



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2019

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2019

Sixty-third General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, Brendan Maguire

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition. The operative clause reads as follows:

“We, the undersigned, call on the provincial government to immediately address this differential treatment of income by changing ESIA policy so that all employment related income, including earnings from self-employment and EI, be treated the same as employment income from other sources.”

There are 231 signatures affixed on this, and I have affixed my own.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Pictou East.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, may I have permission to make an introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

TIM HOUSTON: In the gallery today, we have Dave and Carrol Chisholm, members of Pictou East, strong community supporters, sometimes community activists when they need to be. They have spent countless hours and driven countless kilometres talking to their friends and neighbours about the need for an additional exit along Highway No. 104, particularly since this is the time to do it, with twinning coming.

Thank you for your efforts for the community. Please stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

TIM HOUSTON: I beg leave to introduce a petition which reads:

“We the citizens of District 1 are concerned for the limited access to the new proposed highway. The distance between Sutherland’s River and Barney’s River is 21.5 KM. This distance is 72% longer than the average distance between all exists [sic] from Halifax to Sutherland’s River and 34% longer than the longest distance of Exit 18A Mount Thom to Exit 19 Salt Springs West River.”

The operative clause reads: that the province consider adding the missing Exit 28 to provide accessibility to the communities of the old Trunk 4 highway.

The petition has 472 signatures, and I have affixed my signature to it.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park on an introduction.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: I would like to bring the members’ attention to the East Gallery where we have with us today Franco Fitzgerald.

He is a neighbour, community volunteer, and wonderful friend. Franco is actually the grandson of the late Walter Fitzgerald, a former mayor of Halifax, whom I knew as a child as being a compassionate and kind and caring man - I’m very proud to say that his grandson carries on all of those qualities as well.

I would have him stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS****STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS****GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 873

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

Whereas February 11, 2019, marked the 200th anniversary of Province House; and

Whereas in recognition of the 200th anniversary, the House of Assembly commissioned Symphony Nova Scotia to compose a fanfare for the occasion; and

Whereas the new composition, written by symphony musician Christopher Palmer, was premiered at a concert on February 7, 2019, at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium;

Therefore be it resolved that this House recognize composer Christopher Palmer for a stirring and dignified Fanfare for Province House and extend our thanks and appreciation to Symphony Nova Scotia for their contribution toward the celebration of the 200th anniversary.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Gaelic Affairs.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

RANDY DELOREY: Joining us in the Speaker's Gallery we have Abby and Ella Hanson, two Nova Scotian Gaelic learners who have developed a program designed to educate and share Gaelic culture expression through the province.

Also, I believe Reverend Ivan Gregan, who is a United Church minister, is with them today. Reverend Gregan actually has a connection to this Legislature, and that is he actually married the Speaker and his wife, Stephanie, back in 1999 or thereabouts.

If they would rise and receive the warm welcome of the Legislature. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Gaelic Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 874

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

Whereas Suas Leis a' Ghàidhlig is a Gaelic language and cultural program developed by Abby and Ella Hanson, two dedicated, energetic, and community-focused young Nova Scotia Gaels who are Gaelic learners and sharers of Gaelic cultural expressions; and

Whereas from September 2017 to February 2019, Abby and Ella have presented Suas Leis a' Ghàidhlig to 45 public schools in 215 classes, totalling 4,500 students in the province; and

Whereas Suas Leis a' Ghàidhlig provides Gaelic language and cultural demonstrations, assists educators who are unfamiliar with Nova Scotia's Gaels and Gaelic language and culture in the provincial context, and provides guidance to educators on Gaelic language and cultural resources that may be utilized in the classroom;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Abby and Ella Hanson for their passion, commitment, and perseverance in raising greater awareness, appreciation, and understanding of Nova Scotia Gaels to thousands of students in our province's public schools.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, may I make an introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

TONY INCE: Joining us in the East Gallery today are family members and a delegate of the Jeannine Deveau Scholarship. I would ask them to stand as I read their names to receive the warm welcome of the House: Mr. Bill Gunn, fund administrator and nephew; Ms. Jeanine Gunn, known as the favourite niece; and Ms. Wendy Langley, Director of Development at St. F.X. University.

I would ask that we give them the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 875

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

Whereas Jeannine Deveau, a St. Francis Xavier University alumna from the Class of 1944, created an educational endowment, currently valued at over \$6 million for Indigenous and African Nova Scotian students to help make post-secondary education at St. F.X. University more accessible through scholarships and bursaries and additional support for student services; and

Whereas the Jeannine Deveau Education Equity Fund helps bridge the educational achievement gap which, unfortunately, is a reality in many of our communities across the province; and

Whereas our government believes a prosperous economic future depends on supporting the next generation and ensures that all people, from all races and all cultures, see themselves reflected in the institutions that help shape our province;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating all students, current and past, totalling over 60 students, who have earned the Jeannine Deveau Scholarship and bursaries for their hard work shown towards their

studies and applaud Jeannine Deveau for giving individuals the power to transform their lives.

[1:15 p.m.]

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw your attention and that of my colleagues to the East Gallery, à la Galerie Est, where we have with us today Marie-Claude Rioux, Directrice générale de la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse; Julie Oliver, Directrice générale du Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse; Allister Surette, Recteur et vice-chancelier de l'Université Sainte-Anne; et Emmanuel Nahimana, Gestionnaire de projet de l'Immigration Francophone Nouvelle-Écosse.

Ce groupe représente certains des intervenants de la communauté acadienne et francophone qui ont été consultés lors de la rédaction du Plan d'action pour l'immigration francophone et qui feront partie intégrante de sa mise en œuvre. This group represents a number of the Acadian and Francophone communities that have been consulted and helped us in drafting the Francophone Immigration Action Plan, and they will be integral in its implementation. Je demande tous ces invités spéciaux à se lever, et je demande à mes collègues de leur donner un accueil très chaleureux. Please give them the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.

RESOLUTION NO. 876

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

Attendu que la Nouvelle-Écosse abrite la plus ancienne communauté acadienne et francophone du Canada, et que celle-ci constitue une composante essentielle de notre patrimoine et de notre identité provinciaux; et

Attendu que ce 20 mars, Journée internationale de la Francophonie, cette province a lancé un plan d'action sur l'immigration francophone, fruit d'une collaboration entre l'Office de l'immigration de la Nouvelle-Écosse, l'Office des affaires acadiennes et Francophonie, et les partenaires communautaires; et

Attendu que nos communautés et nos intervenants acadiens et francophones - incluant la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse, l'Université Sainte-Anne, et d'autres incluant nos municipalités, universités, collèges, employeurs et citoyens - feront partie intégrante de la mise en œuvre du plan d'immigration francophone;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les membres de l'Assemblée législative se joignent à moi pour continuer à soutenir nos communautés et nos organisations acadiennes et francophones dans leurs efforts pour renforcer la culture acadienne et la langue française de notre province, y compris par l'immigration francophone.

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

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

Whereas Nova Scotia is home to the oldest Acadian and francophone community in Canada, an essential part of our provincial heritage and identity; and

Whereas on March 20th, International Francophonie Day, this province launched an action plan on francophone immigration that is the result of collaboration between the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie, and community partners; and

Whereas our Acadian and Francophone communities and stakeholders including Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Université Sainte-Anne and others including our municipalities, universities, colleges, employers and citizens will be integral in implementing the Francophone Immigration Plan;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in continuing to support our Acadian and francophone communities and organizations, in their work to strengthen our province's Acadian culture and French language, including francophone immigration.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

Just before we move on to Introduction of Bills, the Clerk has brought to my attention the petition that was accepted and tabled earlier by the honourable member for Pictou East.

Unfortunately, it does not meet the formatting standards as it does not contain an actual ask of the government. So, unfortunately, we'll have to return this petition back to the member for Pictou East.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

KARLA MACFARLANE: If I could please have the members' attention to the West Gallery. I have some incredible friends and ladies that have been working a lot longer and harder on a bill that I am about to introduce, and I would like to introduce them. I will ask them to stand and remain standing when I call their names; Dayle Collicutt, anti-poverty advocate; Jodi Brown, anti-poverty advocate; Hayley MacPhail, women's rights advocate; and, Kristen Hollery, who is the director of St. Paul's Family Resources Institute. I would like the members of this House to give them a warm welcome for attending today. (Applause)

Bill No. 126 – Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 27 of the Acts of 2000. The Employment Support and Income Assistance Act, Respecting Feminine Hygiene Products. (Karla MacFarlane)

Bill No. 127 – Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 27 of the Acts of 2000. The Employment Support and Income Assistance Act, Respecting Post-secondary Education Programs. (Lenore Zann)

Bill No. 128 – Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 27 of the Acts of 2000. The Employment Support and Income Assistance Act, Respecting Dignity and Respect for Seniors. (Susan Leblanc)

Bill No. 129 – Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 27 of the Acts of 2000. The Employment Support and Income Assistance Act, Respecting Employment Insurance Protection. (Susan Leblanc)

Bill No. 130 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 27 of the Acts of 2000. The Employment Support and Income Assistance Act, Respecting Dignity and Respect for Persons with Disabilities. (Susan Leblanc)

Bill No. 131 – Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 27 of the Acts of 2000. The Employment Support and Income Assistance Act, to Protect Children’s Benefits. (Susan Leblanc)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENT BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

STEWART, KADE: RCMP TRAINING ACADEMY - RECOG.

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, this week Liverpool Regional High School Grade 12 student Kade Stewart is spending time at the RCMP Training Academy in Regina, Saskatchewan.

Kade was chosen from 130 applicants to attend the Academy during National Youth Engagement Week.

During this event, elect students from across Canada will experience what life is like living as a police cadet - interacting with officers from various RCMP units and

actively participating in physical fitness drills, driving simulations, police defence tactics, and much more.

Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to recognize Kade for receiving this special honour and wish him all the best at the Academy this week. This opportunity was well-earned by this fine young man. Congratulations, Kade.

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

FIRTH, SCOTT: TIER 1 SOCCER, HFX. WANDERERS - CONGRATS.

BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Fall River's Scott Firth on being the first local player to sign with the Halifax Wanderers. The Lockview High student was excited to sign a contract with the Canadian Premier League - a professional, Tier 1 soccer league.

The Halifax Wanderers will be one of seven teams that will compete in the inaugural season and will hold the opening game on May 4th in Halifax. It has been a dream of Scott's to play professional soccer, but he did not imagine that it would be in his home town.

Madam Speaker, I ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating Scott on being a member of the newly-formed HFX Wanderers, and wish him and the team much success in their inaugural season.

[1:30 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: And happy birthday to the member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank. (Applause)

The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

D'ENTREMONT, ROGER: BIRTHDAY/RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madame la Présidente, le 1^{er} avril, 2019, Roger d'Entremont, directeur général du Village historique acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse, célébra non seulement son anniversaire mais également son départ et sa retraite.

Après avoir quitté une carrière avec MT&T, Roger s'est joint à l'équipe du village comme directeur exécutif, où il a contribué avec succès à mettre en valeur la richesse de la culture acadienne, à promouvoir des changements positifs dans la communauté, et à augmenter le nombre de visiteurs au centre depuis les dernières 12 années.

J'aimerais féliciter Roger d'Entremont pour son dévouement et son bon travail comme directeur général du Village historique acadienne, et nous lui souhaitons une bonne retraite et un joyeux anniversaire.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

ESIA PRGMS.: SUBSTANTIAL INCREASES - DELIVER

SUSAN LEBLANC: Madam Speaker, many of the people I serve in my constituency office are recipients of income-support programs provided by the Department of Community Services. Each one of them has a different story of how they found themselves using these programs, and each has had different experiences with the system.

What all of these community members have in common, however, is that they do not have enough money at the end of the month to make ends meet. My community's most vulnerable people have been told to wait for transformation of the ESIA program, wait for the standard household rate, and wait for the round of rent supplements that are promised in this budget.

Madam Speaker, if and when all of these things happen for a person - and we know now, for instance, that the wait is still nine months away for a paltry 2 to 5 per cent increase in assistance - the person would still be very poor. Even if all the changes happen, the person will likely still have to use a food bank, will still have very limited housing options, and will likely live in a place with mould problems, drafty windows, or pests.

I call on the government to take stock of the reality of the lowest-income people in this province, to acknowledge that its current policies and values are keeping people poor, and to make substantial increases to the ESIA program so that the most vulnerable people have what they need to live

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. Time is well elapsed.

The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville.

HAMMONDS PLAINS COM. CTR.: 80th ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

BEN JESSOME: Madam Speaker, I'd like to recognize the Hammonds Plains Community Centre. The building dates back to 1939, when it was built as a two-room schoolhouse. In 1969, it was converted into a community hall. It has been a mainstay of the community for 80 years.

Community dances, weddings, fundraisers, and other rentals are still a huge part of the centre. Hammonds Plains Heritage Day in August and a community tree-lighting in

December are both times to come together as a community. These are two notable events that happen annually.

The Hammonds Plains Community Centre association continues to work to preserve and build upon the proud history of the hall. Upgrades have been ongoing and continue to keep this valuable part of the community up to date.

I ask all members of the House of Assembly to please congratulate the Hammonds Plains Community Centre on 80 years in our community.

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

MERRY, NIC - ENTREPRENEUR: GEEBO - CONGRATS.

BARBARA ADAMS: Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize the ingenuity of one young man: Nic Merry, the founder of Geebo Device Repair. Nic's success story began in junior high school, when he would offer to fix the phones and screens of his classmates in exchange for something from Tim Hortons. It was in an entrepreneurial class in Grade 11 at Cole Harbour High School that Nic came up with a business plan.

His company has grown from his parents' living room in Eastern Passage to his grandmother's basement to six Geebo locations across the province. Nic's company has continued to grow, and he is currently looking into franchise opportunities for locations outside of our province.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in congratulating Nic Merry on his entrepreneurial spirit. We wish him the best in the future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

BLAIS, INGRID: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

KEITH IRVING: Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and thank a remarkable person from Wolfville on her retirement. For 34 years, Ingrid Blais has worked with L'Arche and lived a life in the footsteps of its founder, the humanitarian Jean Vanier.

As the L'Arche Homefires director for the past 20 years, Ingrid has supported a community of remarkable people who inspire us through their work, their love, and their hugs. Ingrid's tireless advocacy for persons with disabilities has also resulted in the growth of L'Arche in Wolfville so much that a new L'Arche home was opened on Main Street last year.

Ingrid has exemplified the best of what leadership and advocacy can do for our communities. She has built partnerships, developed a network of volunteers, guided staff,

and brought citizens together to learn from each other. I ask all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in thanking Ingrid Blais for a lifetime of extraordinary service and wishing her all the best in her retirement and the next chapter of her life.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

ISAAC FRASER FUND: HOME ACCESSIBILITY - THANKS

KARLA MACFARLANE: Madam Speaker, I recently attended a very inspiring event at the Hector Arena in Pictou, where Isaac Fraser dropped the puck for the opening faceoff of a local hockey tournament. Isaac was born with a rare form of muscular dystrophy. Despite his challenging disability, he always remains positive and upbeat. Mobility issues with this disease are at the forefront.

The Fraser family lives in a home that is unfortunately not accessible. With the help of a GoFundMe page, which has collected over \$6,000 and the collection from a hockey tournament, we received \$1,000. The Fraser family will remain in their soon-to-be accessible home.

I am very proud and thankful to all who have supported sweet Isaac.

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

TRAIN STN. BIKE & BEAN: BUS. SUCCESS - CONGRATS.

HUGH MACKAY: Madam Speaker. I want to thank the Train Station Bike & Bean, a café and bike shop located in the historic French Village Train Station in Upper Tantallon, for graciously permitting me to hold my monthly meet and greet with the constituents of Chester-St. Margaret's.

Not only is the Train Station Bike & Bean a great local gathering place, it is perfectly situated along the Rails to Trails running between Halifax and the South Shore. Cyclists, ATV riders, and hikers can meet at the Bean before or after their trip around Peggy's Cove or the Aspotogan loops.

Those who are less actively ambitious can wait for their more energetic friends with a good book, a latté, and a delicious snack in the comfortable historic surroundings of the café. Expert cyclers as well as families who want to explore a safe, secure bike ride can consult with the bike shop's dedicated staff, discuss bike tour opportunities, sales, rentals, and service.

I invite the members of this House of Assembly to congratulate Dan Flinn of the Train Station Bike & Bean and his successful business staff, and to wish them well in their future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

POTHoles: 'TIS THE SEASON - BEWARE

HON. PAT DUNN: Madam Speaker, Spring has finally sprung and with that comes the unofficial start to pothole season. The reasonably warm days and overnight freezing recently have been the perfect recipe for potholes. Unfortunately, with all the right conditions, they can occur overnight.

Local mechanics will tell you that tire and rim repair becomes quite common every Spring. During this time of year, road crews use a cold mix which, at best, is only temporary. Once the asphalt plants open, crews will be using a hot mix. It is the norm to repair potholes on major roads before secondary roads are repaired.

In the meantime, drivers must be acutely aware of the potential danger and slow down to avoid the expense of replacing punctured tires or bent rims.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

ESPINO-BURCHELL, HELEN: COM. SERV. - CONGRATS.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a woman who has made a tremendous difference in the community of Clayton Park West.

Helen Espino-Burchell is a creator of the Filipino Language and Culture Program. Helen served as the president of the Novo Essi-hano Society of Nova Scotia and is a co-founder of Team Three Music Entertainment, a group that creates events, live entertainment, and music for the community. Helen organized a fundraiser to help Super Typhoon Haiyan victims and was able to raise approximately \$11,000 that was sent to the Philippines in 2013.

Helen loves to get the youth involved in the community in community initiatives. Her motto is: be the change, lead, and make a difference. Would this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Helen on her many accomplishments and volunteerism.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

BOYS/GIRLS CLUB: TEACHING LIFE SKILLS - THANKS

TIM HALMAN: Today I would like to recognize the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Halifax, East Dartmouth site. The club is a fantastic resource for parents with children in Primary to Grade 6. They offer a morning program between 7:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. where children can work on quiet activities, such as puzzles, games, and drawing, until their school day starts.

After school, until 6:00 p.m., children can experience a multitude of programs, ranging from physical activity to cooking, arts and crafts, reading, and leadership.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank chair Shelley Alward-MacLeod, vice-chair Amy Bragg, secretary Mark MacDonald, and all directors of the club for running a first-class operation and providing young children with viable, life-learning skills.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

CLEVELAND, DARRELL: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Madam Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to send my heartfelt condolences to the Cleveland family from Herring Cove on the passing of their loving husband, father, and grandfather: Darrell Cleveland.

On a personal note, Darrell was always there to chat with me, whether it was in the local store, on the street, or in church on Sunday, and give me great advice. I will miss his advice, his handshake, and his smile.

Madam Speaker, to the Cleveland family, Sheila, Sheldon, Lauren, and Ryan, I send my love. Their family, our community, lost a great man.

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

UNITED CHURCH WOMEN'S GRP.: BREAD NOT STONES - COMMEND

LARRY HARRISON: In light of the recent report indicating that Nova Scotia has the highest child poverty rate in Canada, I want to draw attention to the Bread not Stones initiative of the United Church of Canada to eliminate child poverty in Canada.

The United Church Women's Group presented me with some handmade fabric dolls. These dolls, as well as paper dolls and communications, are all symbols for a campaign to raise awareness that hundreds of thousands of children in our country live in poverty. Although they are aiming for a nation-wide strategy to eliminate child poverty, I am hoping we can become leaders by implementing a provincial strategy.

I'd like to commend the United Church Women's Group for their efforts in bringing awareness to this devastating issue.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

ESIA PETITION: COM. AWARENESS - INCREASING

LISA ROBERTS: I would like to share my experience of canvassing with the petition that was tabled earlier by my colleague, the member for Dartmouth North. It asks for the province to stop the practice of clawing back income assistance benefits from employment insurance and self-employment income.

It was not the easiest petition to canvass with. Often, I had to explain to people more than once what the current practice is, which is that if a person works, certainly part time, because they are on income assistance, maybe they have a disability, but consistently and for long enough paying into employment insurance and then they lose that job and they get EI, they actually don't get a red cent. One-hundred per cent of their EI benefits are subtracted from their income assistance cheque.

Before this happened to a constituent who lost his job of six years, I did not know that it was our practice. Most people who signed did not know, but once we knew we also knew that it was wrong.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

SEDNA TECH.: NEW BUS. ENDEAVOUR - CONGRATS.

HON. MARK FUREY: I rise today to recognize Aleksandr Stabenow of LaHave and his business partner, Sheamus MacDonald, co-founder of Sedna Technologies. Sedna is one of the 17 new technology companies selected last November for Innovacorp's 2018 Accelerate and Start-Up Yard programs.

As participants of this program, Sedna, a fisheries technology firm, is receiving \$50,000 to grow the business, in addition to coaching from seasoned business professionals and access to incubation space. Sedna's technology uses sensors and software to track, trace, and monitor seafood from catch to plate. It monitors the conditions of harvests to reduce waste and bring a higher quality product to the market. It pinpoints problem areas before issues occur.

Aleksandr and Sheamus hope their seafood tracking technology will become the industry standard to help exporters reduce waste and improve accountability.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in congratulating Aleksandr Stabenow and Sheamus MacDonald, a pair of young Nova Scotia-based entrepreneurs, for this outstanding achievement and wish them all the best with their future endeavours.

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

[1:45 p.m.]

DONKIN CITIZENS BRASS BAND: 100th ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: I rise today to acknowledge the Donkin Citizens Brass Band, which will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in July 2019. The band had its start July 22, 1919, when a group of five men discussing music at the corner of South and West Streets decided to organize a band.

The original name for the band was the Dominion Number 6 Silver Band. Under the leadership of Michael MacDonald, its first public appearance was on Christmas Day 1919 at Schooner Pond Dam with 17 brass instruments. This was just the start of a long and illustrious career. The band developed into a reputable musical organization known throughout the country.

Over the years, the band have received numerous awards, have played in Louisbourg during the Bicentenary celebrations in 1958, were in the movie *The Bay Boy*, and continue to play at Remembrance Day celebrations.

I stand today as the band enters their 10th decade of entertaining. It should be noted that they have named their first female band president, Charlene Reid, who has been a member for over 30 years. Congratulations to all.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

LILL, WENDY: PRODUCTION, *THE FIGHTING GAME* - THANKS

CLAUDIA CHENDER: As yesterday was World Theatre Day, I rise to recognize celebrated playwright and former Member of Parliament Wendy Lill and her production at the Dartmouth Players. Tonight is the opening night of *The Fighting Days*, which chronicles the relationship between newspaper editor Francis Marion Beynon and famed suffragette Nellie McClung.

This story of the Canadian suffragette movement captures a pivotal historical moment while allowing the audience a peek inside the intricacies of friendship. Beynon and McClung struggle to navigate their relationship as they're both united in, and divided by, their political beliefs.

Thank you to the Dartmouth Players for the brilliant and timely community theatre they bring to Dartmouth, and to Wendy Lill for capturing this story.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

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

THE SPEAKER: Granted.

LENA METLEGE DIAB: With us in the East Gallery is a former Page of this historic Legislature, who is also a former constituency assistant of mine, Peter Efthymiadis. Peter, please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

EFTHYMIADIS, PETER: HALITECTURE - CONGRATS.

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: I rise to congratulate Peter Efthymiadis on the success of his business, Halitecture Photography. Peter's always had a passion for the history and unique beauty of our city, and with Halitecture, he's turning his colourful and captivating shots of notable local buildings into lovely souvenir cards and prints. His first publication, *Dalitecture*, is a souvenir book showcasing the architecture of Dalhousie University. It's now available through the university's bookstore and is sure to conjure fond memories for fellow Dal alumni and others.

I'm pleased to say that on this historic 200th anniversary year, Peter was commissioned to produce a souvenir photobook of Province House, which launched this month.

I encourage members to discover Peter's work on his Instagram account, @halitecture, and join me in wishing him continued success with his work and future endeavours.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

WOHLMUTH, STEVE: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

JOHN LOHR: Steve Wohlmuth of Port Williams passed away suddenly at home on Sunday, March 24th. He was an outstanding teacher and had taught at Central Kings Rural High School for 27 years. He was named the NSTU Teacher of the Year and Canadian Geographic Teacher of the Month.

Steve organized school-supply drives to support the Ifumbo Primary School in Malawi for the last 12 years. He led many class trips. He was the head coach and founder of Launchers Athletics and the Launch Pad in Port Williams. He helped develop many athletes in javelin, shot put, and discus. He was also a head coach to numerous Nova Scotia and Canadian track and field teams. Steve organized the Throw for Autism and Team Heidi, raising thousands of dollars for the Acadia S.M.I.L.E. Program and the Valley Chapter of Autism Nova Scotia.

Madam Speaker, this is a great loss to our community. I ask that all members join me in offering our deepest sympathies to the Central Kings and Port Williams communities, and especially to Steve's wife, Valerie, and children Kaitlyn, Heidi, and Edmund.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

NORTHSIDE SPORTS HALL OF FAME: NEW INDUCTEES - CONGRATS.

EDDIE ORRELL: I rise today to salute the inductees to the Northside Sports Hall of Fame: Norman Ross, tennis; Spencer Pye, bodybuilding; Bernard Blinkhorn, horseshoe; Hugh Gillis, track and field; Paddy Ryan, hockey; Gordie Purchase, as a builder in the bowling category; the 1982-83 Memorial High hockey teams, and Joe Peck for a significant contribution to sport in the community. These individuals made their community proud and the recognition is more than deserving.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Northside Sports Hall of Fame for this honour and as a member of the Memorial hockey team, congratulate all the inductees.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

MACTAVISH, LOUISE: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Louise MacTavish, an exemplary lifeguard and aquatics instructor in Greenwood and wish her well as she enters retirement. For 56 years, Louise dedicated her life to the Greenwood swimming pools, making quite a splash as she developed her extensive and impressive resume in aquatics.

Having begun lifeguarding in 1962 at the outdoor pool in Greenwood, Louise was recently recognized by the Nova Scotia Lifesaving Society as the oldest-serving lifeguard in Canada. She continually instilled the passion, importance, and responsibility of lifeguarding with others as she taught over 200 lifeguards and instructors, as well as over 60 water-safety and first-aid courses. There is no doubt that her dedication has led to the saving of lives.

I ask that all members of this House join me in recognizing the accomplishments, dedication of Louise MacTavish and extend well wishes as she formally retires from the Greenwood pools.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ADAMS, JAKE: SNOWBOARD, CAN. WINTER GAMES - CONGRATS.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Madam Speaker, today I'd like to recognize Jake Adams of Amherst. He's a 16-year-old young man who competed in the Canada Winter Games in Alberta for snowboarding. Jake has been interested in snowboarding since he was five-years-old. He is always looking to improve his skills and saw this as an opportunity to better himself and compete with his peers. Jake competed in a limited timed event that judged his technical skills.

I am proud of Jake for achieving this level of expertise. We know to get to this level of achievement, one must persevere and be dedicated with training and self-discipline. Please join me in congratulating Jake and his proud family on his participation in the Canada Winter Games.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

**ROBINSON, ANDREAS:
SUPPORTING YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS - CONGRATS.**

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Mr. Andreas Robinson, founder and CEO of Infinitus Academy, who knows the benefits of education, hard work and dreaming big. He developed Infinitus as an action brand that provides such services as curriculum development, facilitation, consulting, events, and speaking engagements. He spent last summer on a scholarship in Jamaica developing a nine-week program to train fourth-year technology students on how to become technical entrepreneurs. He's a double major at the Sobeys School of Business and at St. Mary's University and is currently working on an initiative with Nova Scotia Health and Wellness.

I want to recognize and congratulate Andreas Robinson on his tireless efforts on youth support work.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

PARRSBORO: FIRE RECOVERY FUNDRAISER - CONGRATS.

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the people of Parrsboro, Nova Scotia in organizing fundraisers to help support the staff at the Glooscap Restaurant and Lounge that was destroyed by fire on December 11, 2018.

The people of Parrsboro organized many fundraisers to support the workers of the Glooscap Restaurant and Lounge, including a wing night at the Parrsboro Fire Department, proceeds going directly to 14 employees who are now out of work. An online auction as well as a Go Fund Me page that made more than \$14,000 in four days. The small town of

Parrsboro has shown an outpouring support for their friends and neighbours while they lost their jobs.

Please join me in congratulating the residents of Parrsboro and area on stepping up to fundraise monies to help these families get through the tough time and make an otherwise difficult Christmas a little better. I'm also pleased to announce that owners Amber and Mike Fisher will be rebuilding their fine establishment.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

4-H CLUBS: LEARN TO DO BY DOING - COMMEND

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride today that I bring your attention to the work of 4-H Clubs in Hants East. The 4-H program was founded in Nova Scotia in 1913 and grew across this province and across Canada in the following years. The 4-H is dedicated to young people between the ages of nine and 21 and offers programs to prepare them to be responsible, contributing adults. The 4 Hs stand for head, heart, hands, and health, and their motto is "learn to do by doing."

We are blessed to have three clubs in Hants East: the Shu-Mill Club, the Hardwoodlands Club and the Cobequid Club from the Noel area. With their model as their guiding force, these clubs have been providing opportunities for local youth to learn - with activities like small engine repair, working with animals, public speaking, gardening, cooking, and anything else they can think of. The goal is to encourage all youth to be the best that they can be. They encourage social responsibility by holding food drives for the local food bank and taking part in other charitable efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that 4-H is one of the best programs available to our youth today, and as a founding Shu-Mil member, I would like to say thank you.

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

RAFTUS, MANDY: MULTICULTURAL POTLUCKS - THANKS

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Mandy Raftus of Eastern Passage, Nova Scotia, for her vision to bring together the many cultures that make up the Eastern Passage and surrounding communities.

Mandy brought community members together through our first annual MLA Multicultural Potluck Dinner. The dinner food dishes were fabulous and many of those who attended even wore attire of their own culture.

The entertainment was nothing short of amazing. We had Scottish Highland Dancers Dianna Hazelton, Katy Singleton, Machara MacNeil and Hillary Davis; we had

African Drummers Samuel, Eugene, Mercy, Goodness, Enie and Olugu; and we had bagpipe performer Tyler Cameron. There were representatives of the Jewish Association of Nova Scotia, the Pakistani Canadian Association of Nova Scotia, and information tables from Communities, Culture and Heritage and Pier 21.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the whole House to join me in thanking Mandy Raftus and the team of volunteers who worked together with her for the first of many multicultural potluck dinners.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

WHITEHOUSE, HELEN: VOLUN. OF THE YR. - CONGRATS.

SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Helen Whitehouse, who has recently been named the Town of Mahone Bay Provincial Volunteer of the Year for 2019.

Helen has been a dedicated volunteer for over 16 years. Currently, Helen is the president of the Mahone Bay Legion Branch 49 and has held other offices in the past as secretary and treasurer. Helen is in charge of the poppy campaign, bursary awards, and the veterans' assistance programs. Helen is highly involved in the Legions fundraising, and you can find her in the kitchen at the monthly Sunday brunches. Helen moves quietly through the community providing meals, transportation, and moral support to community members.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you and the members of this House of Assembly please join me in congratulating Helen for being named the Town of Mahone Bay Volunteer of the Year 2019.

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

PETERS, KENT: BRAZILIAN JIU-JITSU BLACK BELT - CONGRATS.

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Kent Peters, a resident of Albert Bridge who recently made local martial arts history when he became the first person to receive a Brazilian jiu-jitsu black belt on Cape Breton soil.

Kent, who is 35 years old, was awarded his new rank by world champion Jake MacKenzie after a seminar in Sydney. Kent is a self-taught BJJ practitioner who owns and operates Zombie Proof Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and MMA in Sydney. He now frequently posts short instructional videos on his popular Instagram and YouTube pages.

I stand here to acknowledge Kent Peter's martial arts milestone, and to wish him the very best as he continues to grow his business in Cape Breton.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

MOZAMBIQUE FLOOD: ATTENDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE - DO MORE

LISA ROBERTS: In keeping with my resolution to talk about climate change in this Chamber, I want to draw the attention of my fellow members to Mozambique, where a massive unprecedented flood has certainly claimed more than 1,000 lives.

In the City of Beira, 90 per cent of the structures have been destroyed, and millions are in need of food, water, and shelter. The city had recently invested in new infrastructure to mitigate the effects of floods, but they were no match for a cyclone with 240-kilometre winds.

In this Chamber, the government often talks about Nova Scotia as a leader in greenhouse gas reductions. Let us consider, though, that our per capita emissions are 16.9 tonnes of carbon dioxide. The world average is 6.3 tonnes per capita, and Mozambique emits just 1 tonne per capita of carbon dioxide - one sixteenth that of Nova Scotia.

We can, and we urgently must, raise our ambitions and do more.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much for those member statements today.

[2:00 p.m.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

GOV'T. (N.S.): YAR. FERRY - TOURISM BUDGET

TIM HOUSTON: The province is spending \$22 million this year on Tourism Nova Scotia. There's another \$15 million on the Nova Scotia-to-Maine ferry in the transportation budget. That's \$37 million of tourism-related dollars, so nearly half of our tourism dollars go to the ferry.

We have over 2.4 million visitors to Nova Scotia by all points of entry; we have 50,000 visitors from the ferry. So, we are spending \$15 million to bring in 50,000 people, \$20 million to bring in 2.4 million visitors.

My question for the Premier: Is it the Premier's vision for this province and the future of tourism that half of the visitors to this province will ultimately come via that ferry?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): I want to thank all those in the tourism industry, Mr. Speaker, who have allowed us for the third consecutive year to have a record season in tourism. I also want to thank the people in Yarmouth and surrounding area in southwestern Nova Scotia who have been working very hard to build back the tourism industry and service down there that was devastated, quite frankly, in 2009.

We, as a government, believe that the international link is an important one. We are pleased with the fact that we have a five-year deal now in Bar Harbor. We believe that will provide the stability that is required to continue to reduce the subsidy associated with that ferry. We are committed, Mr. Speaker, to that international link.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, the question was about vision. The answer was not, because there is no vision in how this file is being managed. Think about how good things could be for that region if it had a vision to properly manage and bring people there with that amount of money. That's what is missing here.

There is so little vision of what could be, the members are so restricted in what they think is possible for that region; they need to think big. There is so little vision that under the terms of the contract, the operator can do pretty much whatever they want. I ask the Premier: If that boat doesn't sail, does Bay Ferries still get their management fee?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Mr. Speaker, the vision is the population is at an all-time high in Nova Scotia. The vision is more young people are staying in this province than leaving, for the third consecutive year.

Mr. Speaker, the vision is we've just had a third consecutive year of record tourism numbers. The reality is the vision is that we have a pre-Primary next year that every four-year-old in this province will have access to regardless of the socio-economic circumstances they belong in.

Mr. Speaker, the vision is we have the largest single capital investment in health care in the Capital region in the history of this province.

The vision is in Cape Breton we've just announced a large capital infrastructure in Cape Breton Island. The fact of the matter is, the vision is, we look at this province holistically.

The honourable member looks for a divisive way to divide communities, to try to get cheap political points on the backs of our citizens, Mr. Speaker. It is unacceptable.

That's the lack of vision. That's the lack of courage to stand in his place and tell the honourable member for Argyle-Barrington, he doesn't support the Yarmouth ferry either.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, lack of vision on display - a simple question, don't sail the vessel, still get paid? I want a successful ferry on this route. This is the difference. This Liberal government wants a ferry; I want a successful ferry. That's the difference.

Everything I see from this government, including the fact that the Premier won't answer questions about the contract, confirms that they only want a ferry. We want a successful ferry. We have a vision, they don't.

If the Premier has a vision, I'd like to ask him a simple question: When you pay \$60 million for something over four years, did you at least give the operators some key metrics, so you can judge their activity and hold them accountable? Any key metrics, Premier, or just get it done?

THE SPEAKER: I'd like to remind the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition to direct his questions through the Chair.

THE PREMIER: That's okay, Mr. Speaker, he can continue to yell. I will hear him, it's okay.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is quite frankly, southwestern Nova Scotians continue to see growth. We're continuing to see the investment in the private sector. Those are all positive signs where we see economic growth and job creation in Nova Scotia.

The honourable member again looks for a way to divide communities across this province. He is pitting one community against another. His solution is, Mr. Speaker, let's take the private sector to court. That is one sure way to continue to grow the economy, create jobs, and provide opportunities for our sons and daughters. Talk about lack of vision. It is over there. He wouldn't even show up to work yesterday to ask his questions.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please. I'd just like to remind the honourable Premier it's not proper to reference who is or is not in the House at any given time.

The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party.

GOV'T. (N.S.): NURSING HOME BEDS - SHORTAGE

GARY BURRILL: When this government took office in 2013, there were two years left in the continuing care strategy, which provided for 180 nursing home beds on the South Shore, 42 in the HRM, 12 in Cape Breton, 67 in the Valley, 202 in Pictou, 152 in southwestern Nova Scotia, 99 in Cumberland, and that's just the replacement beds. The plan also called for adding 350 new beds into the system. Mr. Speaker, the Liberals threw that plan aside and none of this took place. Will the Premier acknowledge his plan, by contrast, 89 beds in Mahone Bay and Meteghan and North Sydney and New Waterford,

falls miles short of where we would have been if he followed through on the plan that was given him in the first place?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As he knows, we've committed to providing 60 beds in both New Waterford and Northside. Those are all positive signs. He also knows we're working with components now when they look at expanding existing ones in Mahone Bay. We're hoping to add beds there as well in the one in Meteghan where we are looking at ensuring that we have a cultural component to provide long-term care for citizens in the Acadian community in our province, to continue to support the fine work that's happening by that community. Part of that also will be looking at whether there is there a way to provide small options homes with a culturally-sensitive component that will allow the sons and daughters of our Acadian communities to find and get services in the language of their choice.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, that decision to throw aside the nursing home plan has had such wide-ranging impacts. We can think about Shoreham Village in Chester that was slated for replacement in 2013, but which still has not received it. As a result, today, the pipes are rotting, water is dripping out of the ceiling into the buckets in the hall, the exterior of the building needs serious refurbishment in order to be kept intact. Let me table some pictures of the situation, just in case there is anybody that has any doubt about it. The situation is one of many that has persisted around the province since the continuing care plan was thrown out six years ago, with no commitments made to solve these issues. Let me ask the Premier: Why has he put this wonderful facility and others like it at risk by starving them of maintenance and investment?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member would know we continue to invest in long-term care. We want to thank the hard-working citizens across our province who continue to provide care for our loved ones in communities from one end of Nova Scotia to the other. We're continuing to work with operators to find ways that we continue to invest in our infrastructure at the same time, potentially providing more services in those particular communities, where we continue to add beds, but also have a way for the proponent to actually earn income based on other ways to rent. For example, a family physician could be in one of these facilities, which would allow us to keep the per diem in a way that makes sense for all taxpayers, as well as providing those services in communities and we're going to continue to find solutions as we continue to work ensuring not only do we upgrade the current infrastructure around long-term care but, where appropriate, add beds.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, we should also not overlook the impact of that 2013 decision to throw aside the nursing home plan on alternate level of care patients, themselves, as they wait months and months for placement. These people pay nursing home rates, but they don't receive the care that a nursing home provides. They live in hospitals, which lack the community programs, the recreational programs that every nursing home in Nova Scotia has. Having prepared themselves to move into long-term care, they find

themselves living long times in long-term limbo. Does the Premier not recognize that people wouldn't today be having to go through all this if he had stuck with the nursing home plan that he'd been given?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member knows that prior to the New Democratic Party being defeated in 2013, there were a number of promises and commitments made with no financial ability to pay for them. He would also know that there was a \$600 million deficit left there on an annual basis - the inability not only to invest in long-term care beds or anything else in this province if we'd continued down the economic path they were on.

We'll continue to make those investments. We'll continue to work with our partners to provide the services that Nova Scotians deserve and want in their communities. I'm looking forward to seeing the redevelopment that's going to take place in Northside, as well as in New Waterford, and I hope the honourable member will support that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

TIR: BAR HBR. UPGRADES - MAX. AMT.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Last week, the government announced that they would be spending \$8.5 million on renovations to the port terminal in Bar Harbor. I understand that Bay Ferries negotiated this deal with Bar Harbor on behalf of the province - so it was the private company that was negotiating how to spend Nova Scotian taxpayer dollars and how they would be spent.

I'd like to ask the minister: Was there a maximum amount that the department indicated to Bay Ferries that it would be willing to spend for the upgrades at Bar Harbor, or was it just a blank cheque?

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to be on my feet to talk about the plateau that we have reached in permanently establishing the service between Nova Scotia and Maine. We have a five-year agreement and we are now in a position to stabilize this service, which has been in an unstable situation since it was unceremoniously dumped in 2010, to start with.

My department was regularly informed of the negotiations and the renovations and the cost estimates. We've been a partner to the process all along, and we're very confident that the amount of money that has been designated for this renovation in Bar Harbor reflects the true cost of that project.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, "sustainability" obviously has different ways to be defined in this House.

Two ports in three years, and the thing that can make this service most sustainable is an actual vessel. There are six years left in the contract - one year of a vessel. They don't even know what boat will be in operation one year from now.

We know that the agreement for the current Cat vessel expires this year, and there's no vessel for the year after that. That may be sustainable, but we need an actual vessel. Because of the way the contract is written, and the broad powers that Bay Ferries have to negotiate on behalf of the province, seemingly at any cost, I'd like to ask the minister: What's to stop Bay Ferries from finding a boat that costs \$10 million a year and locking in for that deal, and the taxpayers having to pay for it?

LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. If anybody took the time to read the publicly-available contract, you will find that there are all kinds of provisions in there that prevent the operator from doing anything that we do not approve of.

The vessel is secured for the season before us. We're in absolutely great shape going in. I would just like to point out that there is provision in the contract for no management fees to be paid if the contract is terminated.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

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

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Services. Last year the department made changes to allow income assistance recipients to keep more of what they earn if they work. Those who are fortunate enough to have long-term employment are eligible for EI; however, if they are laid off and receive benefits they have paid into, this money is clawed back at 100 per cent.

When I asked the minister about this in the Fall, she indicated that she would look into it. However, in response to a follow-up letter, the minister said that an exemption of EI earnings was not being considered. I can table that.

Will the minister reconsider and agree to treat EI benefits the same way as employment earnings?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I would like to thank the honourable member for her question. We want all Nova Scotians to enjoy lives involved in their communities and things like that. We want them to have rich lives here in Nova Scotia.

One of the things about income assistance is that it is the program of last resort. When people have other ways of getting support, we do ask them to do that.

[2:15 p.m.]

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, with respect, people living on income assistance, as the minister has referred to, are living in abject poverty and to expect them to have all their EI, which they have paid into, clawed back is simply unreasonable and unfair.

Halifax artist Josh Dunn received a grant from Arts Nova Scotia to make a film that had been years in development. When he told the department that he would be paying himself a small fee out of that grant, the department told him they would be clawing back 100 per cent of that money from his ESIA payment.

If the minister was actually committed to improving the lives of people living on low incomes, then her government would not be using every opportunity possible to take the money away from them.

Will the minister apologize to Mr. Dunn and agree to treat self-employment income the same as other employment earnings?

KELLY REGAN: I thank the honourable member for the question and of course we all should recognize that these particular rules have been in place for many, many years, including the four and a half years that the NDP were in government. (Interruption)

Mr. Speaker, I was kind enough to listen to the honourable member make her statement. I would ask that she would at least allow me to finish my answer without being interrupted.

What I would like the honourable member to know is that, in fact, we are looking at that exact question right now and I expect to have something to announce soon.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

MUN. AFFAIRS - DEED TRANSFER TAX: ELIMINATE - COMMENT

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I think one thing we can all agree on here is that people of Nova Scotia are heavily taxed - the highest in the country, actually.

One tax that could be changed that people believe is an unnecessary tax grab is the deed transfer tax. This tax increases housing costs and the fee cannot be mortgaged; it cannot be included in financing costs. There are really no costs to a municipality in the transfer of a deed other than a small administration expense. The deed transfer tax is a hidden tax that gets lost in a massive expense, yet it is real dollars taken from the pockets of Nova Scotians.

My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs: Has the minister and his government given any consideration to lowering the tax burden on Nova Scotians, and specifically, removing or lowering the deed transfer tax?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: I thank the honourable member for the question. We have continued to support our municipal units who have actual authority - they are their own level of governance. They make these decisions based on taxation for their revenue. It's the stream they have to operate all of the great things that they do in each of their respective municipalities.

With regard to the deed transfer tax, that is part of that collection, but we do support our municipal units through a variety of different grants and will continue to do that in the future.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: The municipalities throughout Nova Scotia have a deed transfer tax of about 1.5 per cent. On the sale of a \$200,000 property it is an extra cost of \$3,000 to transfer the deed on top of real estate fees, banking fees, et cetera. On the sale of a \$400,000 home, it is an extra \$6,000. Let me remind the minister that this is a cost that cannot be financed, and most Nova Scotians do not have extra cash lying around in that amount.

These are huge extra costs that are barriers to doing business. Many people believe home sales would actually increase if the deed transfer tax was lowered or removed. It's a tax grab, Mr. Speaker, plain and simple, and it is a tax grab during a time when people are making the most expensive and important decision purchase of their lives.

Will the minister and his government consider removing or lowering the deed transfer tax?

CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, we are always looking for ways to continue the great work we are doing with our municipalities; to offer them assistance as required.

As I said, we are doing a variety of different grants. We are always looking at new opportunities and if the municipalities wish to discuss this issue, this minister would be more than happy to have that conversation.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North on a new question.

MUN. AFFAIRS - NSFM: J-CLASS RD. REQUEST - RESPONSE

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities passed a resolution in the Fall of 2018 asking the province to provide equitable funding for J-Class roads.

Many here in the province know a moratorium was placed on paving gravel roads. Residents in subdivisions asked the municipalities and the province how they can get their roads paved and the J-Class road program was adopted, but municipalities are finding it hard to cover their expenses in their municipal budgets for J-Class roads, hence the resolution.

My question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs is: Can he provide an update today on his department's response to the resolution from Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities asking for equitable funding for J-Class roads?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, municipalities are their own level of government; they make decisions on what their priorities are. We work with them regularly, both on their priorities, by way of different grants that we support each of our municipal units with, and we will continue to do so.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, they do decide where they spend their money, but they have specifically asked the province to help them with this issue, with J-Class road funding.

Taxpayers are paying enough in this province - property taxes are high. Yet when a municipality decides to pave a J-Class road, they often will impose an area rate to the property owner, increasing property taxes even higher. Other times municipalities place a lien on the property for a fee, based on the per linear foot road frontage of that property. In some cases, decisions of some home owners imposed the cost onto another home owner, who may not actually want their road paved or cannot afford their share of the cost.

Higher costs to our citizens and increased taxation pose potential hardship on our citizens. My question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs is: Is the minister aware that municipalities are creating by-laws to this effect, and does he believe that this is a fair way to fund these roads?

CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, we have a current program to cost share whereby we put \$2 million and the municipalities also put \$2 million into J-Class roads. That's a program that's been in place and it will continue to be in place. Again, if there are further conversations that we are looking to have around that, government is always open to have those kinds of conversations. We'll continue to work closely with our municipal units.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North on a new question.

MUN. AFFAIRS - NSFM: SOLID WASTE REQUEST - RESPONSE

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, solid waste management has become one of the most expensive line items for Nova Scotia municipal governments.

Total cost in 2017 exceeded \$91 million. The Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities passed a resolution requesting the province to develop legislation and regulations in full support of extended producer responsibility for printed paper and packaging. This will be an added expense to businesses trying to make a profit here in this province, an expense that their competitors outside of Canada may not have.

My question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs is: Can he provide an update today on his plans to respond to this request from the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, we've had some discussion with the NSFM at a round table last Fall. We'll be looking to more of that discussion as we come into the Spring. I've met with the current president of the NSFM as well as the past. The ERP, I guess as it's referred to, has been discussed a couple of times on this.

I will tell you right up, we are ways away from a decision on this. There's a lot of work to go into this, it's more complicated than some might think, but we are looking at this issue.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I believe, and we believe here in the PC Caucus that all levels of government should be looking at ways to save the taxpayer money - like the taxpayers are our shareholders and we are the Board of Directors running an effective government. We need to ensure that we're running an efficient, effective government so on that topic of solid waste management, I want to ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs if he's aware of a private company in Chester that sealed a deal to revolutionize waste management.

Sustane Technologies has plans to convert 90 per cent of Chester's trash into clean energy. This company will remove the future need for landfills, turn waste into a resource, and will lower the cost of solid waste management for municipalities.

My question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs is: Will he encourage other municipalities to follow Chester's leads, and look for innovative ways to lowering the cost for municipal governments?

CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the honourable member. Absolutely, we're always looking for ways to do business efficiently and effectively in this province. We have been leaders for years in effectively diverting from landfills and we will continue to do so. We'll continue to work with all of our municipal units and if they have creative ideas like this, we're willing to listen.

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

ENVIRON. - BUDGET 2019: CLIMATE CHANGE ABSENT - EXPLAIN

LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Environment. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report says we need to have ambitious action from every level of government to address the very real crisis of climate change. We need to be making unprecedented investments now.

Mr. Speaker, it was very disappointing for Nova Scotians to note that in the budget even the words “climate change” were glaringly absent, let alone any kind of money. There was not even a mention of anything that would create the rapid and exciting transition to a clear, clean, green economy.

A few weeks ago, high school students even walked out of class to protest this lack of government action. Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain why her government is choosing to burden our children and our grandchildren with the cost, chaos, and catastrophic reactions that will be the outcome of climate change by not investing in a clean future now?

HON. MARGARET MILLER: I really want to thank the member opposite for bringing up this very important subject. It gives me the opportunity to really talk about what is happening in our green economy. We are the federal leaders in reducing greenhouse gases. We will have 30 per cent below the 2005 levels, and we have a very ambitious goal of 45 per cent to 50 per cent below by the year 2030.

We are also the leaders in solid-waste diversion. We have almost half of the solid-waste diversion of other areas. I believe it is 404 kilograms per person, where most areas are above 700, Mr. Speaker.

This government has done so much. We’ve just introduced the first Coastal Protection Act. That really speaks towards what’s happening with climate change.

LENORE ZANN: In that list, most of the things she mentioned were done by the NDP government, by the Progressive Conservatives before that, and also by municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, I’m sorry, but it needs to be said: it is our duty as citizens of this world to make real investments to prevent climate change. We need to make investments on the scale of the ones our grandparents’ generation made during the war effort. The minister and the Premier talk as if addressing climate change is about individual sacrifices from regular people who are already struggling, but it’s not. The IPCC report calls for government action, not individual sacrifice.

I’d like to know: Why is this government keeping us in a weak and polluting economy when a clean and prosperous green economy is not only possible but vital for our survival?

MARGARET MILLER: I have to agree with the member opposite. That doesn't happen very often. But anyway, I will also acknowledge former governments that have played their part in this. We're looking forward to continuing that. We have been continuing that.

We've seen Nova Scotia bring in the first cap-and-trade legislation, on our terms, Mr. Speaker. We're seeing our neighbours who are going to have a large increase in the price of their fuels come April 1st, and Nova Scotia doesn't have that. We have a very moderate increase.

We're talking still about our protected areas and our wetlands areas that are carbon sinks. We're protecting those areas. We have almost 12.5 per cent of our province protected now. When you start looking at 35 per cent of our property is actually Crown land, we're protecting up to 13 per cent in the near future. That's a big goal, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue the battle.

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

MUN. AFFAIRS - CBRM: EQUALIZATION FORMULA - FAIR

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. There is a group at home which is known as the NSEF. They are a group that believes that the municipality of CBRM is not getting its fair share of the equalization payments that the province receives from the government in Ottawa.

My question to the minister is quite simple: Could he explain to us why he believes that this formula is fair?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: Of the municipal operating grants that go out across this province, we put 50 per cent - that's somewhere in the vicinity of \$15 million, Mr. Speaker - into industrial Cape Breton alone. There has been a lot of that.

We recognize there are always pressures. There is probably never enough money, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, and every municipal unit across this province would have an ask of some kind for this project or that project.

We've done an awful lot in the CBRM, moving in NSCC in downtown Sydney. I spoke yesterday about other projects - millions of dollars going into a second berth, millions of dollars going into New Dawn, new schools, new teachers, more teachers. A big announcement this week in the budget - health care announcement, millions of dollars going into industrial Cape Breton on hospital expansions.

[2:30 p.m.]

ALFIE MACLEOD: I want to thank the minister for his answer. I believe an intention to move a school downtown is much different than actually moving it downtown, unless somebody got a U-Haul since I came up here on Tuesday.

Mr. Speaker, on May 18th of last year, a letter was written by myself and my colleagues from Victoria-The Lakes and Northside-Westmount asking the Premier and the minister of the day to have an audit done by the Auditor General on the way the funds flow to the CBRM and other municipal units. If you are so convinced, Mr. Minister, that this is indeed a fair and equitable way, would you please ask the Auditor General to do an audit on these transfer payments?

THE SPEAKER: I would just like to remind the honourable member to keep his comments and questions directed through the Chair.

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

CHUCK PORTER: I appreciate the honourable member's question. As far as an audit goes, the department and I are doing an extensive audit on exactly how this program has been operating and what the view for the future might be, Mr. Speaker. As soon as that is actually done, we will be reporting that back to the members of this House and all Nova Scotians, quite frankly.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

EMO: NAT. STRATEGY FOR CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE - PLAN

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, in 2009, the province accepted the National Strategy for Critical Infrastructure. Critical infrastructure refers to processes, systems, facilities, technologies, networks, assets, and services that are essential to the health, safety, security, and economic well-being of Canadians and the effective functioning of our government. It's pretty important stuff. Yet in 2016, the Auditor General completed an audit and found that our province did not have an implementation plan to meet our commitment for this National Strategy for Critical Infrastructure. This week, the Auditor General released another update that confirmed that this recommendation remains incomplete.

My question to the Minister responsible for the Emergency Management Office is: Why has his office failed to come up with a plan to safeguard Nova Scotia's critical infrastructure?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: There were four items that the Auditor General reviewed, I believe, and made recommendations on from that report. We certainly welcome

those recommendations, Mr. Speaker. We see them as a priority. We are three quarters of the way through those. The fourth one should be complete a little bit later this year, but this should be done very soon.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General identified that Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and the Emergency Management Office did not have a risk-management plan for the Canso Causeway connecting the mainland to Cape Breton or the Chignecto Isthmus connecting Nova Scotia to New Brunswick. If either of these critical pieces of infrastructure were compromised, it would cause significant economic disruption, potential environmental damage, and an interruption to emergency services leading to possible loss of life.

My question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs is: Can this minister explain why his department has failed to document risk assessments for critical infrastructure as highlighted by the Auditor General?

CHUCK PORTER: As I said, three of the four of these very important recommendations have been completed, and we'll continue to work on completing No. 4. As I said, it is being worked on. It is in progress. We have had regular communication and updates with the AG's Office. We'll continue to do that as we move forward.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

EMO - FIRE SERV.: STAKEHOLDERS COMM. - UPDATE

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Three out of four might sound good here, but it's critical infrastructure, and we made a commitment 10 years ago to implement this strategy. Ten years.

Mr. Speaker, on another topic, in 2016 and 2017 Pomax Consulting was engaged to undertake a review of the Nova Scotia fire service. Following the completion of the report, a stakeholders committee was assembled and they have been developing an action plan to explore identified issues, such as fire service standards, organizational structure, and short- and long-term goals, as well as other areas for collaboration.

My question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs is: Can he provide an update today to the House on the work of this committee?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: This is an important piece of work being done by this committee. What I do know from a recent update myself is that this is in progress. There is a lot of work to be done and has been done from what I understand so far, with quite a bit of work still to be done - but progress is being made. I've been anxious to see the final on this, as well. We look forward to that and see what those standards look like and we'll make preparations for implementation when we're ready to do so.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: It would be nice if the minister was able to provide some details rather than just saying some of the work has been done. On that topic, there has been some discussion on centralization of fire dispatch services. Some municipalities support this move while others are against it. As I understand it, fire dispatch services was part of what the stakeholders committee was studying.

Can the Minister of Municipal Affairs provide us an update today on the plan for fire dispatch services for the province?

CHUCK PORTER: This is something that is near and dear to my heart. I come from the dispatch world of communications around EHS as a former paramedic - and a long time there. I certainly understand the fire service and dispatch, the importance of that and the timeliness and the essences of importance of getting out the door. We are working on this. There have been a number of municipalities and different organizations that have reached out to me by way of correspondence that has been sent to me asking for a review of this, and we are reviewing it.

Again, it's a very detailed process. It's being done differently around the province. We're not sure what the end result looks like, but I can assure the honourable member and all members of this House this is something that I am working on and will continue to work on, and we need to have something in place sooner rather than later as far as I'm concerned. We'll do this with the assistance of our municipalities, our fire service. This is complicated and there's a lot to it and we know that some are very much in favour of it and there may be some who are not, but we need to put in place a secure and safe dispatch system right across Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

EMO - OFF. OF THE FIRE MARSHAL: AG REC. - UPDATE

TORY RUSHTON: My question, again, is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. In 2011, the Auditor General completed an audit which cited the Office of the Fire Marshal was not doing an adequate job of protecting the public from a fire safety risk in buildings. The report also found that the Office of the Fire Marshal lacked fundamental information to effectively manage its operations. I realize this was eight years ago, but in 2015 a review was done and 14 out of the 25 recommendations had not been completed.

My question to the minister: Can he provide this House with the report and update of how many recommendations have been done to date?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: I thank the honourable member for the question. Of those 25 recommendations from that report, 18 have actually been completed to date; there are seven left. Three of those are due to be completed in the next two months, I'm told. The other four is working in conjunction with municipalities on the oversight. We'll

continue to work with them; they're in progress and we're looking to see how we can complete those in a timely fashion as well.

TORY RUSHTON: I thank the minister for the answer. One of the recommendations that was not completed as of 2015 was Recommendation 6.5. It stated: "The Office of the Fire Marshal should implement performance standards for Deputy Fire Marshals' activities." Also, "Performance evaluations are necessary to ensure that staff are meeting desired performance expectations including recognition of good performance as well as identifying and addressing areas in which staff require development." I'll table that. The Office of the Fire Marshal needs to develop a process for the ongoing monitoring of the evaluation for the staff.

My question is: Does he know if this evaluation is going on now for the deputy fire marshals?

CHUCK PORTER: What I can tell you is that the fire marshal's team are continuously providing performance feedback throughout the course of the year on a regular basis - daily communications, meetings, verbal discussions, and feedback. These performance evaluations are all part of what we do on a regular basis and will continue to do. As minister, I would expect that all of the staff would have a regular performance evaluation just like every other public servant does across this province.

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

JUSTICE: STREET CHECKS - END

CLAUDIA CHENDER: My question is for the Minister of Justice. Yesterday when I asked the minister to take action on the Street Check report, rather than answer my question the minister chose to argue about a technicality. He said that Dr. Wortley did not phrase the findings of his report in the form of a recommendation, he presented two options. The recommendations from that report are clear - the status quo is not an option and Dr. Wortley has called on the government to either ban or regulate street checks and to impose an immediate moratorium while action is considered. I will table that.

Mr. Speaker, why is the minister allowing police street checks, a practice rooted in systemic racism, to continue while community members, academics, senators have been clear that this practice must end now?

HON. MARK FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleague for the question. I want to reiterate, I have said publicly that the findings of the Wortley report quite frankly are alarming, and they are unacceptable. We are taking steps to address that. Just today, I gave directives to our law enforcement community that they are to cease using street checks as part of a quota system. The direction has been given to cease using street checks as part of a performance measurement tool. There is a need, quite frankly, for

training around the law enforcement community specific to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, their authorities, the missions, visions, and values and code of ethics of law enforcement agencies. We have to address this problem. We will address this problem. It will be inclusive not only of the law enforcement community but the communities that are most impacted.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I thank the minister for that answer. However, street checks should never have been part of a quota or a performance management tool ever. So, ceasing those is the very tip of the iceberg. Yesterday, after the powerful report that we heard and the community voices, the minister addressed the media and called street checks a valuable policing tool when used correctly. However, Dr. Wortley was clear that there is very little evidence at all that street checks impact local crime rates in any way.

Street checks are not an effective policing practice and have done and continue to do significant harm to the Black community. This practice must be suspended while a permanent solution is determined. Will the minister acknowledge that in spite of having clear evidence laid out for him, he is permitting a racist and discriminatory practice to continue in Nova Scotia?

MARK FUREY: Again, I appreciate my colleague's question. This is a very serious matter that we are giving immediate attention to. But I want to remind my colleague I'm acknowledging everything that Dr. Wortley has identified in the content of the report. It is alarming and it simply unacceptable and we will take steps to address it. But what my colleague has not shared with this Legislature and all Nova Scotians is Dr. Wortley himself said that a ban in itself may simply be symbolic and not change the experience on the street. That's not lost on me. It's important that I put a common-sense, sound-judgment lens to the work and redress that we will take to ensure that this practice stops into the future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

ENVIRON. – N. PULP: EFFLUENT TREATMENT - SUBMISSIONS

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment. As we all know in this Chamber, Northern Pulp Nova Scotia Corporation submitted their application in January 2019, to build a new effluent treatment facility, which would include a pipe carrying the effluent through Pictou's watershed and then into our beautiful Northumberland Strait. March 9, 2019 was the deadline for concerned citizens and stakeholders to deliver their submissions. So, I would like the minister to confirm please how many submissions did the Department of Environment actually receive.

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for that question. In all, we have 1,700 pages that came from Northern Pulp, their submission themselves. On top of that, we had the public post all their comments online. We had, I

believe, 918 although there are a couple of variations of those. I was able to read all of them as well as all the material. I'm pleased to announce that there will be a decision made tomorrow and I invite any members of the House to come join me at noon tomorrow.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I do thank the minister for her answer. I have received some of those submissions as well and I had the opportunity to read them carefully and there was a lot of detail in all of them. A lot of blood, sweat, and tears went into these submissions and it is my hope that every single one was read in-depth whether it was hundreds of pages or a few statements on a single piece of paper. And yes, it is public knowledge and it has been confirmed today that the minister plans to release her findings on the application tomorrow.

[2:45 p.m.]

The minister has stated that she was able to read all submissions although they only came in on March 9th, and I know that I received hundreds.

I would like to ask the minister: Can she confirm that she was the only one who read all these submissions that came into her department, so that a thorough decision can be made?

MARGARET MILLER: I thank the honourable member for that question. Certainly, I took a lot - it was emotional, reading all those statements, 918-plus statements, more or less, 4,500 pages. Certainly, our March break, our Spring break, I know a lot of us are working through that break, it was my reading week. It certainly was a time to be able to engage that.

I heard from businesses, homeowners, business owners, and nine-year-old little girls. They were all expressing what their thoughts were and what they thought about Northern Pulp, and the impact that it would have. Certainly, I took that very seriously and I can share that my staff also read all those, as well as all the material, and made recommendations based on all that material.

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

H&W - BUCHANAN MEM. HOSP.: LAB. TECH. POSITION - STATUS

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, let me first of all begin by thanking the government and the Health Authority for once again recruiting a medical laboratory technologist for the Buchanan Memorial Hospital. This will go a long way in providing service continuation to the people in the North of Smokey area.

However, it has not been confirmed as to whether or not the position is permanent or temporary, so my question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Can the minister inform this House whether this is a full-time position or a temporary, part-time position?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as I believe the Health Authority reported on the weekend, they are continuing the lab services at Buchanan Memorial, and part of that process is recruiting the replacement MLT to fill that position on a permanent basis, to provide those services.

KEITH BAIN: I thank the minister for that response. Over the past number of weeks discussion has been taking place in this House on point of care testing as the best thing to happen to Buchanan Memorial Hospital. Everyone is glad to see this will not be the case, but point of care testing can be done after-hours and emergencies.

Mr. Speaker, one of the fears in the community is this might only be done between now and when point of care testing actually takes place. My question to the minister is: Will he commit to the residents of the North of Smokey area, that the technologist position that is being reinstated is indeed permanent and will not be replaced by point of care testing?

RANDY DELOREY: I can confirm that the efforts to recruit and maintain those lab services are to be ongoing. As far as point of care testing, as I previously spoke in the Legislature about the evolution of the technology, that it can still provide important service and may still be a service and a technology deployed at that site and other communities, but that's to work in conjunction with and alongside the lab services at that hospital and not a replacement one for the other.

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

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, first I want to start off by saying Nova Scotia is very fortunate, we have a lot of great health care workers in all different aspects.

The announcement that was made in Sydney on Monday was an excellent announcement. The problem, Mr. Premier, is there was no human resources plan. We still do not know how the people who are going to be served by this building are going to actually have doctors.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board have taken great pride in the fact that there are new doctors coming but . . .

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Government Motions.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Resolution No. 712.

[Res. No. 712, re Estimates - CW on Supply: Referred - notice given Feb. 28/19 - (Hon. Karen Casey)]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness with 19 minutes remaining.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, when we have Cabinet Ministers of this House resorting to physical and verbal aggression outside of this Chamber, I think it indicates the government has a problem with its ability to debate matters here in the Chamber.

Now, we know the allegation that was made yesterday, and not so long ago there was an event in this House that I witnessed myself and, from what I hear, it's a very similar incident. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that this government when they were sitting over here and they had the ability to press that matter had no mercy. I know the individual involved ended up having to resign, and it wasn't very nice for him. And what I witnessed I was asked to make a statement down at the police station about it. There really wasn't much to it, but who am I to say that the person involved was not in a position where they felt vulnerable or threatened? That's not my place.

You know, in the old days, a simple apology would do, even one that was in private. I spoke with the Government House Leader about this and I essentially asked: What does the member think he should do based on what happened? We saw the member express that he experienced something differently, and I'm reminded of the Prime Minister recently when he made a similar statement - I experienced something differently.

When I was watching this unfold and seeing that I thought: Maybe an apology should be enough for this and maybe this isn't as serious, or we shouldn't take it as serious. Maybe an apology should be what's needed. Let's treat this if I may say, Mr. Speaker, like the old days. I don't know what the old days were like, but I think there was the kind of

relationship in here where if somebody did something, they acknowledged that maybe they were out of line, they extended an apology, and the person apologized to would let it go.

But, then, when I was leaving the House the other day, there was another outburst by the minister in question. I thought to myself, my immediate gut reaction was, well, that's not very good. Instead of thinking maybe extending an apology, it was the opposite response. What option did we have but to pursue a point of privilege and, then, of course, as we know, yesterday, that was put forward and, Mr. Speaker, you in your counsel . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to point out this portion of the Address in Reply with exception to the budget reaction is specific to the budget statement. Furthermore, the member is discussing an issue that, number one, we've dealt with in the House already; number two, he's using quotes such as "from what I hear" and "who am I to say what happened." We've had this discussion already. The member is talking now about what we would do in the old days in terms of an apology. He is correct. He and I had a discussion about what the conversation would be between the parties who were involved. That was the last conversation we had yesterday, and the next thing that I was privy to is a point of privilege here in the Legislature.

I'm not sure where this is going but, number one, from a technical perspective, this reaction is supposed to be specific to the Budget Address, which the member has about 15 minutes left, so I would appreciate that we respect the Rules of the Legislature and stick to the Budget Address.

THE SPEAKER: The point of order is upheld as according to Rule 62A. The response to the Budget Speech is supposed to be relevant to the actual budget, so we will allow the honourable member for Inverness to continue with remarks regarding the Budget Speech.

The honourable member for Inverness has the floor.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the purpose of my opening statement was to identify when the government is responding outside of the Chamber with the behaviour that they have to the debate here in the Legislature on the budget. (Interruptions)

The members opposite can't call order. That's the Speaker's position - unless, of course, the government believes they should be instructing the Speaker on how he should do his role. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the point I want to make here is on this budget. We are raising issues and the government is responding outside of the Chamber to those issues in ways that I

think is behaviour unbecoming of a member, and yesterday we raised that in here. The minister said in his remarks that he would welcome investigation and the government voted it down.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, again on a similar point of order, you just referenced the exact rule of engagement for the Legislature on the budget reply. We are back to the incident yesterday.

I would like for you to clarify where the member can go in terms of the Budget Address versus regurgitating the conversations that we already had. Not only the precedent, not only the history, nor the Rules of the Legislature provide that when we have dealt with the matter.

Regardless of the position or the opinion of the Opposition, the Official Opposition, the Third Party, or the government, that matter has been settled. Obviously, if the members have other ways that they want to discuss this, then that is up to them, but this rule is very specific to the reply to the budget that was tabled by the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. I would appreciate that we stick to that line item, please.

THE SPEAKER: The point of order is upheld.

Once again, I remind the honourable member to stick to the information as it pertains to the budget.

I also remind all members of the House that there is a parliamentary rule that the House has dealt with this matter and we should not be discussing it any further in this Chamber.

The honourable member for Inverness has the floor.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, perhaps then I'll speak more from the perspective of - in such a way that it is not of such offence to the government members because I know I've been shut down in Public Accounts. I know that I guess I'm being shut down here, so I will get back on the budget then, I guess.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

ALLAN MACMASTER: Yeah. Yeah.

It's nice, Mr. Speaker, when people have power with a budget, and it's nice how they treat other people - smirks, and hahs. I'll be getting to the Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act in a little bit here.

This is the kind of thing where I think when a government is delivering a budget, the government members should own their behaviours. (Applause)

Ministers of the Crown who represent the government and who have a line item in the budget for things like education, who are responsible for things like anti-bullying measures, should own their behaviour. (Applause)

It's very important, when a government is delivering a budget and talking about how it's going to invest money in anti-bullying behaviour, that it means what it says.

[3:00 p.m.]

For instance, I don't think in the schools of our province we would want students going around slamming doors in people's faces and using language . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: We're hearing from the Opposition about how we respect the Rules of the Legislature. This is the third time we're up on a point of order.

Obviously, the member for Inverness is intending to draw a connection between his comments and what happened yesterday - it's quite obvious - to the Leader of the Official Opposition. It's quite obvious. This is not something that's gone unnoticed here. It's very clear.

The member for Inverness talked for 40 minutes around the budget on his first day, which is certainly - exactly, not certainly - well within the means and the Rules of the Legislature for reply to the budget. He had 20 minutes left starting today. He continues to insinuate and connect back to a decision, a discussion, and a procedure in this House that we've already covered.

Mr. Speaker, I again implore you to ask the member to follow that specific rule that you just referenced and focus on the budget reply.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, once again I'm going to uphold the point of order here and ask the honourable member to keep his comments directed at the contents of the budget and remind him that the matter that he keeps referring to has been dealt with by this House already.

We're going to continue, and if it comes up again, I will continue to remind you to keep your comments relevant to the budget.

The honourable member for Inverness.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Thank you for that, Mr. Speaker. I might ask that the interruptions that have been taking place be taken into account.

THE SPEAKER: Your time will be reset. You focus on the budget.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Thank you. I respect you, Mr. Speaker. Any time I see the government in its budget, in its communications, stand up for things like preventing violence against women, for antibullying behaviour, I think that it's very important.

It's difficult for me to say what I want to say - I feel like I'm being restricted.

There can be violence against men. There can be violence against women. Either way, it's wrong. I would hope that this budget we have before us recognizes that. I would hope that, say, a member like the Minister for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act would recognize that violence against men is also wrong. (Applause)

I'm going to have to skip over some lines here - that kind of behaviour is wrong. Whether it's the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development or whether it's in the Minister for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act's budget, the Department of Justice - budgets are allocated to try to prevent that behaviour in the province.

Interfering with that kind of justice, I believe, is also wrong. In society, we expect there to be mechanisms when something happens. The Department of Justice, through the courts, has a mechanism to decide to be able to investigate. The Minister of Justice has a budget that funds the court system to investigate, police to investigate matters, and courts to adjudicate over them, not just to be tossed off to the side and disregarded because somebody doesn't like it, Mr. Speaker.

We have a justice system with integrity. I know with this budget, Mr. Speaker, that's why the province and that's why we're asked to approve money here in this Legislature for the Department of Justice. That system exists, so it is fair to all. You know what else I will say, innocent until proven guilty. Until somebody can be examined, and a situation can be examined, nobody knows if they're innocent. That is why we have a justice system and that is why the budget funds it.

I think with this budget we've seen the government mistreat people, Mr. Speaker. Maybe that's not fair for me to say, but I think there's Nova Scotians out there who may feel from time to time like they're mistreated by the government. We have seen this government use its power to avoid being held accountable. I mentioned Public Accounts, using majorities on committees to control what can come before Public Accounts, despite

looking at the rules of the Legislature that say that we can look at certain things at Public Accounts, but the government using its majority to stop us from doing that.

I know the budget funds the Public Accounts Committee, so it's fair, I think, Mr. Speaker, for me to be able to talk about that today. If there are people out there who feel mistreated by this government, we may share that as well from time to time. We also feel that sometimes the government avoids being held accountable with things like Public Accounts and the public probably feels that way, too. We talk about the health crisis, you may say the government is basically stating, we've experienced something differently, we don't feel there's a health crisis.

In the first part of my speech the other day, Mr. Speaker, I talked about how the Premier would not respond to accept responsibility for health care when he was asked by my colleague, the Leader of the Official Opposition. I believe it was his first question as Leader when he entered the House. For many Nova Scotians, this will be nothing new. It will sound all too familiar to teachers who are dealing with challenges in the classroom, to health care professionals. For example, I think of those working in nursing homes, being chastised for sending patients to the emergency room when they may need to do that, and I've given those reasons in my previous speech.

It will sound all too familiar, Mr. Speaker, this government's behaviour to families waiting to get a doctor. It will sound all too familiar to families waiting for a nursing home bed for a loved one, and for people suffering with mental health issues waiting to see a psychiatrist and being sent home from a hospital and for their families. I think about physicians who are burning out and leaving. The government is not really that concerned about finding out why and blocking them from appearing before the Health Committee.

I think there are a lot of Nova Scotians out there who would say that the government is mistreating them. It's using its power to avoid being held accountable for that and the government would probably say, no that's not how we're experiencing it. What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that the behaviour of this government is letting people down. If this government cannot connect the dots to understand that its behaviour determines the actions it is taking on all these important issues, there is no hope for this government to do better.

Mr. Speaker, this goes beyond the dollars and cents of this budget, this goes to a matter of character. The character of this government. This government will continue to lose the confidence of Nova Scotians, we will stand with those people and vote against the government and this budget.

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

GARY BURILL: A budget, of course, is an awfully important document, probably the most important statement of plan and statement of its mission that a government ever brings forward. The initiatives that we see in a budget are not just initiatives on their own.

They are the means by which the government gives its signature to what it is about, what is its substance, what is its direction, its vision.

A budget not only in this sense describes the enterprise of a government. A budget also gives the measure and provides us an underlying sense of a government in general.

I think on the subject of budgets of my own experience a few years ago, working with and then having a chance to speak about, the budgets that were brought forward by the government before this one.

What a meaningful thing it was in April 2010, to be able to stand and vote for a budget which provided that seniors who received the Guaranteed Income Supplement would henceforward not have to pay any provincial income tax whatsoever.

I remember very clearly the sense of privilege around the budget in April 2012; being able to stand and vote for a budget that completely eliminated ambulance fees for everyone of low income in Nova Scotia.

But budgets are defining moments. It was a defining moment for me in 2013 to be present for the announcement in the budget of that year, that from now on kids in Nova Scotia aged 10, 11, 12 and 13 would newly be covered, completely, under MSI for everything connected to their teeth. These were matters defining the political work of those years.

Now this present budget was brought forward the day before yesterday at a pressing moment - a moment of pressing sharpness in the lives of the people of our province. It's a moment of the health care crisis; it's a moment of the climate emergency; it's a moment of the urgent situation of family and household incomes.

It is, therefore, hurtful and it is something that in my view calls fairly for criticism, if not condemnation, that in this moment we are being presented with a budget that bears no sign of recognition that we are in a health care crisis. We are being presented here with a budget that includes nothing commensurate with the scale of the emergency that is before us about the climate, and that we are being presented here with a budget which does not register at any level an awareness of the deep, day in, day out urgency of how many people's lives in Nova Scotia are entirely circumscribed by their unremitting struggle with not having enough to live.

What we have before us rather than something which would address these great, sharp crises of the moment, is rather a budget which is a bucket full of band-aids. We can think of the disappointment that confronts us in this budget on a number of levels.

First, we can think of it on the level of the health care crisis - overcrowded, chaotic and untenable situations in emergency departments are being increasingly reported by frontline health care workers in communities all over the province.

At the QEII just a week and a half ago nurses on the overnight shift were calling on the hospital and the administration there to declare Code Orange. That's a state of alert almost always reserved, for instance, where there are mass casualties. At one point that night - it was the 13th of March - there were 99 patients in the department there. There were three doctors on rotation and there were three fewer nurses than are required. That night in the department there were seven critically ill patients of the classification requiring one-on-one nursing, but there were only four nurses to provide that. That night, 42 patients left without being seen at all.

[3:15 p.m.]

The very same week in Kentville, Cheryl Burbidge, who's an LPN at the ER in the Valley Regional, reported that conditions for working in the ER in Kentville had become so intense, she and the staff she works with were working at 200 per cent over capacity almost every shift. In her view, the situation had become dangerous and had become a violation of the fundamental standards of their nursing practice.

Members may have seen an article that was contributed just a few days ago to the provincial paper which described this as it had been experienced by another front-line health care worker. On one day, this is in Kentville, just very recently 24 patients had been admitted from the ER to the hospital, but there was no place in the hospital. The two dozen patients that had to be admitted to the hospital had to be accommodated in an ER that only has capacity for 20.

I should be clear about what that means when we say that the patients had been admitted. That doesn't mean that they had been admitted through the triage system, that they had come in the door to the emergency department and been admitted by having received triage and then had taken a seat to wait. When we say that 24 patients had been admitted, we mean that they had come in, they had been triaged, they had waited, they had received the care that they had come for, and the emergency department was all finished with them, and had to send them to the hospital because they were in that category. They were going to go to the OR, or to the ward, or somewhere in the hospital. That's what admitted means in that case. They have room for 20 people that they had thus admitted, but that night there were 24.

In Sackville, just in the last couple of weeks, at the Cobequid Community Health Centre, a facility that is set up to close at midnight, patients were being kept overnight. Therefore, of course, there's no provision for feeding them, so they were being fed from vending machines because the other ERs in the HRM were so overcrowded, there wasn't any place for those patients to be transferred.

Less than a month ago, in North Sydney at the Northside General, they were handing out in the ER flyers to patients who had been waiting there more than eight hours, informing them the wait was going to be a lot longer and suggesting that maybe they would like to come back the next day or maybe they would like to go to Sydney and see how they could make out at the Regional ER instead.

Nova Scotia has a new verb now, that is the verb to be “pink sheeted.” As ER patients in the last couple of weeks have been handed pink sheets with instructions that tell them that they’re being sent home because the ER where they are is too jammed up. It’s too plugged up to take them. So, that in Sydney, Dr. Megan Keating speaks about what she calls - these are her words - nothing short of crisis conditions at the Regional. Dr. Jeanne Ferguson also there, said of the situation, we’re losing lives and that’s the bottom line. She remarked further, the conditions are starting to become Third World, not First World. I’ll table their printed remarks.

The primary cause for this across the province, this multi-level ER crisis, has been identified in the same way by front-line workers, by administrators, as well as by health policy experts in the field. That primary cause that has been identified is that up to 20 per cent of the hospital beds in the province are being filled at the moment by what are called alternate level of care, or ALC, patients. That is, patients who are not hospital patients, but rather people who’ve been assessed as not any longer safely able to stay home, no matter what the level of home care, therefore they require a place in a nursing home, but there is no place for them in any nursing home. The reason for that is because at the height of the greatest aging tsunami in our history, the present government has not opened a single new nursing home bed in the six years since they came to power. With the result that emergency room departments across Nova Scotia are double-plugged solid because there’s no place available in the hospital for them to transfer their patients into.

This is not a matter of one person says this, another person says something else; a matter of interpretation. The role of a large concentration of ALC patients in impeding proper patient flow in a hospital system is something that is entirely established. It is something that is beyond dispute. It has been clearly established, for example, by Accreditation Canada.

Accreditation Canada is the body that validates the work of our Health Authority itself. In our province last year, over 2,000 people lived in hospitals as ALC patients. Their average stay while they lived in the hospital was over 100 days. Surely it is a matter of significance to the government that this average stay of 100 days of ALC patients was six times longer than the average for other provinces in our country.

We face a crisis at this level. There is a solution to the crisis enveloping emergency care in Nova Scotia. That solution is simple: more new long-term care beds. Therefore, it is a matter of distress to a lot of people that the government, knowing this is the solution,

should be bringing forward a budget this week that has no comprehensive program for new nursing home construction in our province.

No amount of talking about home care, no amount of purchases of mattresses and lifts, no amount of self-congratulation about what is projected to be built someday in Mahone Bay or Meteghan or North Sydney or New Waterford - none of this will change the fact that by failing to invest in a comprehensive program of new long-term care construction in the budget, by means of this decision, the government is condemning hospitals and condemning ERs and condemning paramedics to more of the intensifying and unconscionable state of being jammed up, blocked up, and overcrowded to which they are presently, this month, subjected.

No one should forget, when these matters are being discussed, the situation of those 2,000 ALC patients themselves. Like the member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley, I have done a great deal of visiting in hospitals of ALC patients as a minister, as I know that he has. I know, as I am sure he knows, as many in this House know from visiting their own friends and families in nursing homes, that when you live in a nursing home that has a good recreational programming staff, that has a strong volunteer base, that has a sense of community around it, that experience is not to be compared with living in a hospital as a patient but not a patient, with the doctors who, when they go on rounds, sort of go by your bed as though maybe you weren't there, and where, when your family comes on the weekend, the top of the conversation is you questioning them again about whether anybody has heard anything about the placement you're waiting for, and where, here in our province, you are apt to stay in that situation for an average of more than 100 days.

Let's add to that the fact that ALC patients are paying, as they would pay to be in a nursing home, to live in these sub-nursing home conditions.

I think about a woman I met by chance recently while visiting door-to-door in Halifax Chebucto. She and her elderly father lived together, but he had had a couple of falls. He was in his nineties, and the time had come, she explained to me, where his care was going to be beyond her capacity. He was going to go to a long-term care facility. She said that for him, this really wasn't a worry, because he was a person of some financial means. He was going to be able to get a place in a nursing home very quickly, she felt.

But as she was going through this experience, she said, her thoughts had been occupied with thinking about all the people of whom this wasn't true, who were in a situation in their families similar to hers - people who, once they had got to the end of the road of what home care could provide, she knew would have to wait in the hospital for several months or more because the government had not made the investments needed for there to be places for them to be able to get to.

She talked to me about this, and as we were at the doorway of her apartment in her building, she was visibly upset. She said, "You asked me if there were any issues?" I've

got an issue, let me tell you about it.” She talked about her father, about how this is bothering her, about all the people she said in Nova Scotia that have to be up in the QEII because they can’t get into a nursing home.

I’m going to beep out a part of what she said to me at the doorstep because it’s not totally parliamentary. She said to me as we discussed this, “Mister, I don’t want to hear any more of this balanced budget . . . beep . . .” - suffice it to say she was a woman with a pretty good talent for alliteration. “I don’t want to hear any more of this balanced budget . . . beep . . . because, when the time comes that you need care, people ought to be able to count on getting care.”

I think that she has summed up a great deal of what, in the words of my friend Jason MacLean, president of the NSGEU, said, is epically disappointing from the point of view of the health care crisis about this budget.

There’s a parallel level of disappointment that confronts us when we consider this budget in light of the present climate moment in Nova Scotia. We are in a moment which is increasingly defined by the climate emergency, as it has been set before us in such unassailable monumental detail by the October 2018 publication of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C* - a report which has a wonderfully comprehensive title. The real title of that report is as follows: *An IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty.*

The IPCC report itself, in its encyclopedic grasp, reflects the scope and fulsomeness of that title. If the whole report could be reduced down to one thought, as in fact the dozens of scientists who have put it together have attempted to do in its first page, that thought would be that “. . . limiting global warming to 1.5 would require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society.” This, beyond question, requires a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. I’ll table this.

No international document could have a more defined and salient relevance for daily life in Nova Scotia. Here in our province we can think of the summer of 2016 when throughout the western part of the province wells went dry that had not failed in living memory. We can understand what happened in western Nova Scotia to wells in 2016 in light of the fact that in the past 30 years we have seen all 20 of the hottest years the world has recorded. We can understand what happened in 2016 in our own province to wells in western Nova Scotia in light of the fact that nine of the 10 deadliest heat waves in human history have occurred since the year 2000.

As we think about the direct relevance of the IPCC report to our world here in Nova Scotia, we may think of the unprecedented flood damage caused in Sydney by the

Thanksgiving flood in 2016 with its enormous life-disrupting and altering impacts. When we think about that flood, we can think about it in the light of how those same scientists in the IPCC report have identified our part of the world, Eastern Canada, in their section on impacts on human and natural systems. They have identified our part of the world as one of the regions with the largest increases in heavy precipitation events in the scenario of an increase from 1.5 degrees to 2 degrees centigrade global warming. I will table that part of their report.

Whereas we think about the relevance of the IPCC report to daily life in Nova Scotia we can think of the vulnerability of the Isthmus of Chignecto held together at this stage by not much more than a railbed, and across which flows daily \$50 million worth of trade.

[3:30 p.m.]

Unless anybody thinks that this is just an abstraction or something raising an alarmist point that has no immediate material connection for us, all we have to do is think about what happened in Churchill, Manitoba in 2017 when Churchill was, by floods, cut off from the rest of the country when the rail line was uprooted in those floods. And we can think about the fact that when the federal government last summer restored the connection destroyed by the floods of Churchill, Manitoba, it cost \$1 million for every six residents of that town.

So, there's so many things left to think about. We can think about agriculture and we need to hold present to our minds what the IPCC says about this. When you get from 1.5 degrees Celsius to 2 degrees Celsius in global warming, the rate of crop loss doesn't increase by 5, 10, 15, 20 - the rate of crop loss doubles. Or we can think of the fisheries and the threat of species migration, or we can think about it from the level of public health. And when I say public health, I'm thinking in particular of all the issues surrounding Lyme disease.

Now, my own family comes from Yarmouth County. I think about Lyme disease. You know it wasn't very many years ago when Yarmouth County was the only part of Nova Scotia that had any ticks. It wasn't very many years ago when people came to Digby County or Shelburne County or Yarmouth County from other parts of the province in April or May. You'd have to explain to them check themselves for ticks at that time of the year, and they would never know what they were talking about. You would have to explain to them what a deer tick was, but with global warming we've got the whole phenomenon of species northern migration on the basis of our own experience.

We are compelled to look at what is said in the IPCC report and it says there that all of this calls for what it calls - these are the words of the scientists there - a rapid escalation of the level of ambition in the work of emissions reductions both from, it says, national governments and sub-national jurisdictions - that means us, provinces. I'll table

the place in the report where they said this. So no one could reasonably describe the climate change-related measures in this budget.

Nobody could read through this budget and, in my judgement, reasonably come to the conclusion that although there are things that of course that have to do with environment and have to do with climate - nobody is denying that - but nobody I think could fairly read through that document and say that it represented what the authors of the IPCC report talked about as a rapid escalation of the level of ambition in the work of emissions reductions. That is the significance of the fact that the words “climate” and “climate change” don’t appear in the document whatsoever. It’s symbolic of the fact that the rapid escalation and level of ambition at the moment requires that the government in its defining document is entirely impervious to this truth.

Now, earlier in this session, our Party introduced the Local Action on Climate Change Support Act. This was introduced by the member for Halifax Needham and in that bill that she brought forward was a piece of legislation that would establish a fund to support municipalities with the cost of climate change adaptation projects like dyke improvements and energy efficiency projects, but we look in vain in the present budget for the establishment of any such funding here.

Our Party has also proposed a Green Jobs Act to establish the policy framework for the economic mobilization that’s going to be required in order for us to position ourselves in a dynamic, exciting way within the new green economy that’s bursting out all around the world. But we don’t see any provision in this budget for anything that could be reasonably approximated to such a plan. We have here rather a budget from a government, which is holding to an emissions target which nobody anywhere who is authoritative on this subject thinks is consistent with the goal of net zero by 2050.

We have here a budget from a government which has taken an approach to global emissions reduction which nobody thinks is commensurate with limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees centigrade and which does nothing to fundamentally improve or alter that situation.

As I think about what the budget has to say on climate, I think of a riveting phrase in the important book on this subject by one of the leading authors on the subject who happens to live here in the city, Dr. Kate Ervine, called *Carbon*. She said it often happens in the world that governments don’t really wish to do something adequate to the rapid level of escalation of ambition, so they kind of try to dress up and present the business-as-usual scenario. These are Dr. Ervine’s words - she said sometimes business as usual dons the robes of meaningful action. That’s another way of saying that what this budget offers on the climate emergency is paltry and puny and a dumpster-level disappointment.

Mr. Speaker, there is no place in this budget, in my judgment, more comprehensively disappointing than the government’s treatment of the urgent situation of

household income faced by so many thousands of people in our province. Allow me to register in the House this afternoon a few facts, which, in my judgment, anybody who wants to think in a straight line about the economy of Nova Scotia needs to grapple with, needs to be aware of, and needs to understand. All of these facts were entirely omitted from the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board's falsely, in my view, triumphalist discourse.

Fact one: Nova Scotia is the only province in Canada where child poverty is getting worse instead of better. This is not a random survey that somebody we know took working on a paper somewhere in college. This is this month. The result of a study from Statistics Canada's Canadian Income Survey.

Why wouldn't that be the case? Because of fact two: Nova Scotia has the lowest, not seven, eight, nine, 10 out of 10, the lowest median income in the country. Now since this government came to power six years ago, in the country as a whole, median income has been rising. It has gone up over that six-year period by six per cent. In Nova Scotia, since the day this government came to power, median income has risen by 0.27 per cent.

Fact three: RBC's YouthfulCities Urban Work Index, which was published last month, placed Halifax 20th out of 21 cities in Canada, in terms of livability for young people. The study cited as the reason for that, a low minimum wage and the province's highest student debt levels, in coming to that conclusion.

Fact four: Nova Scotia has the highest percentage of the population of any province living in what Statistics Canada designates as low income.

Fact five: According to figures provided by Hunger Count, Nova Scotia has the fastest rising rate of food bank use in the entire country. Hang on a second - the fastest rising use of food banks in the entire country. That means that 6,000 more people use food banks today in our province than was the case in 2011. That's a 31 per cent increase. Two-thousand more people use food banks today in Nova Scotia than in 2016.

I think it's fitting for us to just pause for a moment to think about what that means. The fastest rising rate of food bank use in the entire country. Here's what it means, for example, at the North Sydney Food Bank. In a visit there three or four months ago, food bank coordinator Lawrence Shebib took me through the modest confines of the converted train station. As soon as you go in the door, you are immediately in the only room in the building where there is any room at all and that's a room that has freezers all around the wall and it has ten chairs in the middle of the room. That's the waiting area. That's all the chairs that there is room for there - ten.

Now, the North Sydney Food Bank is open to its members one day a week, that is on Friday. The North Sydney Food Bank serves 380 people. Think about it. There are 380 people, one day, ten chairs. The upshot isn't hard to figure out. What is going to happen at the North Sydney Food Bank is there is going to be a line and it is going to be outside and

that's what happens every Friday. That's the case on knock-you-down hot Fridays, that's the case on freeze-your-tail-off cold Fridays.

You look at that line - the line is long. It has lots of kids in it all the time. It has all kinds of disabled people in it. As you inch your way up towards the door in that line at the converted North Sydney train station, the food bank, maybe a person might just not be in the mood to hear the government's economic self-congratulations delivered here on Tuesday in the address that went along with the presentation of the budget.

Maybe as a person inched their way up in that line on the hot, hot Fridays and on the cold, cold Fridays, they might also not be in the mood to hear the government's often-repeated claims that by holding the line on social spending, they're somehow looking after the interests of the children and grandchildren of future generations. It occurs to me rather that those future generations may well say someday, not, "Thank you, government, for your fiscal discipline," but rather something more like, "What kind of people were you that you thought it was all right to just allow this to happen?"

You didn't just allow it - pardon me, Mr. Speaker, for the use of the second person. It wasn't simply that it was allowed. Rather, it was something that resulted as a direct result of policy choices that virtually guaranteed that we would be a province with the fastest-rising food bank use in the country.

Here is a perfectly predictable formula for producing the fastest-rising rates of food bank use in the entire country. Here's how you might do it. In a province where 20 per cent of the population pays more than 50 per cent of its income out in rent, the first thing you have to do is just fail to bring in rent control. The second thing you would have to do is impose an income assistance regime which was brutal. You would have to impose an income assistance regime which was miserable, so miserable and brutish that IA recipients in this province today, in constant dollars, receive thousands less a year than those in similar circumstances did 30 years ago.

Then, if you wanted to produce a situation that had the fastest-rising food bank use in the country, you would have to top it off by adding to not having any rent control, to having a brutish IA system - add to that, the lowest minimum wage in the entire country.

But wait, whoa. I know, the budget before us on Tuesday says, oh no - no, no, no - that minimum wage is going to go up. It's going to go up to \$11.55. That's going to happen just on Monday - \$11.55. Ontario is at \$14; Alberta, \$15; and B.C. is quickly working its way up there. The truth is that at this rate of a 55-cent-a-year increase for the next three years - in 2022, Nova Scotia's minimum wage is going to be lower than it is in those provinces today.

Why? Because we have a government who think they know more than the consensus of the economics profession around this question, which is that a significant -

significant - increase in the minimum wage will not only not result in a loss of jobs and hours - the Ontario numbers show this very clearly - but will, in fact, rather lead to a spike and a stimulus in demand, which will in turn trend in the direction of an economic expansion that could have the capacity to make us something other than what we are after six years of the mal-administration of this Liberal government. It would make us something other than the province with the lowest median income in the country, something other than the only province in the country going backwards on the subject of child poverty, something other than the province in the country that has the highest percentage of its people rising the quickest who can't even get their food in a store but have to receive it on a charitable basis from a food bank.

I think of a new book by an author named Stephanie Land. It's called *Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay, and a Mother's Will to Survive*. There's a commentary on this book that I think this is a stark, wonderful use of words - it talks about what it calls "the brute poetry of home economics." That's what's missing in this budget, an understanding of the brute poetry of home economics.

What is that the brute poetry of home economics? The author goes on to say that it's like this: Rent plus groceries plus utilities plus laundry plus insurance plus gas plus clothing minus an hourly paycheck of barely more than minimum wage. We know what that equals. It equals the truth that an increase to \$11.55 amounts to nothing more than a paltry, sorry Band-aid.

But wait, wait, wait, wait. The budget says, just a minute here. Don't forget. We want to insist that you think about the increases that are provided here in the personal tax exemption. Oh, come on. It is the very definition of a paltry Band-aid to provide a program to address low income, a program, the upshot of which will be an increase for people on low income. This is what it is, an average of \$13. A total \$13 monthly.

[3:45 p.m.]

American country singer Kacey Musgraves has a song called *Rainbow*, and in it she sings these words: "it's hard to breathe when all we know is the struggle of staying above, the rising water line." That's it. It's hard to breathe when all our people know is the struggle of trying to stay above the rising waterline. That's the understanding that's missing here. Any sense of how hard it is to breathe for so many of our people who aren't able to see anything except trying to figure out how they can stay above the rising waterline and look to their government, and its defining plan in its budget to see what they are going to do, they are reaching out to see there is nobody reaching back.

That's what we have before us, a government that has no appreciation, no evident understanding of how hard staying above the waterline is for so many of the people of our province. A government which, with the budget that is before us, has defined themselves, in my opinion, in terms of Band-aids and disappointments.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply unto Her Majesty.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

[3:56 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CW on Supply with Deputy Speaker Suzanne Lohnes-Croft in the Chair.]

[7:59 p.m. CW on Supply rose and the House reconvened with Deputy Speaker Suzanne Lohnes-Croft in the Chair.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The Chair of the Committee of the Whole on Supply reports:

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole on Supply has met, has made progress, and begs leave to sit again.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

KEITH IRVING: Madam Speaker, that concludes business for today. I move that the House do now rise and sit again tomorrow, Friday, March 29th, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

After the daily routine, business will include the continuation of the Committee of the Whole on Supply and, with time permitting, the Committee of the Whole House on Bills on Bill Nos. 105, 109, and 112.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise to meet again on Friday, March 29th, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow.

[The House rose at 8:00 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 877**

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 the Halifax Christian Academy has announced a new campus to serve the families of the Beechville, Lakeside, and Timberlea community; and

Whereas the Halifax Christian Academy strives daily to fulfill their vision of transforming lives through dynamic, Christ-centred education and discipleship by promoting important life values, and it has been designated as an Early Childhood Centre, accepting children 18 months to 12 years; and

Whereas, offering smaller class sizes and highly experienced staff, the school proudly shares the consistently high ranking of their students' achievements in reading, writing, and math on standardized tests and maintains students who obtain grades two or three levels above their numerical grade;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating the HCA on opening another campus and on their dedication to guiding and nurturing the growth and development of children to be intellectually and emotionally strong to grow into contributing adults in our community.