion of the Regional is a good thing, the minister is forcing us to give up the services we already have in exchange for that expansion. This is a false choice. There is no reason we shouldn't have both, and why can't we?

Mr. Speaker, does the minister think that Cape Bretoners deserve to have a functioning regional hospital and community hospitals?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member again for bringing the topic of the Cape Breton Regional Hospital redevelopment plan to the floor of the Legislature. This is a plan that this government and I are very proud of. We have listened to health care providers and people on the ground. We have physicians who are providing input to the planning team to help guide and influence the specific details that are being rolled out.

I am proud that as a government, we have been able to manage our finances so that we have the money to invest in these types of initiatives, Mr. Speaker, to provide the health care to Cape Bretoners that, as was indicated on Monday, physicians on the front line have been advocating for for over a decade. We are the government that is making the investments to make it happen for the people of Cape Breton.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

L&F - AT-RISK WILDLIFE: AG REC. - TIMELINE

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Lands and Forestry. Two years ago, the Auditor General found that this government was failing at-risk wildlife in Nova Scotia and had no recovery plans for many species. Yesterday the Auditor General reported that after two years the department has not completed a single one of the 2016 recommendations. We are talking about species like the mainland moose, black ash trees, wood turtles, and the Canada warbler. These are important parts of our biodiversity in Nova Scotia.

Will the minister tell this House when all five of the Auditor General's recommendations on species at risk will be completed?

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Of course, we agree with the Auditor General's recommendations. The department has implemented three quarters of the recommendations around forest management and protection. This year in our business plan, the member would note that there is an increased focus on looking at species at risk and wildlife. We continue to prioritize biodiversity.

A lot of the recommendations are interconnected with the independent Lahey report on forestry practices, which we are in the process of implementing. We look forward to bringing forth the recovery plans and renewing those recovery teams she has referenced for those number of species and working with the experts in the field. We'll have more to say in the coming weeks.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, the minister talks a good game about biodiversity, and yet we can see in the follow-up report of the Auditor General that the actions have not been there to back up the words. In 2015, the East Coast Environmental Law Association found that the province was not complying with the Endangered Species Act. In 2016, the Auditor General confirmed it.

This year, a group of citizens are taking the province to court because of its failures to comply with the Act. Given these facts, I think it's reasonable for the public to question the minister's commitment to biodiversity. Can he explain his department's inaction on protecting wildlife and species at risk, as per the Auditor General's findings?

IAIN RANKIN: It's an important topic for Nova Scotians. The Biodiversity Act that we're bringing forward is part of our response to the Lahey report, and it's an important piece of legislation that will actually help us close the gaps in current legislation. That will help us prevent species from even entering into the category of threatened or species at risk, so it allows us to have more tools.

A commitment is seen in this budget with \$1.7 million allocated so that we can allow to have more money for resources. There are actually two more FTEs being added to the department for biologists, so they can work on species at risk. Sixty per cent of species do have recovery plans and the ones that don't, of the 40 per cent, the majority of them are led by the federal government. But I am not resting on our laurels, the government believes that we can do more, and we will do more, as I said, in this year.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

JUSTICE - STREET CHECKS: RACISM - MORATORIUM

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Today the report on street checks by Dr. Wortley overwhelmingly confirmed what African Nova Scotians have been saying for decades – that street checks are an instance of systemic

racism and they damage and disrupt the lives of African Nova Scotians and other racialized people.

The report makes clear that there should be an immediate moratorium on street checks. That is something African Nova Scotians have called for from the beginning of this conversation. We called for that in this House, but the Liberals have refused to support a moratorium.

Will the minister now admit that we should have had a moratorium from the beginning and will he apologize for his government's foot-dragging?

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. As she has indicated, the work done by Dr. Wortley clearly demonstrates that African Nova Scotians are disproportionately represented in police stops and street checks.

This is simply alarming, it's unacceptable. I committed today, publicly, to take steps in providing directions to the law enforcement community across our province, not only here in the HRM. I have committed to meeting with the coalition; representatives from the Human Rights Commission; representatives from the Halifax Police Commission; the law enforcement community; government, including Department of Justice; and, African Nova Scotian Affairs.

We will get to the bottom of this. We will find a solution. We will correct this wrong.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, with respect, we are at the bottom of it. We've known what this is for decades, for centuries. It's systemic racism and it needs to be addressed today.

As one community participant said, "it shouldn't take a White man from Toronto to convince government to hear what African Nova Scotians have been saying for decades."

Before today, the minister wouldn't even say that African Nova Scotians being five times more likely to be stopped than a White person is systemic racism.

Dr. Wortley's study shows that numbers aren't due to crime or place, they are due to race. We can stop street checks now and the minister has that power. There is no need to wait months.

Will the minister acknowledge that street checks are racist and tell us why he won't stop them immediately?

MARK FUREY: I clearly indicated today that street checks in the manner they are being performed is simply unacceptable.

African Nova Scotian males are stopped six times more than a Caucasian male. That is unacceptable - we recognize that, we accept that. I've accepted the report of Dr. Wortley. We will look at the options that Dr. Wortley has advanced, and we will respond in support of the community and ensure that these practices cease going forward.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

COM. SERV.: SMALL OPTIONS HOMES - ACTION

SUSAN LEBLANC: The Community Homes Action Group have repeatedly given the government a failing grade on their progress on the Roadmap for Transforming the Nova Scotia Services to Persons with Disabilities Program.

They have recommended an investment in at least 25 new small options homes each year for the next three years.

The budget tabled yesterday applauded the same eight community options homes the government announced in the 2018 budget.

Will the minister explain why the government has failed to make meaningful progress on access to housing as called for in the Road Map?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. We want all Nova Scotians to be able to live in their communities and to participate in their communities; that's why in the 2017 election we promised to build eight new small options homes.

As I've previously indicated to the member, two of the homes are up and running right now, another two are rolling out fairly soon, and the other ones went out to RFP and they are in the planning stages.

I want her to understand that it is not simply about money; it is also about being able to put people in a situation where they will succeed. We have to make sure that when someone moves out into community, into a small options home, that they have the supports available and that they are also in a situation where they can thrive. Thank you.

SUSAN LEBLANC: An independent board of inquiry ruled that the province has violated the human rights of Beth MacLean, Sheila Livingstone, and Joey Delaney by not providing access to housing options. In a letter to the Premier, Barb Horner on behalf of the Disability Rights Coalition, said the province had a decision to make: that they could allow the 1,500 persons with disabilities in this province lacking necessary supports to

languish, while hundreds will seek to file their own human rights complaint; or it can do the right thing. Will the minister admit that with this budget the government has failed to do the right thing?

[3:30 p.m.]

KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. First of all, she should be aware that, in fact, of those 1,500 people that she refers to, the vast majority are already receiving some form of service from the Department of Community Services, not always in institutions. In fact, about only 500 of them are in institutions, which is still too many, I agree. She needs to know that, in fact, the vast majority of those people are receiving some services from the Department of Community Services often to live at home.

We are committed to helping people move out into the community and we are doing so making sure that this can be done safely and successfully. We have to make sure, for example, if there's someone who vocalizes all day long, you're not going to put them in with someone who's very sensitive to noise. We have to make sure that people move out into community in appropriate ways so that they can feel safe and be successful. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

MUN. AFFS. - NSEF: C.B. MEETING - TIMELINE

TAMMY MARTIN: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I received a letter from the minister in November 2018. In it, he committed to meet with the Nova Scotians for Equalization Fairness in 2019. At the end of February of this year, I received an email from the group saying the meeting still has not happened. As an FYI, there is a meeting being held on April 7th that he is more than welcome to attend. My question for the minister is: Why has he failed to keep his promise to meet with the Nova Scotians for Equalization Fairness group?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: As discussed back some time ago, we will be making our way to Cape Breton to meet with a variety of different municipal units along the way. We will also take the opportunity to invite that organization and others that might like to chat with us while we're down there. An opportunity, as we had promised, and we'll do that in the coming months.

TAMMY MARTIN: I thank the minister for that answer and I would like to be included in those meetings as well. I would say again that, on April 7th, they're holding a closed meeting for politicians only.

When the minister first entered his new role, he was failing to answer emails and phone calls from the Nova Scotians for Equalization Fairness. I asked him at the time if unanswered phone calls were the treatment Cape Bretoners could expect from the new minister. I'm sad to say the pattern has continued. The urgent challenges CBRM faces with its tax base, debt load, and funding for services can't be ignored by this province, and the CBRM needs to be a priority in his new role. When can Cape Bretoners expect the major economic stimulus it needs from this province?

CHUCK PORTER: As I stated in my first answer, we'll be going down to Cape Breton in the coming months once the House rises, and we'll get that arranged. We'll certainly be happy to meet with that organization and others. We're going to stop and visit some municipal units along the way as is common practice. I haven't been out that way yet, but we will get there.

As far as investments, we made one great investment on Monday when the Minister of Health and Wellness was down there and made an announcement in the CBRM. We could talk about a number of projects: a second berth, \$3.2 million for the New Dawn project, and I could go on. There are many investments that have been made in the past while by this government. We will continue, as the Minister of Health and Wellness spoke to a few minutes ago, to invest in Cape Breton.

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

H&W: SANE (CUMBERLAND/COLCHESTER) - DELAY EXPLAIN

LENORE ZANN: My question today is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Last fall the Minister of Health and Wellness admitted that my community needs and deserves a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner after stories of rape victims being turned away from the hospital in Truro with nothing more than some pamphlets. After asking for months now about this, I'm pleased to see that funding for a SANE position is included in this year's budget; however, can the minister please tell us when the good women of Cumberland/Colchester can expect a SANE to be in place?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that the member is happy with the announcement of the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, the member for Colchester North, who also raised concerns about the access to SANE services in the Colchester-Truro region. That's why as we'd indicated, as I'd indicated in the Fall, as the Premier indicated, we believe that expanding the services was appropriate.

As I've mentioned before in the House, we looked to find a quick ability to expand the services immediately over the Fall. Those efforts fell through, but while we were doing that, we also looked to see where else are there gaps. We saw Cumberland as well; that's

why brought it into the budget process to develop a comprehensive RFP to ensure we're providing services not just for Colchester but for Cumberland County as well.

LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to note that, yes, it took a couple of women to get the job done.

Could the minister please tell me and assure me today that he would personally get in touch with the Colchester Sexual Assault Centre to apologize for the long delay in addressing this issue since they have written numerous times and received nothing back from his department, and if he could please give them a specific timeline so the rest of us will be in the know? Thank you.

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as my wife would know, I have no problem taking direction and advice from women. They often set me on the right path. (Applause) In seriousness, in response, I apologize, and I will, right here in the House, if I have unresponded correspondence with the group, I'll certainly go back to the office and double-check.

I do get a very large amount of correspondence that comes through my office. I really do try to get through all of it in the most timely manner as possible. Sometimes, pieces of correspondence do get misplaced or misconstrued. So, again, I'll certainly go through and see if they can find that and get back to them but, again, I apologize if I've been delayed in that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

H&W - LONG-TERM CARE BEDS: SHORTAGE - ADDRESS

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Cape Breton Regional Hospital emergency department had 24 admitted patients in it - the department only has 24 beds. As the minister should know, admitted patients are meant to be in in-patient beds, not in our emergency rooms. When admitted patients are in emergency room beds, they clog the system, preventing people presenting at triage from actually making it into the emergency room.

Will the minister acknowledge that the additional beds he announced for Cape Breton yesterday, or this week, are not helping with the problems that we are facing today and every day like it?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as the member would know, we've had conversations, the fact of the matter is some of the structural challenges that are in place in our health care system, as I've certainly heard from health care professionals across this province, many of those structural challenges have been building for decades and the failure to act on them.

The steps that we're taking are based upon advice and suggestions that are coming from the front lines to ensure that we build a sustainable health care system providing the care that's needed by the people of Cape Breton and throughout the province. We know that's the long-term path to success, but we also recognize you have to take steps in the short term as well. That's why it's part of our Cape Breton redevelopment health care project. We also include a community paramedicine program, a program that's designed to help with the discharge of patients safely out of the hospital more efficiently so that we can free up those beds to continue the positive and improvement in patient flow.

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the overcrowding at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital Emergency Department is directly connected to the shortage of long-term care beds in our province. People are living in hospitals when they should be in nursing homes, which leads to people who should be in in-patient beds staying in the emergency room while those who are seeking care have nowhere to go but the waiting room.

We need nursing home beds open and receiving people, to get our hospitals working again. We needed them five years ago, but instead of investing in the care our people need, this government has spent five years neglecting our community, landing us in the mess that we are in today with not one new long-term care bed opened. This budget was an opportunity to make real investments in long-term care, but they've blown it.

Mr. Speaker, is the minister so proud of his plan to open new nursing home beds in Cape Breton? If he is, will he please tell us why there are no dedicated funds in this budget for the construction? Or will that be next year's election promise?

RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member opposite. As the member would know, these complex infrastructure investments - which in the community, in the Cape Breton region itself, are to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. The announcement we made on Monday in Cape Breton itself, in the Sydney area, is over \$100 million to expand the Cape Breton Regional Hospital, providing infrastructure that is going to provide the tools and the technology and the space to provide modern health care services to the community - services that have been advocated for by front-line health care workers for decades.

This is the government that has recognized and is taking action, just like we're taking action on expanding long-term care beds in those communities as well.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

WOMEN, STATUS OF: RENT CONTROL - SUPPORT

LISA ROBERTS: My question is for the Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act. I saw a headline recently that said, "As Rental Prices Rise, Women Stay in Bad Relationships to Survive." The article quoted studies from other

countries, but we know that this is true in Nova Scotia as much as anywhere else. High rental rates can contribute to people staying in domestically-violent situations.

Will the minister support a rent-control policy and major investments in new affordable housing?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for her question. I don't think she was there, but I was actually in her riding - I want to say last summer - where we announced money for 500 new rent supplements each year for three years. Although that was in the summertime, Mr. Speaker, I do want to let the House know that we actually exceeded the 500 rent supplements that were our goal for this current fiscal.

The last time I checked, which was a couple of weeks ago, we were actually at 543 rent supplements, and we're going to continue rolling those out over the next couple of years as well.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, in my constituency office, I deal with people applying for public housing and getting on the wait-list. That is the system through which people can sometimes access rent supplements. However, there are many people out there in the community living in buildings where they want to live and they want to stay, and they are seeing year-after-year rent increases. That's not fair, and it's not sustainable for them in their personal lives when many of them are living on fixed incomes.

I'd like to ask the minister again: What stops this government from supporting rent control?

KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for her question. I did want to clarify for her as well that for anyone escaping domestic violence, they can be bumped up on the rent supplement list and on the housing wait-list. I did want to share that with her.

I do want to let her know that we take this matter seriously. That is why we put that in place, Mr. Speaker. That is why we have directed funding to two transition houses, so that women can leave domestic violence and live in good places with their children and start their lives over again.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

H&W: NURSING SHORTAGE - ADMIT

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, while members of the NSHA leadership team have been in the news lately insisting that there are no staffing shortages with our health care system, I have to respectfully and publicly disagree. According to health care workers onsite, there are two ICU beds at the Halifax Infirmary that have been closed for three

weeks straight because of staffing shortages. Nurses are working overcapacity every day, and it's burning them out. Nurses are having vacations cancelled. Nurses are unable to have food breaks or bathroom breaks. That is unacceptable.

I have a simple question for the Minister of Health and Wellness: Does the minister believe there is a nursing crisis, a nursing shortage? Does he believe the NSHA or the nurses?

[3:45 p.m.]

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, if I've seen the same reports that the member seems to be referring to from the NSHA, I believe the comments that they have been making is an acknowledgement that, in fact, as a workforce as a whole throughout the province, there are 1,000 - 2,000 additional nurses working in the province today than there were 10 years ago. But they simultaneously recognize there are certain areas within the province in which there are vacancies that are harder to fill.

That work is ongoing. As a province, we work to support and recognize the very important and valuable role that nurses in all the health care system - hospitals right through to community primary practises - that they provide for our health care system.

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I guess that's a no to believing the nurses that they're working over capacity and short staffed mostly all of the time. Many full-time nurses are reporting to us that they are dropping down to part-time status because of the dangerous workload and staffing levels that they have to deal with.

We know these conditions have serious consequences for the patients. When there aren't enough nurses working, nurses may get the patient's medication wrong; they may fall trying to get out of bed without help; they may not get to the bathroom, which is the case in many instances.

Can the minister tell us if this budget contains significant money for hiring new nurses into our system or is the minister satisfied with the status quo?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite. I think the member would appreciate the work and the investments that we make as a government.

I believe in 2019 we're expecting to see almost 24 per cent additional RN nursing graduates in the Province of Nova Scotia. We've invested to add 25 additional nurse practitioner seats for registered nurses who want to upgrade their skills to become a nurse practitioner to provide a broader scope of practise throughout the health care system. We're investing to provide job opportunities for those nurses in collaborative care practices that we're expanding across the province. We've invested an extra \$10 million, on top of the

\$17 million that was already put in our budget, for expanding private care practices of which nurses will be part of those teams.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

ENVIRON. - WILD. AREA PROTECTION: TARGET NOT MET - EXPLAIN

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment. There are still almost 100 wilderness areas in Nova Scotia that have been ready for protection since 2013, waiting for the signatures of the Order-In-Council.

The Premier has said he is committed to protecting them, but six years into the mandate of this government it has only protected a handful. We're hardly any closer to reaching our 13 per cent target. These are areas that have been picked because they are important to Nova Scotia and Nova Scotians, and this government is ignoring them.

I'd like to ask the minister: What is delaying the final protections of these important wilderness areas?

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for that very important question. This is certainly something that our government has committed to, reaching our 13 per cent protected area. We plan to continue with that.

Certainly, in the early days when properties were starting to be protected and areas were starting to be protected because of biodiversity, there were many things to consider including mineral rights; there were surveys that had to be done; we had to make sure there were no encumbrances on any of these properties, so they could be moved forward. In the early days, it was easy to do that but now we're getting to that final stage. We're at 12.4 per cent, presently which is quite remarkable in itself, but we know there is still work to do on those final properties to make the move forward.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, in 2018 this government protected just 0.57 per cent of our land mass. That is barely moving towards our goal. These areas were thoroughly surveyed, and a plan was developed and consulted on when the NDP was in government. There is no reason for further delay.

Protecting wilderness areas is key to supporting wildlife and sequestering carbon and a government that actually cared about biodiversity would have finished the job by now. After six years of foot dragging, can the minister tell this House on what date the rest of these important wilderness areas will be protected?

MARGARET MILLER: Certainly when we think about the protected areas in Nova Scotia and where we're going with that, it's very commendable, and I think we're on the right path to that. Right now, Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member pointed out, we do

have properties that are still sitting in the queue waiting to be addressed but those go far beyond the 13 per cent. We have committed to 13 per cent. Before we proceed any farther, we need to know that the ecological features that most need to be protected are going to be protected.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

JUSTICE - DPAs: LEG. AMENDMENT - COMMENT

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. As Nova Scotians are well aware, there is a serious issue unfolding in Ottawa focused on the independence of the Public Prosecution Service. The Ottawa Liberals seem to have a problem respecting the principal that there should be no interference in criminal prosecutions by elected officials.

Here in Nova Scotia, following the advice of the 1989 Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr., Prosecution, we adopted legislation establishing an independent Public Prosecution Service. It has worked reasonably well, but the current crisis in Ottawa has focused our attention on prosecutions of corporations and the possible use of DPAs, or deferred prosecution agreements.

I want to ask the minister whether, in light of existence of deferred prosecution agreements and in light of the difficulties his political cousins in Ottawa are having in implementing them, he is intending to amend governing legislation here to specifically address DPAs?

HON. MARK FUREY: I thank my colleague for the question. It gives me an opportunity to recognize the outstanding service that our Public Prosecution provides in the Province of Nova Scotia. They function totally independent of government, and I have no intentions at this time of addressing any legislation. Their service is, quite frankly, exemplary.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer, although I would suggest that we always need to re-examine governing legislation. We have taken the opportunity to examine the Crown Attorney Manual, which is a public document, and an admirable set of guidelines, but it's obvious that it's written in terms that contemplate the prosecutions of individuals, not of corporations.

In light of the Ottawa SNC-Lavalin mess, considering the increased frequency with which corporations may find themselves the focus of criminal investigations and prosecutions, even right here in Nova Scotia, will the minister undertake to revise the Crown Attorney Manual to include a section that specifically addresses corporate prosecutions?

MARK FUREY: My colleague raises a valid point. In the portfolios I have had, I have advanced many pieces of legislation and multiple other efforts within each and every department to really look at updating legislation. Mr. Speaker, in these circumstances, it would be no different, but there are no compelling circumstances at this time that necessitate that work.

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

ENVIRON. - GOLD MINING: ARSENIC WATER LEAK - EXPLAIN

LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment. There has been much talk of gold mines in the Tatamagouche watershed region, and even the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has signed a petition stating that she and other residents have great concerns and do not want to see this happening in their area.

This January, we learned that the province left a gold exploration hole on Warwick Mountain which has been spewing high-arsenic water for the past couple of years. The province knew about the arsenic last year, but only decided to do something to stop it after media attention.

Can the minister explain why her department thought it was okay to allow high-arsenic water to continue spilling out of an old mining hole and did not act sooner?

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Once we became aware of the situation with the hole, we reached out to the resident and we had it taken care of.

LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, while I recognize that that minister is new to that new department, this was an issue that the Department of Environment should have picked up on a long time ago and didn't do anything about until there was media attention.

Again and again this government fails to earn the public's trust when it comes to protecting clean air, water, and wilderness - from clear-cuts to Northern Pulp and weak aquaculture regulations. Many residents in Nova Scotia are concerned about expanding gold mining impacting watersheds, especially in the French River watershed region and this affects many rivers including going down to the Truro area. Can the minister explain how she expects residents to trust gold operations when the province can't even stop a known arsenic leak?

HON. MARGARET MILLER: I know it's a little confusing, Mr. Speaker. Anyway, I thank the honourable member for that question. Certainly, any time that any actions like this are taken in the province with any gold mine and the other industrial applications,

applications have to be made for environmental assessment. That includes hydrology reports and how it affects the surrounding communities.

Communities always have an opportunity for input for those solutions and, in the end, we find the best solution that works and protects the environment of Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. The time allotted for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers has expired.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable New Democratic Party House Leader.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, although it is in the rotation for the Official Opposition today, it's my understanding that they don't intend to call any business today and, therefore, with the unanimous consent of the House, I would request that we move to Private Members' Public Bills for Second Reading.

THE SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

THE SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader for the New Democratic Party.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 69.

Bill No. 69 - Vital Statistics Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: It gives me great pleasure to speak to this bill. It's an important one and I'm glad we finally have a chance to talk about it in this House.

When the government brought forward changes to the Vital Statistics Act in the last sitting, our caucus was supportive of removing outdated language and establish the option for gender-neutral and nonbinary identifications. However, there are other important changes to be made to ensure that our legislation reflects current understanding of sex, gender, relationships, and families.

The Nova Scotia Vital Statistics Act includes provisions for the registrations of births. These provisions do not reflect the variety of family structures that are increasingly

common in our communities. The law remains unnecessarily focused on the marital status of parents.

For example, the terms “mother” and “father” are used rather than the gender-neutral term “parents”. References are made to a child being legitimized by marriage. These concerns were raised by a constituent in Dartmouth North. In fact, they reflect my own situation. I am not married to my spouse and the father of my children. I am partnered with him and live with him, and we co-parent. We are in a relationship together, a loving relationship, but we’re not married. Currently, the act refers to our children as illegitimate children. It’s shocking to think about that.

It’s shocking to think that the word “illegitimate” was ever used for any child because every child is obviously legitimate. The simple changes that our bill would bring into effect make a huge difference. One day, my kids will be old enough and aware enough that they might go back and look at this video or the video of this exact proceeding - hi, kids, in the future (Laughter) - and they may read the Hansard. It makes me very sad to think that they will realize that, according to the Act, the Province of Nova Scotia considers them illegitimate children. They are very much not illegitimate. They are very legitimate people. That is a very important change that needs to be made to the Vital Statistics Act.

Other provinces have updated their acts to be more inclusive. These amendments to the Act include the removing of all references to marital status with regard to registration of births; removing “married woman” from the definitions; removing all references to “mother” and “father” and replacing with “parents,” as done in the Ontario Act; allowing for the possibility of a child having more than two parents, as is done in the Ontario Act; removing all references to legitimization of children through marriage. I would just like to speak to that for a couple of minutes.

[4:00 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we have many families of many looks, sizes, shapes, and feels - people who are raising children in this province. We have same-sex parents. We have parents who co-parent, where there are more than two parents. We have gender non-binary people raising children.

The fact is that our definitions of families have changed. A family is not a mother, a father, and one or more children anymore - or ever. A family is people who choose to live together in a relationship and have children or not have children; who adopt children; who have children biologically; who choose their own parents. As many types of people there are in the world, there are as many ways that we can define family.

The current Vital Statistics Act is outdated and needs to be changed to reflect the vibrant makeup of our Nova Scotian communities. Again, I will reiterate the fact that a “married woman” is referred to in the Act. I think we should just get rid of it. We should

get rid of the term “woman” altogether, as we propose, and replace it with “parent,” but if that can’t happen, let’s get rid of the definition of “married woman.” These are very, very simple changes to make.

When the Minister of Service Nova Scotia brought forward his amendments, he had a chance to take a look at this bill that we have put forward. I am disappointed that in the past our changes were not looked at as part of that initial round of amendments. I was very supportive, as I say, of those amendments in that bill, but this just goes another step.

A small change would mean a huge amount to many, many people in this province. It would bring us into the 21st century. It would bring us up to date with the types of families living in Nova Scotia today who are paying taxes and contributing to our communities.

To not make these changes is doing a disservice and is insulting to many, many people in the population. The government has the ability to remove the barriers that exist for people and to make concrete changes that will make our communities safer and more accepting for everyone.

I have a lot of time left, so I will just reiterate this idea of illegitimacy. Think about it for a moment. Think about the people you know who may have children, who are not married and have never been married. Does one consider their children illegitimate?

We hear this term - it’s like something out of *Les Misérables* or something, from a time when things were different, and things are better now. Well, we need to make real changes to real laws that affect real people to actually be able to support that.

My children are legitimate, and I would love for the laws of this province to reflect that.

I ask the Minister of Service Nova Scotia to consider these changes, to do the right thing for people in Nova Scotia, to call this bill to the Law Amendments Committee and then into third reading and pass this bill.

I am going to reiterate the amendments that our bill would make to the Act:

It would remove all references to marital status with regard to registration of births. It would remove the term “married woman” from definitions. It would remove all references to “mother” and “father” and replace them with “parents”, which is done in the Ontario Act. It would allow for the possibility of a child having more than two parents, which is done in the Ontario Act, and which is the case for many children in this province right now as we speak. It would remove all references to legitimization of children through marriage.

I'm going to tell a little story to finish off. I don't know, sometimes I wonder if I should tell these stories, but I will.

When I was in the hospital with my second child - nowadays you go to this computer kiosk and you register your child before you leave the hospital, and you're really not supposed to leave until you've registered the child. I was in a little waiting room at the IWK registering my child and I was entering all the information, and I was hormonal, and I was tired but very excited to get back to my other child and my home and start our new life together with this new baby.

I had to answer a question which was: Are you divorced? And I clicked yes. Then it asked me what was the date of your divorce? I was like, oh my God, I have no idea what the date of my divorce was. I thought, why does this computer system, why does this registration need to know the date of my divorce if the person I've divorced has no connection to the child I am registering, which is the case.

So, I found myself in the waiting room having just given birth 12 hours before, calling my ex-husband and saying, "Hey, do you know when we were divorced? I don't have that information at my fingertips. I didn't think to bring it with me to the hospital when I was going to have my baby. Can you look that up for me?" He went home and he found his papers, and he called me back and said we were divorced on this date.

It was humiliating and, frankly, silly and stupid. Why is that information necessary? I don't know that exact situation is part of this Act, I think it must be somewhere in the Act, but it just speaks to this kind of completely out-of-date perception of parents and mothers and people giving birth. It speaks to a time when there was a very conservative notion of a man and a woman coming together to make a child and living happily ever after, forever and ever. We know that has never actually been the case, for some people, and we know there are many, many versions of what that is, what family is.

I implore this government to take a look at our bill, to make these changes, to legitimize the children of Nova Scotia who are currently considered illegitimate in the eyes of the law and pass our bill. It's as easy as that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for Dartmouth North for her comments. I'd also like to say hi to her children in the future, who will be seeing this some day. They must be bored if they're going through the archives of the Legislature. "It was a riveting speech, kids, don't get me wrong." I don't want to offend anybody with family.

It is an important piece of legislation. The whole conversation around gender identity around the identification of family the family unit, all these things. I think every

member in the House listened to the member for Dartmouth North talk about their piece of legislation and the surrounding anecdotes of her life and her situation.

I think all can very much relate, to reflect, on active society. Certainly for some of us that family unit looks a lot different from the composition of that traditional setup that it used to be for so many years. I think that it is of importance to the issue.

Technically speaking, if the law states that children are illegitimate for some reason or another, then obviously that's extremely archaic and it doesn't make any sense. I can tell you, having had the opportunity of six years in Cabinet and having various portfolios, it actually is a significant amount of work from the bureaucratic levels, the amount of work that has to go through these very all-encompassing pieces of legislation that have contradictory terms, that have hypothetical terms that aren't relevant anymore and certainly antiquated references like this one, with "married woman," "parents," "the family unit" and, again, those things that make very little sense.

When you look at the Motor Vehicle Act, which is a massive document, it still reflects the horse and buggy and how those particular vehicles should be parked and situated on public streets. There's always work that has to be done in terms of catch-up and I think that this is just one of those.

During the legislation that we brought in in the last session, the changes around Vital Statistics, I just wanted to talk about a few of those because it's important to reflect them again for the Legislature. The member did speak about some of these particular issues that she experienced and that are obviously very relevant to this piece of legislation.

I'm not saying that this is an obvious no-brainer, clearly logical updates to the Vital Statistics Act. It just takes some amount of time and focused effort to make sure that when we're changing these pieces of legislation, when we crack them open, there are a significant number of things to consider. Again, I'm not saying that these particular changes are anything too controversial because they aren't, but when we take off these big projects in terms of these very significant pieces of legislation, like the Vital Statistics Act is, there's a lot of leg work that has to be done.

We've got a lady who is an absolutely tremendous public servant in Nova Scotia. Her name is Krista Dewey. Krista is the person who has guided this through Service Nova Scotia in terms of the changes that took place with the last round. Her consultation with the 2SLGBTQ+ community is second to none. Her relationship, the liaison, the understanding of what is required in terms of changes seemed so obvious to her but, again, the wheels of motion in terms of changing this legislation when you have to sort of move it from bureaucratic departmental level and get it into the Legislature and have these things stamped and proclaimed and passed through, you can imagine that if you have a passion for these types of things, as Krista does, that certainly it's frustrating for her.

I know she was in the gallery when the Vital Statistics Act came through and she was incredibly excited about what was happening. Again, to think that someone who would identify as non-binary would have to pick male or female on the birth certificate - you talk about archaic things that don't reflect anything logical in today's society; that was one of those changes. People needing a letter from their doctor to indicate that they were looking to change their sex indicator, it's laughable in this generation and in this day and age, in 2019, that that would be something that people would have to do - the expense of getting the change on the birth certificate, but just to have to go and essentially ask your doctor for a change of sex letter of support, as if it's some kind of illness or some kind of ailment that someone has.

Having the ability to do that without that type of scrutiny, that type of ridiculous oversight is just something that is an understatement to suggest that it's common sense. (Applause) Thanks for the support across the way here.

One of the other changes that for me is just sort of an anecdotal one, not to stereotype regions, but having the opportunity to live in the Middle East for a year, back I guess back about 12 years ago, there are things that we have to change and make better, and we've taken too long with some of these changes, some of the changes the member is suggesting here with this legislation, but I can tell you that as a society the freedoms we enjoy, the things we do, we've got it pretty good.

One of the aspects I reflect back to Vital Statistics is the fact that a Nova Scotia resident who is born outside Nova Scotia is looking to change the sex indicator on their birth certificate, the amount of effort, the amount of challenge, the amount of scrutiny and criticism and anger they would receive if they had to reach back to their country of origin, their birth country, to get information reflective of their sex indicator and their sex was a very real risk. It's one for those who would come here and be looking to make that change in the sex indicator, or not identify the sex indicator field on their birth certificate. It just wouldn't be worth the risk and what is associated with that back in their respective countries where they were born. Given the challenges that people would experience with that, it just made no sense.

[4:15 p.m.]

One of the things that I have found fascinating - and again, I guess I live in a bubble sometimes, where you just think that these laws are automatically updated by somebody somewhere and they reflect the current modern society . . .

LENORE ZANN: That would be us.

GEOFF MACLELLAN: That would be the NDP, the member for Truro-Millbrook-Salmon River-Bible Hill - was that close? (Laughter)

This is a reality, and again, there are a number of things - the member's anecdotes are about the rights of parents and giving the mom the ability in certain family units or situations to identify a surname of her choice for the child. Again, it's something that's logical and very straightforward, and it's something that didn't exist until last year. To think that they would have had to give the baby the surname that was identified directly with them - it makes no sense, and to have that restriction on a mom just isn't something that's reflective of today's society anywhere.

I had this in the notes - something that we touted, although it's really not something to brag about - some of the changes that we made put us ahead in terms of identification and gender and the birth certificate issue. They put us as leaders in the country. That was actually really surprising to me. To think that we haven't advanced that far ahead until last year for us and we've become the leaders on it is something that is a bit surprising. When you go back to looking at - common sense dictates government, and common sense dictates the bureaucracy, but when we have to dive in and actually make these formal changes, when you crack it open and you see what actually exists on paper, it's kind of scary sometimes.

In closing, I can tell the member for Dartmouth North that I do appreciate where she is. None of it is nonsensical. Again, living as a person and as a dad with two great kids and not your traditional family composition, I can appreciate the importance - especially for moms - of having it reflective and right in our legislation. Times have changed and it's time for us to make sure that we're doing everything we can to have our legislation reflect what's current, modern, fair, and just for the people we represent.

Krista Dewey and her team are working on a number of these changes and looking at the very legislation that the NDP has tabled. We'll continue to have this discussion at Service Nova Scotia as time goes on. With that, I take my place.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Internal Services.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: I won't take very long. I just wanted to touch on a few things in regards to Bill No. 69.

I want to start by thanking the member for Dartmouth North for bringing this forward. I find it interesting - over the last 30 years, families change and what we think about families and how they encompass is very different, and that becomes a very natural progression as we live our lives. Most people wouldn't know what's in the Vital Statistics Act, and like the member for Glace Bay, there are a lot of particulars that I was quite surprised by. The main aspect for me was the giving of children's surnames.

I'm not married and I don't have kids, but I have a close core group of girlfriends, two of whom got married at 18. At 18, very traditional: you get married, you take your husband's last name, you have your kids, those kids have their father's last name. But when

you fast forward about seven or eight years later, when the majority of the rest of my friends were getting married, it was a little bit of a different conversation. Some of them were married. Some of them had kids on their own. Some of them were in common law relationships. Some of them were in partnerships.

The thought about having kids then and the last names of their kids began this whole crazy conversation of what was going to be the best way to handle what their child's last name was going to be. Do I hyphenate my name? If the hyphen is there, do I have to use the full name? Does my child have to have the full name with the hyphen? If I don't put the hyphen, can my child have either my last name or their father's last name? It's these crazy conversations that seem to just make no sense whatsoever, and it just seemed like a big waste of time and a grab because you had to go and change all your IDs and change your credit cards, and it had to be this huge whole thing.

Also, at that point my friends had established careers. Their names and their surnames started to mean something more to them than my friends who had gotten married earlier on in life. The identity that was attached to that surname was something that they wanted to pass on to their children. Apart from the inconveniences of changing your name or deciding what your child's last name is going to be, the sense of propriety around your last name was something that had more meaning to them.

I find it interesting because, honestly, I'm very protective of my last name, but if I had gotten married at 18, at 25, or at 28, maybe I wouldn't have cared as much. Actually, I know I wouldn't have cared, because there were times where I hated my last name, and I wanted to get married just to get rid of my last name. I'm just joking.

My last name has a lot of meaning to me, and one of the key things that I thought about when I decided to run for public office was the reputation that my last name has, what that was going to mean moving into a public sphere, and making sure that I carried myself in a way that honoured my last name. It was very surprising to me because it had never been something that I had thought about as much until my career changed and I was put on this path.

I think that when you want to pass on your last name, it is your legacy, and your children are a representation of the best parts of you. Whether that is a you who is by themselves, or that is a you who is in partnership, you want to make it as easy as possible for that legacy and that goodness to be carried on.

I really do thank the member from Dartmouth North. I'm happy to hear the minister's remarks. I think that this is something that we need to take a closer look at and make sure that we do right by all of our families, regardless of their shape or size in Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The member for Halifax Needham.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I welcome this somewhat unanticipated opportunity to discuss a subject and, maybe more so, some themes that are so important, so intimate and so emotional for Nova Scotians. It's always humbling to realize the impact of our work ultimately as legislators on people actually living their intimate lives, including their relationships, child bearing and so forth.

I wanted to share a thought that my colleague from Dartmouth North whispered in my ear. As this is somewhat impromptu, she forgot something that she wanted to say. That is that her experience as a new mother again, with hormones, feeling thrown off and sort of alienated and humiliated by her interaction with the impact of the law as it is, where she needed to put in her divorce date. That experience is important in that it allows her to feel empathy for other parents who are perhaps not cisgender heterosexual parents in a relationship with one individual.

That feeling, that realization, and the next step of her story really resonates with me. I think every experience that we have where we feel the injustice or the alienation of the systems as they affect us in many cases, given the privilege that we walk through the world with, just allows us to have a taste of what many other people are experiencing more acutely than ourselves.

I want to take the opportunity to highlight one of the aspects of our legislation that has not been spoken about at great length. Our proposed legislation would allow there to be more than two parents and create sort of a framework for how those more than two parents could arrive together at choosing a surname, and what would happen if they did not agree, and what would happen in various circumstances. I think that is so important because what matters in the end at a time when a child comes into the world is that they land into a structure of love. In the end that's what it's about, that is what is going to determine that child's ability to thrive in our province or not.

Frankly, as this Party often talks about, there are a number of structures in our province, in our society, that really make it difficult. Part of that is extreme income inequality, part of that is structural racism, part of that is the legacy of residential schools, and part of it is just capitalism. How we're all supposed to be running this race as individuals, as if the end goal is to have the most stuff that you can attach in a U-Haul to the hearse that takes you to the end of your life - I mean it's absurd.

Nothing makes it more absurd, or makes the absurdity of it more obvious, than when you really think about what kids need. Kids need a structure of love. So the goal of this legislation that governs that very beginning of life has to be to facilitate that structure being solidified around a child.

If it makes sense that it be with three people, with four people - my caucus staff pulled for us some reporting in the *Globe and Mail* from December 2016, where two couples, a couple of women in a loving unit and a couple of men in a loving unit came

together to have a child. In fact, I think I've maybe heard a radio documentary about this same family and how they co-parent, and how they have created this extra-strong structure of love around one very lucky little human. In Ontario, there is change to legislation to actually allow all four of them to be recognized as parents. I think that is so important.

I guess the last thing I'll say is that while there have been many references here to how change happens and how change has just happened; in fact, I think change is really complex. I don't know that it just happens. I think part of what allows change to happen, either in a positive direction or in a negative direction, is that people like us lead and people like us send signals. So, it's really important that we send the right signals.

I say this thinking of my colleagues in Alberta who are fighting an election where it's not clear that the signals being sent are all positive, that we're all supportive of LGBTQ+ kids, and of all families. I think it is important that we speak from the positions that we have in favour of really wanting all children and all families to thrive.

I grew up in many ways in a really privileged upbringing context but where there was so much shame around things like unwed mothers. It was literally the worst thing that could ever befall me, which is just now unfathomable to me. When I was 12, 13, I knew who those girls were, and I knew who their parents were, and they almost became invisible amongst us. It was not somewhere you wanted to go.

[4:30 p.m.]

How ridiculous, but also how harmful. I think we don't want to just allow change to happen, we actually want to lead change, and we want to support change, and we want to push the change further because, in the end, in our society, in our lives, in our kids' lives, shame is a deeply alienating and destructive force. Nobody should feel shame based on their identity, based on who they are and how they came into the world, and what their family looks like. Any change to legislation that allows us to continue to push change in a positive direction is something that we all should indeed be embracing.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable New Democratic Party House Leader.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 123.

Bill No. 123 - Sales Tax Act.

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

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, this Bill No. 123, its purpose is to amend the sales tax regime in our province, so that we will no longer charge people provincial income tax on the goods and services exchanged in connection with a person's funeral.

My own background with this question comes from when I first went into the ministry, and as a minister you often are called, you have the experience that someone passes away and that day the family needs to go to a funeral home and that very difficult experience of going through that arrangement and selecting a casket and so on, you're called upon sometimes to accompany that person as a person in support. As a young minister when I first did this, I observed how it all worked financially.

As a community minister in a small community, I was often very much aware of the financial limitations of people's circumstances. I was struck to find out how often caskets were being sold for thousands and thousands of dollars and then I found myself conducting funeral services for people who had lived on very low incomes throughout their lives at a situation where the casket in which they were being buried cost more than any car they ever drove. Out of that experience I, and a group of others in the Musquodoboit Valley, established one of what is now two funeral co-operatives in Nova Scotia - the other is in Margaree Valley - with the primary aim of providing funerals at a more modest cost.

In the early years of that enterprise, in the early and middle 1990s, that organization was able to provide burial services for people for the average Canada Pension death benefit or less. This became not the case with changes that were brought in 1996 and 1997. One of these was not the change we're going to talk about today, changing the CPP death benefit which decreased it a lot. But there was a change in our provincial regime when the HST was harmonized. Prior to that, no Nova Scotian family ever paid provincial sales tax on the goods and services to do with the passing of someone in their family.

But when the HST was brought in and the harmonized system, provincial sales tax was extended to funerals in the province. This had the effect of increasing the price of a funeral - I think we all know from our own families that a funeral service can be a very expensive matter - by some hundreds of dollars.

A campaign began, now over 20 years ago, with the support of the churches that were part of that funeral co-op, many of them organized in what's called the Truro Presbytery of the United Church, and out of the Arimathea Funeral Cooperative, calling on governments to amend this Sales Tax Act so that there would no longer be taxation on funerals.

Now, those members of the House who were serving here in the years 2009 to 2013 will remember that some of the strongest, most wonderful speeches given here in those years were given by Junior Theriault on this subject, who brought forward a private member's bill over and over, year after year, calling for the elimination of the funeral tax. I was privileged to speak in favour of those motions.

All the arguments that he raised in those years apply to this situation today. It makes no sense at all that after lifetimes of contributing, people's estates should have to pay on their funerals, and that people at the most difficult moments of their lives should have to

think, how am I going to raise the money to pay for that, and that the province would be a part of that burden, at a moment when we would wish, rather, to be supportive.

All these years, the Arimathea Funeral Cooperative has been having its annual meeting right around the time of the provincial budget. Year after year, it's reported that it was not included in the budget again this year to make any change about the provision of the funeral tax. This has been a great disappointment, because there is a precedent for this change in Nova Scotia in our Cemetery and Funeral Services Act - because in fact, in our Cemetery and Funeral Services Act, we already exempt cemetery lots from having the provincial income tax applied.

I want to admit, frankly, that our Party also was not successful in bringing about the change that Junior Theriault rightly was arguing for. Nor were the Progressive Conservatives. Before we had that opportunity, they had been pressed many, many times. But I want to say that to this date, neither has the present government been successful about this, and in my judgment, this is a failure of the present government.

Perhaps not all members will be aware that in 2009 the Liberal Party ran on a platform that included the elimination of provincial sales tax on funerals. Perhaps not all members would be aware that, in conjunction with that, the present Premier - and I will table the news report from the time - in 2012 spoke in favour of the position that had been outlined by Junior Theriault and aligned the Party with the purpose that he had put forward there, that it ought to be eliminated.

Since the present government came to power, because I understood what the Premier's position was, because I had heard the Party rally in support of the marvellous positions that had been put forward with such conviction by Junior year after year - every year, I looked for this change in the budget. We looked in 2014. I thought, we'll see it. By golly, nothing about the funeral tax; 2015, you know, we ought to see that - nothing about the funeral tax; 2016, nothing; 2017, nothing; 2018.

I came to the budget this year, into the lockup, as in the last three or four budgets - one of the first things I've looked for. Surely, they would have done that. Surely, they're not going to let their mandate expire - two full majority-government mandates - without seeing to this egregious injustice in our system in Nova Scotia.

It seems to me that all Parties have spoken in favour of this. I can't see any reasonable argument in favour of continuing the system that we've had since 1997, by which we're charging people sales tax when they die. I think it would be a thing that the government could do which would enhance the general understanding of the government's project. It would enhance public estimation for what the government is doing. I think it would enhance public estimation of public institutions in general to realize that this one thing, which just simply makes no sense, a burden set on people at the most difficult part

of their lives, at a time when they ought not to be receiving an extra burden from the government, that the government had made a move to do this.

I can assure you that if, in the time between now and the expiry of this second mandate, the present government can see its way clear to following up on its commitments of 2009 and 2012 and modify the Sales Tax Act in order to eliminate tax on the sale of goods and services together with funerals, the government will enjoy an enthusiastic support and response and appreciation from the members of the New Democratic Party.

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

BEN JESSOME: I thank my NDP colleagues for bringing this noble initiative forward as a reminder to some of the previous members of the House who have previously brought it forward. I want to first acknowledge the difficulty that coincides with experiencing the death of a loved one. Without question, that is what we are trying to accommodate today.

Any family that goes through dealing with one of their departed family members is certainly preoccupied with everything but dealing with the proceedings and organizational and financial side of trying to honour them and trying to create an opportunity for their family and individuals close to the family to grieve the passing of a loved one.

On a personal note, since I have been elected I have regrettably, but in many ways positively, attended a few more funerals around the community. Through those experiences you get to see people of all different walks of life who celebrate their family and friends in many different ways. To the testament of those who I have had the good fortune to know and whose families I have had the good fortune to know, there are some pretty magnificent ways that people celebrate their loved ones.

Additionally, I would add that some of the funerals I have been to have been very simple. In my view, that humility that people are able to exhibit in a funeral procession is quite a testament to why people are there. People show up to a funeral to celebrate that person, to pay tribute to that person, and to honour their families who must deal with that.

With that being said, I humbly say, and I will get into it in a little bit in a second, I know everybody's family is based on different walks of life, different religions, and different cultural backgrounds and has different things that coincide with what is expected at the time of death. What I would like to say is that having been to different classes, I'll say, of funeral proceedings, some of the simpler ones were some of the best ones that I have been to. To me, this indicates that you don't have to spend an arm and a leg to honour your family member. What it's about is being there with friends and family to celebrate their lives.

What I would like to jump back to is I believe that the New Democrats have set out a bill here that does structure an opportunity for the minister to look into this and to have some structure around what this protocol would look like. It does enable some controls around what is required in terms of refunding a portion of the cost that goes into a funeral. What I will say is that in the research that I've done and the experiences that I have had, you know, the average cost of a funeral can start - if you're talking about a cremation, they can start anywhere in the ballpark of \$2,000; if you're a more traditional family and want to bury a family member with a casket, it starts out at around \$5,000.

[4:45 p.m.]

My information may be a year dated, but in saying that I'd like to bring to the attention of the House that the Department of Community Services already has a program in place whereby - and not limited to individuals on social assistance, but all Nova Scotians can apply to the program and be helped out with funeral proceeding costs and the amount that a family can potentially access is up to \$3,800 plus taxes. They are required to demonstrate the paper trail that's associated with the costs of that funeral, which is consistent with some of the things that are outlined in the bill from the NDP.

I did some reading that indicated that in 2015 the province was able to help out with respect to - I believe the number was 450 different families. So, Mr. Speaker, there is a protocol in place that's not limited to the most vulnerable but does bring some sensitivity to the fact that a funeral can cost an exorbitant amount of money, especially depending on where you come from and how much your family has to offer.

I will say that with the expenses aside, each family dynamic is extremely different. I mean, you could have even a couple of people who are committed to helping out with a funeral, but not every family or not every individual has that team behind them to manage their estate and to manage the proceedings of the funeral when they're gone. So, I should say that I am sensitive to the fact that not every family has the same capacity to see their loved one into the next world.

I will additionally add that through legislation, through the Embalmers and Funeral Directors Act and the Cemetery and Funeral Services Act there are many safeguards in place with respect to the number of professionals, the number of businesses, cemeteries, what have you, that are involved in and around the process of dealing with someone's passing. People are required to have certain certifications. There are protections in place around finances. More recently, last year, government made changes to those Acts around an unfortunate situation in receiving that feedback from, in particular, a family from the Valley.

So, we've continued to try and be mindful of a difficult time in everyone's life. There's no way around it; it's terribly morbid to talk about it but it's a fact of life. The best thing that we can continue to do as members is be as accommodating as we possibly can,

as thoughtful as we possibly can because, again, the group of people or the individuals that we're talking about - if they're not already going through what can be one of the most difficult situations in their lives - have so many other things to contemplate. This is not something that should be overly burdensome on an individual or on a family.

I will commend the members of the NDP for supporting this bill. Generally, we have a responsibility, as all members, to continue looking at the best ways to serve our communities and individuals in their most vulnerable times. I thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place to speak for a few minutes on this particular bill with respect to the Sales Tax Act, and around funeral services and the ultimate costs of the HST that is applied.

Well done to my colleague from Hammonds Plains-Lucasville, it is certainly an important conversation. I think the member for Dartmouth South will finish off. Of course, the NDP Leader kicked us off here with his take on this, his experience in the Legislature and certainly in his time in his previous career and way of life as a minister. I didn't know that he led the charge around the funeral co-operative. I think that's a very noble thing to have done in his community. I think it truly does reflect his position as a community leader and as a minister that he would have seen the impact of funeral services and certainly how it hits people in such a particular way at such a terrible time.

Thinking about this particular topic and how it rolls out for people - and my colleague from our government caucus referenced the Serenity Funeral Home in the Valley - for me, a legislator, a member of the provincial Cabinet, it was a real eye-opener for funeral services and funeral homes and the processes that are established.

I think one would reasonably assume that these things are operated and functioning to the letter; respecting the human remains; respecting the family that is left behind; respecting the idea that these processes and the procedures by which a corpse is handled, from transportation to holding at a funeral home or at a church or any religious denomination facility or in a private place of worship, which is becoming increasingly common now, that there would be that level of respect and certainty around the process.

To think that multiple families were impacted, devastated quite frankly, by this terrible error and really a series of things that should have been in place but weren't, it was a real eye-opener for us.

When you are crafting legislation and you are working with departments and working with the government side and the Opposition with their input around legislation, amendments and things like that, there are differences of opinion. On this particular piece,

with the Funerals and Embalmers Act, there was no grey area at all. It was very clear that these changes had to be made, again referencing the member for Dartmouth North in the previous piece of legislation we just talked about around the Vital Statistics, there's common sense that just has to take place here. Again, you are thinking that it's in place and that these things exist and when they don't, it's terrifying.

When the media becomes involved and really highlights these stories of the devastation of families because of these things, it's a real eye-opener when you are at the place where these decisions are being made and these legislations are being updated or certainly should be updated.

Secondly, the Leader of the NDP, and all members who've discussed this legislation, talked about this time in their lives. I think the Serenity piece is part of that. I remember I was only - it's hard to believe it was eight years ago, my first year in the Legislature here - my Dad passed away. And when you're going through this process, regardless of whether your loved one was young or old, whether they were sick or it was sudden, it's all terrible. When you're going through those moments of grief and doing the obituary - the small things that you don't think of until it really hits you - having to worry about the financial part of it, doing the paperwork, contacting Canada Pension in our case, figuring out with the family what we would do in terms of the casket and the costs. Those things are terrible, and you think to yourself in those moments, this is the last possible thing I want to be worrying about - administration, the proper paperwork, and the expense around it.

Again, we were fortunate because of the Canada Pension support and a small private policy that my dad had, that those things were covered. If they weren't, it would've been very difficult.

You see that first-hand as an MLA - the member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville referenced how, as a public representative, we attend a lot of funerals, wakes, and services to show our respects. It really hits home how difficult it is to manage the grief, and then have all this paperwork and expense that's associated with it.

What we're talking about here today is around the public purse and how it impacts on funeral services and coverage of those services. The member referenced the global number of funeral services that are covered by DCS: 450. I can tell you that there's certainly a fair proportion of those that are in Cape Breton and in Glace Bay. I know that in speaking with the funeral home providers, the service providers, in my area of Glace Bay and surrounding area, it's the type of thing where they recover what they can from DCS, but there are times that there's just things that the families can't afford, quite frankly, or they don't fit inside those parameters, so they just cover it on their own.

I think that speaks to the type of individuals we have in this industry who really understand the human element of this, more so than anybody else, and that they step in and

help when they can. I think that having that ability, for any government of any stripe to be able to support by way of cost-coverage and recovery for those funeral home fees - as much as funeral homes will do whatever they can, they have to maintain a certain level of revenue to keep the doors open.

When working collectively with those particular stakeholders, it's important for us as government - DCS, in this example, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, with this particular tax regime - to do what we can and find those areas where we can help out. The NDP Leader referenced the expense, and it really is an incredible thing to think that these caskets are several thousand dollars. His example was that these caskets sometimes cost more than any vehicle this person ever owned.

You're seeing a changing landscape of funeral services. It used to be for us, traditionally, a couple of public viewings, wakes, and then a final service. From my experience in Glace Bay, predominately the final services were done in churches, but that has changed so drastically over time. Now we're seeing the emergence of sort of mobile service providers that are online, and they book places in advance. It's really moving away from that traditional model, and that does change the cost structure a little bit, but that certainly doesn't diminish the fact that there is an impact on families.

Governments have to do what they can when they look at their budgets and they look at the options that they can provide families for help at such a dire time. It's important to always keep that in mind.

I do appreciate the reference to Harold Junior Theriault. Two things he talked about were HST off funeral services and cutting the alders down on his highway. I know the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal hasn't done that for him yet, so if he can deliver on the alders down in Digby way, Junior would be pretty happy, and he'd like to see something like this go through as well, to complete the two particular items that he'd always highlighted.

With the new emerging model, there will be opportunities for government to look at the structures around the taxation, but also just around the other services that are provided through some of our social programming and departments that can really help families at such a difficult time. We're always looking at ways to reduce burden for people, Mr. Speaker. I think that this is an important conversation to have.

Not to put the NDP on the spot, but one of the questions that I'm curious about here and maybe the member can cover this in her closing. I didn't see this in the legislation but I may have missed it. The notion for this particular piece that this would be income-tested or is this for everyone - is it HST across the board or is it a certain income level?

[5:00 p.m.]

The member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville referenced the morbid topic that we're discussing here but at the end of the day it comes, the social safety net and the idea that some in our society who could pay a little more do so and some who can't get the support they need. There's always that notion that with programs of this nature there would be some income-testing - maybe if the NDP could cover that in their final comments, that would be great. With that, I'll take my place.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on Bill No. 123 which, I believe, has been kicking around in some form or other in this Chamber for over a decade, and I appreciate the comments of my colleagues on both sides of the House.

I guess I want to take a moment first to address the question put to me by the minister just now, which is that our bill is universal, it's not income-tested. That's the theme of our legislation. We believe that, in general, there are some basic and compassionate services that should apply across the board. Although we sometimes disagree on taxes in different ways in this Chamber, in this case I think we would say that we ought to all agree we don't have to tax people in the grave. That's really what this does.

I want to talk for a moment about the fact that at least in Dartmouth South - and I imagine this is true for the member for Glace Bay, the member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville - I have some poor seniors in my constituency. We all do, all across Nova Scotia and it's a huge issue. We have demographic challenges in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotians are getting older and many of those Nova Scotians have significantly limited incomes.

Recently, we have been hearing in our office that Nova Scotians who are on ESIA at age 60 are being forced to apply early for CPP - that is a policy in the Department of Community Services. The upshot of that policy is that they receive about 36 per cent less of their CPP benefit for the rest of their life. Relying on CPP alone is already an extraordinary difficult thing to do - probably something none of us in this Chamber will ever have to do, but which many, many other Nova Scotians do. Even that is sometimes being compromised.

Not only that, I think across the board all of us at various stages think about what will happen when we retire, when we're not earning income. I don't think anyone wants to be a burden on their children and so I think we want to make sure that people can age and die with dignity, and part of that is not having concerns and stresses. This is what we hear from seniors, I hear this in my office and I suspect my colleagues do all of the time. Just a deep amount of stress - stress about income, about housing. It's a stressful time for all of us but particularly if you live in Nova Scotia and you are retired and you're older and you

have a fixed income. This is a real issue: What's going to happen when I die and who's going to pay for it?

We can't solve that issue in its entirety today, but - and I'm going to paraphrase because I don't have the tabling document - Darrell Dexter once said something to the effect of, it's not a very compassionate tax when you're taxing people to the grave. The reality is, we're taxed our whole lives and I think we in the NDP are happier than most to be taxed our whole lives. We believe in taxes because they pay for social services, they pay for education, they pay for community services, they pay for many of the things that make this a good place to live. We all think many of those things need improvements, but that's how we pay for them. We pay for them out of government revenues, but when are those taxes appropriately applied and those revenues appropriately collected?

As I said, this legislation has been kicking around for over a decade. I think it's something that could easily have all-Party support in this House. It was proposed by the Liberal Party. None of us passed it when we had the opportunity, so we're all equally culpable. Some of us may have talked about it more than others. This is Opposition Day, and as such we don't have the opportunity to call legislation for a vote, but hearing the thoughtful comments of my colleagues on the government side, I would request that the minister and Executive Council really take the time and look at this and think about bringing it back and moving it quickly. It will have all-Party support I believe - I can only speak for our Party.

It's a relatively simple change. We removed the tax on home heating oil. It's not the same circumstance, but it's not totally different. Here in Nova Scotia we are hard-pressed to get through a winter without heating our homes, so we decided that that was a basic thing that all Nova Scotians needed, and that tax should not be applied. Similarly, I can guarantee you that none of us will manage to escape death - not possible. Therefore, it doesn't make sense for it to be taxed. It just doesn't. It's not kind. It's not compassionate. It's not in keeping with the way that I think we all aspire to take care of people in life.

We know that, in general, estates can end up with all kinds of fees. I have a constituent who has a \$10,000 fee because they were the recipient of a grant from DCS for a lift in her mother's home. The mother died, but if the mother dies within six months, that grant has to be repaid. It's a glitch, it's a gap in a policy, but these things happen all the time. Estates are saddled with all kinds of strange bills. I think that whatever we can do to ameliorate that kind of awful bureaucratic nonsense that can be financially punishing for families in the wake of the death of a loved one, we should all endeavour to do it.

The minister spoke eloquently of his own experience in his first year in this Chamber. I know there are other members who have experienced the loss of a parent in this Legislative session. It's not so far from all of us. We'll go through it, but we will be lucky enough, probably, to not really have to worry about paying a funeral bill. We are not in the majority on that. It's a heavy burden, and it's something that everyone will have to

face. I think it would really show some leadership and mostly just some compassion for the members of this House collectively to decide that we're going to lift a small part of that burden.

That concludes my remarks. That also concludes Opposition business today, so I will turn it over to the Government House Leader to call hours for tomorrow.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today as well. I move that the House do now rise to sit again tomorrow, Thursday, March 28th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

Following the daily routine and Question Period, business will include the Committee of the Whole House on Bills for Bill Nos. 103, 105, 106, 109, 112, and 116. Following the Committee of the Whole House on Bills, we will move to the Committee of the Whole on Supply. (Interruption)

Mr. Speaker, just a clarification. After the Committee of the Whole House on Bills we will move to the reply to the Budget Address, and with time permitting, we will then move into the Committee of the Whole on Supply.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for the House to adjourn to rise again tomorrow, Thursday, March 28th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

We have now reached the moment of interruption. The topic for late debate as submitted by the honourable member for Yarmouth is:

“Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia to Maine ferry is of critical importance to the economic growth of Nova Scotia and that the Opposition rhetoric ignoring the importance of the service has created uncertainty to all Nova Scotians and international investors.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

**GOV'T (N.S.) - N.S. TO MAINE FERRY: OPPOSITION RHETORIC -
CREATING UNCERTAINTY**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I stand tonight in defence of a ferry service that is critical to our plan for rural economic development in this province, that is critical for the tourism industry and economy of southwestern Nova Scotia. I stand to argue that the way in which the Progressive Conservative Opposition members have approached debate and conversation on this issue has had a directly negative impact on investment, on lending, on our marketing efforts abroad, and our efforts to build a stronger rural economy.

Now I have heard the Leader of the Official Opposition say that he does support a service. I really find that challenging to accept. In fact, I feel that while he undermines public confidence, while he works to undermine market confidence, while he uses embellished hyperbolic political rhetoric to attack the service and the contract that we have signed with Bay Ferries, I feel that exposes a disingenuous approach to this. In the same breath, you cannot say you support a service and undermine public market confidence and vilify the service's operator.

I think it's important for the record here to remind members what has been said about this service by the Leader of the Official Opposition, from a Letter to the Editor in the *Pictou Advocate* called "Throwing tax money at ferry is not a solution":

"So far, they have shut down industries and thrown money at a ferry. Is that the plan? It can't be [It] is just more of the same [S]imply throwing tax dollars at ferries and hoping for results doesn't attract businesses, it discourages it."

The Leader of the Official Opposition has said: Liberals definitely missed the boat with their one-sided political deal, but we will fix it. Recently he said: Is that investment that the province is making giving the most bang for the buck, or are there better ways that we can invest that money? This deal is laughable.

He said at another time that this is the worst deal signed by any provincial government in history, even though it's a deal that almost mirrors the one that was signed by a previous Progressive Conservative government and one that they defended for many years. He also said: Nobody should take comfort in this deal, I guess taxpayers are just supposed to pay as long as that ferry saves the seat in Yarmouth.

He said it's not a sustainable deal. He believes this is not a deal that puts Nova Scotians first and that taxpayers are being hosed by this. I will table those comments for the record of the House.

As far as I can understand, there are four main items of argument that the Progressive Conservatives have presented. First is that our investment in the ferry is not

driven by economic necessity, it is driven by political necessity. That is simply not true. This is not a hypothetical situation for anybody in southwestern Nova Scotia or in the tourism sector.

When we lost that ferry service, the sector was decimated in southwestern Nova Scotia. In Yarmouth alone, we lost half of our rooms overnight - 300 inn, motel, and hotel rooms closed down overnight. There were 500 jobs lost overnight, and we entered into a period of economic decline where we experienced an exodus from our Main Street and merchants closed up. These pressures were felt, not to the same degree, across this province all the way up to Cape Breton. That was expressed by tourism operators at the time.

[5:15 p.m.]

To assert that this is driven by political necessity is false. We have seen a revitalization in our economy in the tourism sector. We have seen our hotels in the process of reopening and investing again. We've had 50,000 people come through our province as a result of that ferry service, and we know we can even do better.

The CEO of TIANS, who spoke at committee this morning, also said this is not a situation that affects only Yarmouth. She said that exit interviews of tourists show ferry passengers stay longer in the province, spend more money and travel more broadly throughout the province than other visitors. She said: "I think the numbers that we have supporting the impact of the ferry from a tourism perspective are very compelling."

That's not a person from Yarmouth. That's the CEO of our provincial tourism organizations.

So I reject that notion that this is a political investment. It's an economic investment, and the facts demonstrate that. You look at the fact that with 50,000 passengers, we only need each of those folks to spend \$200 in Nova Scotia to break even on the service, from an economic perspective. However, we know that each party is actually spending more than \$2,500. You use a conservative estimate - say, if you split the 50,000 up into four-person parties, you're looking at a \$30 million infusion into the economy, and I actually think that number is much higher. The Yarmouth and Acadian Shores Tourism Association has indicated that number might be closer to a \$70 million impact.

The Progressive Conservatives have said the costs are out of whack. The costs of this ferry service are in line with the costs of the service in Digby and also in Pictou. The per-passenger subsidy is fairly equivalent. The only ferry that's a lot more expensive than this one is actually the Newfoundland ferry, which costs \$160 million a year that taxpayers pay. To suggest that the costs are out of whack is not accurate.

Also, we are working to drop the subsidy and get it lower. That's why we've moved to Bar Harbor, where there is a bigger market for tourists and where the fuel costs can be driven down.

The other two areas where the Progressive Conservatives have said that this is a problem are the investment in the terminal in Bar Harbor and the need for customs capacity there, and also the confidentiality clause with Bay Ferries Limited. The only things we're investing in in those terminals are the ramps, the paving, and the infrastructure needed to get people on and off that boat safely. Those are the only things we're investing in.

Those ramps do not service other vessels. They only serve this one, our vessel. The confidentiality clause is necessary because Bay Ferries Limited is a global company. They compete globally, and they don't want other companies knowing what their competitive and proprietary information is. It gives them a disadvantage.

For the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, who's supposed to be pro-business, to not only take a business to court to vilify them publicly but to suggest that their competitive information should be made public, putting them - a Nova Scotian company - at a disadvantage globally speaks volumes, I think, about where that Leader is when it comes to rural and economic development in the province.

These comments have had a very real effect. We've had investors pull out of Yarmouth as a result of the uncertainty caused by the Leader of the Official Opposition's comments. The chamber of commerce has stated: "The continued attacks on the service are resulting in lost investment for our region." We know that they need to stop. I will table these quotes for the House.

"Tourism operators in Yarmouth on edge as MLAs in Halifax debate ferry service," indicating how investment lending is impacted by someone who wants to be Premier saying such things about such a critical service. I will table those as well.

We've heard also from the Bay Ferries CEO, who has expressed that rhetoric used by the Progressive Conservatives is "excessive" and "nasty" and harmful to the ferry service between Yarmouth and Maine: "The problem is that our customers, partners, to some degree investors in the community . . . can't ignore those comments. It goes to our customers on the U.S. side and it goes to the people we're trying to do business with . . ." That impacts business in a very real way.

The Town of Yarmouth is also seeking intervener status in relation to the suit by the members opposite. I quote the mayor, who said that hundreds of people in the region across the province make their living. This means multimillions of dollars in the tourism industry and they don't need to be worried about losing that boat again.

We had one developer back out and we've heard from small businesses and large businesses, everybody becomes gun-shy when it comes to investment.

Just as an example of how this impacts our marketing, I have a headline here that was published in the *Portland Press Herald*: Nova Scotia, Canada, threatens to kill the Maine ferry service.

These things have real consequences. It impacts business development; it impacts investment in a way that is very real to people.

Again, I will remind the members that this is not a hypothetical for us in Yarmouth. We lived through the devastation caused when the NDP cut the service, and the words coming out of the Leader of the Official Opposition are even more aggressive than those used by the former Premier who cut the service.

I can't imagine that those comments give anybody in the sector confidence and encourage them to invest in our province. We are focused on rural economic development, we are focused on growing our economy, and it is working. This ferry service is a success story and people are investing in our communities, tourism is growing.

We've had the third best tourism season on record and Yarmouth, and Acadian Shores went from being dead last to coming in second after Halifax in leading the way and increased the room bookings. That speaks to the economic importance of this service.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to speak to the subject. I feel like maybe my views don't count considering, I believe, that the member for Yarmouth has directed most of his comments to the Official Opposition's criticism of the ferry.

I want to be very clear that the NDP believes that the ferry link to Maine is important and we support it. We support a well-thought-out ferry service - and I will get to that in a minute. What we don't support is the secrecy around Opposition questions to the ferry. Nova Scotians have legitimate questions about the way this ferry is being run and it is the government's duty to answer those questions and not hide behind oh, it's proprietary information; oh, well, we don't really know; oh, it's the Bay Ferries or the agents and they do all of that stuff; and blah, blah, blah. That's not good enough.

There is an awful lot of money connected with this ferry. As the member for Yarmouth has just pointed out, it's big business. It's important and if it's not run properly, then the people of Yarmouth and the surrounding areas are the ones who are going to feel it the most. If it is run properly and really well, the people of Yarmouth and surrounding areas will be the people to benefit from a well-run ferry service.

I have to say that because of the secrecy around the issues concerning the ferry, I would suggest in a kind and generous way that, in fact, some of the instability around the ferry could be being caused by this secrecy. I would suggest that the NDP have very important and valid questions about how the Liberals have managed the funding for the ferry, so I'm going to talk a little bit about that now.

Firstly, I do want to say that regarding the Information and Privacy Commissioner's recommendation to release the information about the management fees, we feel that the government should follow the Information and Privacy Commissioner's recommendation. It is beginning to be a bit of a farce, how often this government "listens" to the Information and Privacy Commissioner and then does nothing that she recommends. No wonder she wants order-making powers. It's offensive.

I was at the Public Accounts Committee meeting when Ms. Tully was there as a witness. I was there and watching the member for Yarmouth question her about does she have jurisdiction over the financial decisions and all that stuff, and I frankly found it offensive to her position.

I think that the government should do the right thing and release that information because she ordered it and she is the Information and Privacy Commissioner - end of story. Having questions about the mismanagement of the ferry is not the same as undermining the idea of the ferry.

This Liberal government has made minimal efforts to secure funding from the federal government. We know that most, if not all, other international transportation links between Canada and the U.S. have federal funding attached to them. This ferry used to have federal funding attached. It was cut by the Liberal government in 1994, I believe, somewhere in the 1990s. We have had four years of all Liberal MPs in this province - all Liberal MPs - and we have had six years of a Liberal majority government. How is it possible that with all of those Liberals in the same area, there could not have been a deal made where the federal government came on board to support this ferry? It is unbelievable that that has not happened.

The federal government is also attached to the other ferry services in the province. Somehow, the federal government is not attached to the Yarmouth ferry. It doesn't make any sense. The provincial Liberals and the federal Liberals should be able to recognize the importance of this ferry to regional economic development and contribute to it. It should be a negotiated thing, and our Liberal provincial government needs to start negotiating and start asking for the things we need in this province.

The government has also failed to negotiate with the Town of Bar Harbor. (Interruption) My understanding is that there really was no negotiation when \$8.5 million of our infrastructure money was dedicated to the Town of Bar Harbor or the State of Maine. The government has also not negotiated, as far as we can tell . . . (Interruption) I'm hearing

a lot of feedback from the other side, but guess what? I'm only going by what I don't know because the Liberals don't release any information. I'm using my context clues here folks, the ones you learn about in Grade 5. These are my context clues from all of the pieces of information.

Anyhow, I will reiterate in my comments that the media in the last little while, the questions I have been asked have been, what do you think of this \$8.5 million? That's when I came in on this file in terms of the ferry. I think that's an awful lot of money. It is an awful lot of money to spend when we don't know anything else about what's going on. Suggesting that we shouldn't be running to America with our chequebook open and saying, please let us pay for all of the infrastructure that's going to come to your town - let us take care of it, I'll get the bill, no really, it's my turn - honest to God, saying that is not the same as questioning the importance of the ferry. We're not questioning the importance of the ferry. We're questioning how the ferry is being negotiated.

For the Liberal government to say that one is the same as the other is disingenuous. There are many valid questions the public could have about the way the Liberals have handled this file. The Liberals have yet to adequately justify why it is right for them to withhold the information from the Privacy Commissioner that should be public, that she has said should be public. The public has a right to know how much government subsidy is going toward Bay Ferries.

I'll finish with this really fast - I'm sorry. The government has made no analysis on how to maximize the public benefit we are getting for our public investment. Perhaps we should be insisting on better departure and arrival times. Perhaps we should be insisting that the ferry carry trucks and freight in order to give businesses easy shipping lines to Maine and cover the cost of the trip. Perhaps it would be easier for the province to own and operate the ferry itself. We don't know any of these things because they haven't been examined. How will the move to Bar Harbor impact ticket prices and the number of tourists? We don't know any of this. These are some of the important and legitimate questions we have about the ferry service, which we support.

It's disappointing and telling that, instead of taking these questions and constructive criticisms, there is fearmongering about the ferry.

[5:30 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I thank my two previous colleagues who have spoken today. I'll go over a few of the points that have been brought forward by the Opposition. I don't think I can add an awful lot to what my colleague for Yarmouth has said not only here in the House, but this morning. I cannot say how much I am proud of

the way he represents not only his community, but the Province of Nova Scotia in raising the awareness of this ferry.

I want to bring back, just quickly, in 2012, roughly, I decided that it was time maybe to enter into the world of politics and I put my hand up. So, I was in the middle of when we were experiencing some of the most challenging times with the loss of that ferry in southwestern Nova Scotia. I cannot say how much it made the decision clear to me, when I knew the principle of our Party was to restore that ferry service, in my decision to run. I knew the impact that it was going to have. I have four ferries that serve my community; the Saint John ferry, two down on the Islands, and the Yarmouth ferry. I must say, they're all equally critical to the livelihood of people in our communities.

Today it's difficult to stand up and speak though on another note. We have to be cognizant of the fact that we're here trying to educate people, and that's one of the biggest strengths of a committee, that you get educated. Today was probably, for my colleagues who were there, it was a real eye-opener to hear expert testimony on facts and that's the power.

On the other side it's difficult for me to stand here though, because I hope, and I really do reach out in saying that right now, that our colleagues, our friends in Maine do not hear about the conversation that went on today as rhetoric, that they not hear that conversations that went on today as negative, that they hear that as a government that is committed to that service, that has done everything that it can to make it as successful as it is today and will continue to do that down the road because, Mr. Speaker, that is what is threatening Nova Scotians, it's the rhetoric.

A couple of quick stories. You know, these are ones that never make the media. We hear about the Rodd Grand, we hear about different impacts, but I'm going to give you a couple that touched me when I was out campaigning in 2013. The Gilbert's Cove Lighthouse Society, small group, very beautiful lighthouse if you ever have a chance to visit it - it has a nice little coffee shop there, tee-shirts and stuff like that. When that ferry was cut, they lost 25 per cent of the revenue that they had and were on an unsustainable path in keeping that lighthouse open. It's only because that ferry was resurrected and brought back that that lighthouse is existing today. Those people needed that; our communities need that. That's our heritage.

Another quick little story - I can remember when they painted over the lines where the buses used to park in Digby because, Mr. Speaker, the buses stopped coming. Bus tours look out four to five years when they project, and they continue to do that today. So, when this rhetoric starts and they're looking at three to four years down the road, guess what? They're wondering, are we going to package up this area for our tours? That's important to know. I must also emphasize the fact that not only were those lines painted over, but last year those bus stops were reinstated in Digby. Again, another story that you don't hear an awful lot of.

Today's conversation in the committee that we heard this morning, the question that I wanted to get to was around management fees. We've heard some interesting queries about management fees here already. Management fees are charged to a lot of entities in Nova Scotia. They're charged to private nursing home operators - or not charged but they're part of their business package and the confidentiality of them. They are part of road builders, they are part of other ferries believe it or not, in this province, outside of the Nova Scotia to Maine one. Why aren't we questioning those ones? I don't think we should be, I think the question is: What is in a management fee?

I asked today in the committee meeting, is it a silver bullet that's given to these operators? Is it a big pile of cash that they just run away with? No, it isn't. It's money that's used by them to operate their businesses. It pays wages within their communities, it pays for health benefits for their employees, it pays for operating their businesses and running the everyday operations they have, and sometimes, if they're lucky, they have enough money left over at the end of the day to make a profit for their shareholders. That's what a management fee is. That management fee is very instrumental to the success of that company. You're not going to let your competitor know exactly how you're going to bid on this; when you start letting management fees go out, you are undermining the economic ability of our local rural companies that exist here in Nova Scotia to go on.

There are three key things that I think we need to focus on when it comes to the Nova Scotia to Maine ferry. One is around the management fees, so a little bit of a Coles Notes on what they are; the second is around the impact to the province and we've heard a lot of that. My colleague from Yarmouth cannot overstate that. I cannot overstate that. Third, the fact of the move to Bar Harbor was a very interesting, in-depth conversation that we had today. Also, about the need and the stability of this industry, and to understand this industry needs to have stability. It needs to be able to have a look down the road - it just isn't operating today, it's operating five years out.

The Portland Terminal was not a sustainable route. It has been a challenge from day one. It's one of the most valuable pieces of property in downtown Portland and the challenges for a commuter ferry from Nova Scotia to continue to keep access with that piece of property was very difficult. We are very fortunate to have had a company that understood and saw that. We're very fortunate, also, to have a company that had a relationship in Bar Harbor.

They talk about not asking Bar Harbor for money. That was unequivocally denied and said as a falsehood by the CEO of Bay Ferries today, Mark MacDonald; that yes, it was part of the conversation.

It was also testimony from our key people that we have within TIR, that this is always part of it. How we are going to get, believe it or not, money back from our capital investments when we meet a certain target. So, there are indicators in there where we're going to be able to get investments back.

The fact that they say they weren't asked is not true. This is the problem sometimes we as politicians face, is getting all the information. That's why sometimes late debate is a good thing and I must commend them on that.

A few last points that I want to really touch on. One is around the Information and Privacy Commissioner. My colleague from Yarmouth, during Public Accounts Committee, questioned the Information and Privacy Commissioner on whether there was an economic impact scan made when decisions were made of those sorts of things. The answer was no, there was not. And that is the problem that we have. Any time an official makes a statement, they need to understand the full scope of the impact of what they're saying, on the economic impact of this.

This is about the economy of rural Nova Scotia is what we're talking about here today. This is about moving us forward as a province. This is about rural economic development, period.

It concerns me an awful lot that we sometimes can easily jump at that as an opportunity to pick at and I, as a member of rural Nova Scotia, will not accept it. And I will not put up with it any more.

I asked one pointed question at the very end, I was very fortunate to be able to ask the last question at the end, and that question was pointed directly at Michele Saran and the CEO of Tourism Nova Scotia.

We only had a minute to ask the question and I only have a minute to explain it. I wanted to know from her perspective, who monitors the impact of tourism in Nova Scotia, not just Yarmouth and the South Shore; how much it affected, or could affect and would affect, the impact of tourism in Nova Scotia of negative rhetoric and inaccurate information on that ferry service on Nova Scotians and she said, it is concerning. It definitely would be something that would hit us.

Everybody needs to keep that in mind. I hope that we're going to, eventually at the end of this day, have a better understanding of what that ferry means to Nova Scotia and I'm very proud of the support that we have on this side of the House to continue to see that go on.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much for all those thoughtful comments. The time allotted for late debate has now expired.

The House is adjourned until tomorrow at 1:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 5:40 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 856**

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 February 19, 2019, will always be remembered as a sad day for all Nova Scotians as we woke to the tragic news of a house fire that claimed the lives of seven beautiful Syrian children of a family that recently immigrated to Canada; and

Whereas there are no words to describe how deeply and profoundly this catastrophic event touched the community, nor words to describe the pain and heartache felt by so many people; and

Whereas in loving memory of the seven Barho children who lost their lives, Sharon Kinsman, an active and caring community-minded resident, set into motion to organize a public event on fire prevention to educate our community on fire safety measures so we never have to experience the horrendous heartache like the lost of the Barho children;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Sharon Kinsman for her care and concern for educating and protecting her community.

RESOLUTION NO. 857

By: Kim Masland (Queens-Shelburne)

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

Whereas I congratulate Elizabeth Cromwell, founding member and president of the Black Loyalist Heritage Society, on her investiture into the Order of Canada on November 20, 2018, by the Governor General of Canada; and

Whereas she was instrumental in establishing the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre, a museum housing artifacts, stories and the collective history of the Black Loyalists in Canada; and

Whereas the Order of Canada is one of Canada's highest honours, recognizing outstanding achievement, dedication to the community and service to the nation;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Elizabeth Cromwell on this tremendous achievement.

RESOLUTION NO. 858

By: Kim Masland (Queens-Shelburne)

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

Whereas I congratulate the Town of Shelburne on being awarded the 2018 Creative Nova Scotia Community Arts and Culture Recognition Award at their Awards Gala on November 10, 2018; and

Whereas among the many ways Shelburne has introduced art into the town in 2018 are a sculpture series of two-foot-high people in various poses, a bust of town mascot "Bruce the Moose," an ornamental cemetery gate, and a large Mi'kmaq carving, plus many other art events and contests;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Town of Shelburne and the art community on receiving this award and look forward to seeing what creative ideas they have planned for 2019.

RESOLUTION NO. 859

By: Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

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

Whereas Anita Loretta Roberts of Port Hawkesbury deserves all the respect and honour we have to give for a life that touched so many people and left a lasting impression on her family and community; and

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 860

By: Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

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

Whereas Catherine Anne (MacDonald) Stone, RN, of Port Hawkesbury deserves all the respect and honour we have to give for a life that touched so many people and left a lasting impression on her family and community; and

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

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly honour and commemorate the life of Catherine Anne (MacDonald) Stone, RN, having her name forever written as historical record in the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly.

RESOLUTION NO. 861

By: Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

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

Whereas Gerard William Dort of Port Hawkesbury/Lochside deserves all the respect and honour we have to give for a life that touched so many people and left a lasting impression on his family and community; and

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 862

By: Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

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

Whereas Joseph William “Willie” Marchand of Louisdale deserves all the respect and honour we have to give for a life that touched so many people and left a lasting impression on his family and community; and

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

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly honour and commemorate the life of Joseph William “Willie” Marchand, having his name forever written as historical record in the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly.

RESOLUTION NO. 863

By: Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

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

Whereas Laurie Ann Samson of Arichat deserves all the respect and honour we have to give for a life that touched so many people and left a lasting impression on her family and community; and

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 864

By: Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

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

Whereas Leona Mae Peddle of Potlotek deserves all the respect and honour we have to give for a life that touched so many people and left a lasting impression on her family and community; and

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 865

By: Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 866

By: Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

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

Whereas Chad Christopher Landry of River Bourgeois deserves all the respect and honour we have to give for a life that touched so many people and left a lasting impression on his family and community; and

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 867

By: Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

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

Whereas Dan John “Stewart” MacDonald of West Bay deserves all the respect and honour we have to give for a life that touched so many people and left a lasting impression on his family and community; and

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

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly honour and commemorate the life of Dan John “Stewart” MacDonald, having his name forever written as historical record in the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly.

RESOLUTION NO. 868

By: Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

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

Whereas Dorothy Rose Shears of Port Hawkesbury deserves all the respect and honour we have to give for a life that touched so many people and left a lasting impression on her family and community; and

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 869

By: Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

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

Whereas Florence Josephine Morgan of Cleveland deserves all the respect and honour we have to give for a life that touched so many people and left a lasting impression on her family and community; and

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 870

By: Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

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

Whereas Francis Joseph “Cooke” Cooke of Louisdale deserves all the respect and honour we have to give for a life that touched so many people and left a lasting impression on his family and community; and

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 871

By: Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

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

Whereas Shirley Jane Hillier of Martinique deserves all the respect and honour we have to give for a life that touched so many people and left a lasting impression on her family and community; and

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. 872

By: Alana Paon (Cape Breton-Richmond)

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

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

Whereas Roderick Albert “Rock’n Roddy” Boudreau of L’Ardoise deserves all the respect and honour we have to give for a life that touched so many people and left a lasting impression on his family and community; and

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

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly honour and commemorate the life of Roderick Albert “Rock’n Roddy” Boudreau, having his name forever written as historical record in the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly.