



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 2019

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 2019

Sixty-third General Assembly

Second Session

9:00 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, Brendan Maguire

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause reads as follows:

“We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now to pave Hwy 332 Riverport to Lunenburg in 2019. No more delays of plans to pave.”

Mr. Speaker, there are 791 signatures on this petition and, as per the Rules of the House, I have affixed my own.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I'd like to introduce, and ask her to stand, Cathy Bates of Malagash, Nova Scotia. Cathy is one of our strong citizens and I'm glad she is here today to give me an opportunity to table this petition. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table this petition, the operative clause reading:

“1) We, the undersigned, request that the Government of Nova Scotia, and in particular, the Department of Develop NS, commit to the residents of the Malagash area, that they will obtain and provide an explanation to residents for the continual service disruptions to internet connectivity by the various service providers.

2) We, the undersigned, also request that Develop NS commit to the residents of Malagash and of Cumberland County, that our region be given priority for enhanced internet connectivity.”

Mr. Speaker, there are 83 signatures and I have affixed my signature, as per the Rules of the House.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 878

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, when I finish my notice of motion, I'd like a moment of silence.

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

Whereas Skyler Blackie was a charismatic and hard-working 28-year-old young man, who was a firefighter with the Truro Fire Service for five years; and

Whereas on March 9th a terrible accident occurred during firefighter training, and on March 20th Skyler passed away; and

Whereas Skyler was a great firefighter and a well-liked team member and often gave his time and energy to better his community and participate in charities, like Movember;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in offering sincere condolences to Skyler's wife, Erin, his family, and his friends at this devastating time, and offer our appreciation for Skyler's dedication to firefighting and protecting his community.

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

I also want to make notice to the House, Mr. Speaker, that there will be, tomorrow, a regimental funeral service that will be held for Skyler on March 30th at the Colchester Legion.

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.

I ask that all members please rise as we observe a moment of silence in memory of firefighter Blackie.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 879

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

Whereas the sport fishing industry is important to our rural communities and contributed about \$66.5 million in direct spending in 2018, with over 66,000 licences sold last year; and

Whereas sport fishing is an exciting pastime that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and all skill levels, making a great family experience and one of the most popular outdoor activities in the province; and

Whereas Nova Scotians are encouraged to take advantage of the warmer weather and head to one of the province's open waterways to enjoy the 2019 sport fishing season, which will open on April 1st;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in introducing the excitement of sport fishing to family, friends, and visitors when it comes open on April 1st, to help encourage sustainable growth in this very popular activity while supporting jobs and economic activity in rural Nova Scotia.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 132 - Entitled an Act Respecting Tenants' Right to Know About Human Health Hazards. (Lisa Roberts)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

MACINNIS, JAKE/WALSH, MEGHAN: HOSP. DONATION - THANKS

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's always a good day when you hear of a family wanting to recognize hospital staff and physicians for the care that they were provided.

Jake MacInnis and Meghan Walsh of Springville asked family and friends to make a donation to the Women and Children's Unit of the Aberdeen Hospital instead of giving presents for their two-year-old daughter Dani's birthday. This is the second time they have done this. This generous donation is also a measuring stick for the values that they pass on to Dani, their friends and family, and perhaps others who hear their story.

Jake and Meghan, I thank you for your generosity, and the fine example you are setting for your daughter. Belated happy birthday, Dani.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: May I make an introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I'd like to draw members' attention to the gallery opposite where we have here today a family from Dartmouth North, in particular Tessa Davis who is a high school student at Citadel High, and her parents Penney and Richard are here today. Please stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

DAVIS, TESSA: DEBATING, INT'L RECOG. - CONGRATS.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dartmouth North's Tessa Davis who has been excelling at the fine art of debate in the last several years. Last year when Tessa was in Grade 9 at Armbrae Academy, she was part of the Nova Scotia debate teams that came first and second at the Queen's University Debate Tournament in Kingston.

This result qualified Tessa and her teammates for the prestigious Oxford Cup in England, a competition for youth across the Commonwealth and Greece. At Oxford, Tessa placed in the top 10 speakers, a huge achievement as there were 120 participants. Last week

Tessa and her partner, Noah Szymanis, competed at a major tournament at Columbia University where they placed second overall, and Tessa was awarded second speaker for the entire tournament.

Her former teacher, John Stone, describes her as considerate, modest, brilliant, and an incredible critical thinker - considerable praise for such a young person, and well deserved. I ask the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Tessa on her accomplishments so far. I can't wait to see what she does next.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

MACKINTOSH, FRANK: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

GORDON WILSON: I rise today to remember Frank Mackintosh, a passionate advocate and supporter of Digby. Frank first arrived in the area at the beginning of his naval career, arriving at HMCS Cornwallis. During his time there, he would meet his wife Cookie and they would move to other naval assignments for a while.

[9:15 a.m.]

When he retired to Digby, Frank started working at the hospital and quickly became involved in the community. He was a founding member of the Digby Scallop Days and volunteered for many groups, including minor hockey and his church.

He decided to run for town council in 1979, and the mayorship six years later. He would hold his last position for 20 years - longer than any other in the Town of Digby. We all know the positive impact that Frank has had on our community - an impact that will continue for years as we build on his accomplishments.

We were also able to show him our appreciation of his work in our community - the Town of Digby naming him the first recipient of the Joe Casey Humanitarian Award. I hope that our recognition of his efforts then, and at this sad time, will give his family some solace.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

COOPER, ROBERT - PHYSICIAN: DEDICATION TO PROFESSION - RECOG.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize Dr. Robert Cooper of Pictou. Dr. Cooper has been involved with the Sutherland Harris Memorial Hospital for over 10 years. He is the attending physician for the Northumberland Veterans Unit and the Restorative Care Unit. His compassion and respect for the patients is extraordinary.

He continues to strive to upgrade his abilities and skill set to benefit those under his care. Dr. Cooper also assists nursing students from St. F.X. University and LPN students from NSCC by providing leadership, knowledge and wisdom, so they can also deliver better care for their patients now and for many years into the future.

I am proud to recognize Dr. Cooper's spirit, ability and his tremendous commitment to the residents of both units.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, may I make another introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I would like to welcome to the House today someone who is not really a stranger to this House, as she has been honoured here before.

With us today we have Cheyenne Hardy, who lives in Dartmouth North and is a student at Dartmouth High School, and her parents Rowena and Chris. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

PROJECT COMFORT: COM. CARE - THANKS

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to Project Comfort, a community effort to make warm and comforting blankets for people in need in Dartmouth North. Started by community activist Cheyenne Hardy, Project Comfort began as a co-operation with CeaseFire when blankets were made for people who had lost family members because of violence.

With the help of a community grant from Between the Bridges, Cheyenne has expanded the project and assembled a team of volunteers including her mom Rowena, Vel Oakes, and Donna Bishop. Blankets are being made in three separate community gatherings where everyone and anyone is encouraged to come and pitch in.

A round of 12 blankets were made last Fall and were given to Adsum House. Last week, 10 more were made for the Dartmouth Shelter Society, and there will be another batch made soon.

Cheyenne has also taken this idea to Kenya, where she volunteered last summer, and led young people in a blanket-making exercise so they could start supporting people needing comfort in their own communities.

I ask all members of this House to join me in thanking Cheyenne and her team for their caring and generosity toward people who need a little extra comfort.

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

COUNTRY HBR. GUN CLUB - HOST: TRAVELLING NOBODIES - THANKS

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia boasts a lively music industry with acts that reach the calibre of ECMA award winners and beyond. The one thing that professional musicians would tell you is that they would not be as successful had they not been given the opportunity to play small venues such as pubs, Legions, and community halls.

This past St. Patrick's Day, the Country Harbour Gun Club hosted a lively concert by a new trio, the Travelling Nobodies - Peter Lumsden of Canso, Nathan Langley of Country Harbour, and Clifton Pettipas from Antigonish. These fine gentlemen have all garnered success as solo acts and are now combining their song-writing talents and performing their renditions of beloved East Coast artists such as Stan Rogers, to the delight of their fast-growing fan base.

I would like to thank the Country Harbour Gun Club for supporting live music and providing a venue for the Travelling Nobodies. Community halls are an essential infrastructure for cultivating success in small businesses, grassroots organizations and, yes, even future ECMA award winners.

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

COM. CONNEXIONS NETWORK: COM. UNITY - THANKS

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Marisa DeMarco and Ryan Rutledge of Community Connexions Network Nova Scotia for their hard work and dedication to the community of Cole Harbour and beyond.

Connexions is a not-for-profit organization helping families, children, and youth by supporting community development and citizenship through networking and relationships. Their summer camps this summer are going to be an amazing experience for our young people.

Connexions has a bright outlook for visions for communities coming together to be the very best they can be, with a unique approach that includes everyone. They have also started their own business called Party On People, a great opportunity for our youth.

I would like to ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in thanking Marisa DeMarco and Ryan Rutledge of Community Connexions Network and Party On People for uniting our community members.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

LENA METLEGE DIAB: With us today in the East Gallery, I'm pleased to welcome to this historic Legislature Alastair Trower, a seasoned traveller who's lived in the U.K., Argentina, and France, and who's now made Halifax Armdale his home. I first met him in my first term as MLA through his volunteering in the Armdale Scouts group. I'd ask him to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

Before that, I would like to add that he just recently received his Canadian citizenship. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

TROWER, ALASTAIR: CAREER SUCCESS - CONGRATS.

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise to highlight the success of Alastair Trower. A graduate of Middlesex University in London, Alastair's 25-year career has included extensive global experience in sales, marketing, and management. Arriving in Halifax in 2006, he worked as president of Welaptega Marine Limited, a technology firm specializing in underwater inspection in the oil and gas sector. The challenges of that role were immense, as he oversaw the business' response to BP's deep-water oil spill in 2010.

Today Alastair owns Cove BD, a management consulting firm, and oversees business development for Enginuity Inc., an engineering firm on Herring Cove Road. Their focus is on developing new products for start-ups and established businesses across the Maritimes.

Alastair is also a valued member of the volunteer Halifax search-and-rescue team, assisting both Halifax police and the RCMP in seeking lost and injured people in our wilderness areas.

I ask all members to join me in applauding Alastair Trowers' success and thanking him for choosing Nova Scotia as his home.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MINOR BASEBALL ASSOC.: SUMMER COMP.- BEST WISHES

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, when you mention the word “baseball” in Dartmouth, people automatically think of the Senior Baseball League, which has been so prolific and won so many championships over the years. However, their success had to begin somewhere, and that is what had me thinking of the Dartmouth District Minor Baseball Association.

There are numerous age groups where children can participate, from Ball School under-5 to under-18 Midget and all ages in between. One of the teams this season, the Diamond Dawgs, are introducing some exciting changes with the Ball School U5 and Pre Rookie U7 divisions by adopting some of the major components of Baseball Canada’s Rally Cap program.

I want to extend best wishes from this House to President Frederick Campbell, Vice-President Mark Raftus, Treasurer Tamara Doull, and Secretary Suzanne Wamboldt, as well as all the directors and coaches, for volunteering and providing a summer of excellent competition for so many young people in Dartmouth.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

ST. JOS. A. MCKAY CHESS CLUB: ACCOMPLISHMENTS - CONGRATS.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I’d like to take a moment to recognize the consistent, inspiring, and important work of the St. Joseph’s A. McKay chess club. Founded by teacher Jean Robertson in 2004, the club is now run by four parent volunteers, all constituents of mine. More than 40 students at École St. Joseph’s A. McKay School, from Grades 2 to 6, play chess on Tuesdays at lunchtime, and there is a substantial wait-list of students wanting to join.

SJAM’s chess club has had numerous students play at the Provincial Chess Challenge. This year one of their students placed third, several times SJAM students have won and gone on to represent Nova Scotia at the Canadian Chess Challenge, and the team has placed consistently in the top three at the provincial chess team tournament.

I salute the students and the parent volunteers for their efforts and accomplishments, which have many social and academic benefits.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

MUZZY, JANIS: CDN. MILITARY WIVES CHOIR - THANKS

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Janis Muzzy, president of the Halifax Canadian Military Wives Choir and resident of Beechville. The

Halifax chapter of the club started in Fall 2013 and is designed to bring together women who are closely connected with the military through marriage or by occupation. Through the joy of music, the group comes together weekly to make new friends, have fun, and support each other personally and vocally.

The military way of life, consisting of frequent moves, makes it difficult to establish roots and build friendships. The choir recognizes these obstacles and provides women with a network of friends as they move across Canada. The choir helps women integrate into community and sees members through difficult times and celebrates the good times together. No musical training or experience is required to join as the emphasis is fun and friendship.

I ask the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in thanking Janice for her generous work to support our military families.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

JUTEAU, JAMIE - CHIEF: EXTRAORDINARY FIRE RESCUE - COMMEND

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, the heroics of volunteer firefighters have been noted several times in this House of Assembly, but the courageous work of Windsor Fire Department Chief Jamie Juteau and Windsor members should not go unnoticed after the huge fire overnight in Windsor, in which a family of four had to be rescued from a burning duplex on King Street.

Upon Chief Juteau's arrival, he heard cries for help and stood valiantly as a mother dropped her baby from a second story window into the fire chief's hands. Rescue work quickly escalated with at least three more people rescued from the structure.

Firefighters from Greenwich to Mount Uniacke were called to assist Windsor in battling the inferno, while also assisting in the evacuation of the Victoria Park Guest Home located next door. Residents of the Victoria Park Guest Home were taken to Dykeland Lodge long-term care home to be sheltered until the okay was given to return by fire officials.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

STREET CHECKS: INTERIM MORATORIUM - ADOPT

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Justice directed police across the province to immediately cease using street checks as part of a quota system or performance measurement tool.

Chief Blais of the Halifax Regional Police was clear that there is no existing quota system or formal performance assessment connected to street checks currently. So what the minister has announced is that the police should not be engaging in discriminatory behaviour that is contrary to policy.

Dr. Wortley's report was unequivocal - there should be an immediate interim moratorium on this practice while the minister determines next steps. The report goes on to say that while ending street checks is a good first step, the systemic racism entrenched in our justice system needs a lot more work.

Mr. Speaker, how can we even contemplate working on the broader issue when the minister won't take the initial recommendations. The Black community waited 16 years for a report that confirmed what they have been saying all along. Mr. Speaker, Black men in Halifax are almost six times more likely to be stopped than White men. This isn't a case of bad apples - it is a systemic problem which requires immediate and long-term action.

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

JONES, TAHLIA: MSVU MYSTICS BASKETBALL- CONGRATS.

BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate the Mount Saint Vincent University's Mystics Basketball Team, along with their Captain, Fall River's Tahlia Jones, on having competed a perfect season at the Atlantic Collegiate Athletic Association.

Mr. Speaker, Tahlia Jones, a Lockview High Alumni and former Fall River Rebel, was a member and key contributor to the team's perfect 23-0 season, including the championship tournament. Her co-captain, Maria Carroll, was the league's most valuable player and Coach Mark Forward, was named ACAA Coach of the Year.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Tahlia Jones and the Mystics Basketball Team for their tremendous successful season.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

**AFTER THE BELL GIRLS GRP.:
MENTAL/PHYSICAL WELLNESS - COMMEND**

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, under the direction of Taryn Jollimore, a group of young women in Queens County have formed the After the Bell girls' group.

Designed for female students in Grades 6 through 8, this program gives these girls the opportunity to participate in activities such as yoga, bowling, pickleball, curling, sledding, swimming, nature walks, skating, kayaking and self-defence. In addition, they have opportunities to try new and healthy food options. These are done in safe and positive

environments and recognize the benefits of such activities to the mental and physical health of our youth.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to applaud Ms. Jollimore and these young women for learning new skills, staying active, and working together as a team to benefit all members. You should all feel very proud of your accomplishments.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

ROSS, MATTHEW: BOXING, CAN. WINTER GAMES - CONGRATS.

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, Matthew Ross is a 16-year-old Grade 11 Student at Breton Education Centre in New Waterford and is the youngest son of Monica and Robbie Ross.

[9:30 a.m.]

Matthew took up the sport of boxing in 2014 while working part time at his father's garage. A client, a local boxing coach, often visited the garage and would comment to Matthew that he would make a great boxer. One day, Matthew decided to take him up on his offer and has been in love with the sport ever since.

Matthew has been recognized for many accomplishments in boxing - such as winning gold at the Brampton Cup in 2016 and in 2018, winning gold at the national championships in 2018, and earning silver at the Wexford Cup 2018, and was named the Nova Scotia Provincial Boxing Champion in 2019. He is very proud of his most recent opportunity to represent Nova Scotia as a member of the Canada Games team where he was awarded the bronze medal.

Beyond the awards, boxing has changed Matthew's life in so many positive ways, both mentally and physically. The daily intensive training has improved his fitness level and led to a strong work ethic and discipline. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Matthew on all of his accomplishments and wish him well in the future.

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

LORDLY PARK: BEST COM. SPACE AWARD - CONGRATS.

HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Chester Municipal Heritage Society on the designation of Lordly Park as the 2018 winner of the Best Community Space awarded by the Municipality of Chester.

Over a number of years, the society's dedicated volunteers accumulated a full block of the original Village of Chester to create Lordly Park. The park has cultivated areas, a

natural wetland, a children's playground, and a skating and games berm. It is also home to successful restoration projects of Lordly House Museum and Maple Cottage.

The historical society has partnered with the municipality, local volunteers, and local businesses to provide more structured family entertainment at Lordly Park. In addition to popular afternoon teas, families bring picnic suppers and their dancing shoes to enjoy local musical groups providing weekly entertainment.

I commend the volunteers of the Chester Municipal Heritage Society and congratulate them on the designation of Lordly Park as the 2018 winner of the Municipality of Chester's Best Community Space Award.

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

HENICK, DELORES: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, right about now, Delores Henick of Sydney River is finishing up her last shift in the operating room at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital, after 41 years as a registered nurse.

For four decades, Delores has committed herself to saving lives, helping others heal, and showing love and compassion to those in their darkest days. These qualities alone would be impressive, but her deep commitment to serving others goes well outside her life as a nurse. Whether she is volunteering, singing at church, or raising her five children, Delores is a beacon of compassion and the embodiment of self-sacrifice.

Though I very much doubt Delores will be less busy, I ask all members of this House to extend their heartfelt congratulations and hopes for a relaxing retirement for Delores Henick.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

LEBANESE & SYRIAN CULTURAL SOC.: HIST. COM. DEV. - THANKS

EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a newly organized Lebanese and Syrian culture society. These families have been arriving for the past 130 years and have played a tremendous role in community development. This group is trying to collect old photos, information, stories, meeting with elders and family members to become part of a display at the North Sydney Heritage Museum. At present, there are 168 members on the group's Facebook page.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank these community-minded citizens for their dream of remembering the role their families played in the history of the Northside and making it available to the museum for all to enjoy.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

COM. ACTIVISTS: C&D SITE - THANKS

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to recognize some outstanding activists in my community, Melissa King, Deb Irons- Kelly and, of course, the incredibly resilient and dedicated Marlene Brown. These amazing women have rallied the community and, for well over a decade, fought to have the C&D site, in Harrietsfield, addressed.

It has been an honour to work alongside them, to follow their lead, and to take their advice on this very important issue.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

PUGWASH COM. HEALTH BD.: HEALTHY LIVING - THANKS

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to recognize the Pugwash and Area Community Health Board for being proactive with the Village of Pugwash and area. They are getting the community to join and encourage healthy living. They held an event on February 23rd with speakers discussing active living and healthy eating options.

The cold winter months can be discouraging to people, Mr. Speaker, and it's important to encourage each other and make healthy choices that impact our lives. The Pugwash and Area Community Health Board show that their community matters, and I would like to thank them today for helping to make our community take steps to being healthier.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

LIBBY, REBECCA: ZENITH PHYSIO PILATES - CONGRATS.

SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Rebecca Libby, who has recently expanded her business, Zenith Physio Pilates, located in Oakland. Zenith Physio Pilates specializes in women's health and also offers pilates classes, massage therapy, grief counselling, and assistance for women who have had breast cancer.

Rebecca is a physiotherapy graduate from Dalhousie University and one of few therapists in Nova Scotia specializing in treatment for women. Rebecca has recently expanded her skillset by becoming qualified as a manual osteopath. She says she enjoys her work and that it is rewarding to see changes in people's quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you and the members of this House of Assembly please join me in congratulating Rebecca on the expansion of her business, Zenith Physio Pilates, and wish her continued success in the future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

FIRE DEPTS.: QUICK FIRE RESPONSE - CONGRATS.

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and thank the fire departments from Parrsboro, Springhill, River Hebert, and South Hampton and the FPW Fire Brigade for their quick response to the Glooscap Restaurant and Lounge in Parrsboro on December 11, 2018. The firefighters received the call at 7:00 a.m. and they were met with freezing temperatures. The -20°C temperatures brought challenges to keep the firefighters warm and to keep the water from freezing.

The Glooscap Restaurant was an icon of the community for many years. It was the only restaurant that was open year-round, and it employed 14 people. Please join me in congratulating and thanking these fire departments on a job well done throughout everyone's community in this province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

MOORE, JOHN: SERV. TO MASKWA - RECOG.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a well-known member of the Clayton Park West community. John Moore has served as a commodore of the Maskwa Aquatic Club for over six years, making him its longest-standing commodore to date. John has transformed Maskwa from a small, struggling paddling club to the largest and most competitive in Canada. It attracts the biggest names from around the world.

John has secured funding for a new heat-pump system, the paving of the Maskwa roadways, a new racecourse, and new war canoes and docks. John also finds time to volunteer at the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes trails association and at Saint Benedict Catholic church. Also, he writes a monthly travel article in the local paper.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the members of this House of Assembly to join me in recognizing John for his instrumental role at the Maskwa Aquatic Club. He is a vital member of our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING: SKILLS DEV. - RECOG.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, the Sunrise Trail 4-H Club recently held their public speaking rally at the well-attended Lyons Brook hall. Public speaking is an important aspect of 4-H and it must be completed yearly by members throughout the organization.

I know the challenge of public speaking, and I am amazed knowing that these members can provide such stellar performances at all ages.

I would like to thank all of the volunteers involved in making this a success by allowing our community's youth to have a platform to showcase their talents. There is also a chance to compete at the county level and improve their skills.

The ability to speak publicly can open many opportunities in your life, and I applaud 4-H in helping promote and foster this great skill to the leaders of tomorrow.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

**SMITH, DONNA & BRUCE - FOSTER PARENTS:
RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.**

KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work of two very special people in Hantsport. Since 2005, Bruce "Bucky" and Donna Smith have fostered more than 75 young Nova Scotians. They have welcomed into their home and cared for children as young as six weeks, right up to 15-year-old young adults.

Last November, Bucky and Donna retired as foster parents, taking with them a lifetime of memories of those who found a home in their home. One of those memories came in the form of an unexpected tribute when one of the former foster children asked Bucky to walk her down the aisle at her wedding last year.

Foster parents serve a vital and indispensable role in our communities, and it is a privilege for me to honour these two fine citizens today. I would like to ask the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to extend, with me, sincere thanks to Bucky and Donna Smith for making a difference in the lives of so many young citizens.

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

**LEBLANC, GABRIEL: LIVRE,
LA TRADITION ORALE DE MON ISLE MADAME - MERCI**

ALANA PAON: Monsieur le Président, je me lève aujourd'hui pour remercier Gabriel LeBlanc de l'Île Madame. M. LeBlanc est un enseignant et administrateur à la retraite, et l'auteur récent de *La Tradition Orale : De Mon Isle Madame: Le Conte Acadien*.

Monsieur le Président, Gabriel LeBlanc est un Acadien fier de sa culture et un raconteur passionné de l'histoire et de la culture acadienne. Dans son livre, M. LeBlanc raconte les liens qui unissent les acadiens et les Mi'kmaq à travers d'une perspective historique et transmis à travers des générations. Il explique aussi comment, historiquement, les habitants de L'Île Madame sont décrits par leurs noms de famille et les communautés d'où leur familles se sont établies.

Monsieur le Président, je tiens à remercier M. Gabriel LeBlanc de cette contribution si importante à l'histoire de l'Île Madame et des Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

KENNEY, COWEN: VOLUN. OF THE YR. - CONGRATS.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Cowen Kenney has been named the provincial volunteer of the year for the town of Yarmouth. Cowen is 13 years old, a Grade 8 student at Maple Grove Education Centre, is an active volunteer, and warm and welcoming presence in our community.

Cowen loves to spend time with seniors at our local seniors' facilities, he visits with veterans he got to know during his time as part of the Memorial Club, he participates in a number of school-based clubs and activities such as the dance committee, performance group, band, the Maple Grove Community Pride group, and hockey. Cowen is also a dedicated volunteer with the Mariners Centre, and MC Media group where he has flourished as an integral part of the group. Mariners Centre General Manager Gil Dares said of Cowen, we are truly lucky to have Cowen as one of our volunteers. He is very personable and, equally, dependable. He has become a valued member of our team.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I recognize Yarmouth's Cowen Kenney here today. I ask that this House of Assembly join me in congratulating him on being named the Town of Yarmouth's Volunteer of the Year for 2019 and I'd like to thank Cowen for so joyously and generously sharing with us his time, energy, and most importantly, his kindness. He's an inspiration to us all. Cowen is not here, I'm sorry for that but if the members of the House ever do get a chance to meet him, they'll know he's a lovely gentleman.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

SHORT, KAYLA: FULL-TIME BLOGGER - CONGRATS.

EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Sydney Mines native Kayla Short. She is the creator of Short Presents media pages.

Almost 10 years ago while she was studying to be a teacher, she started blogging family back home. Her comments on food, fashion, beauty and travel led her to writing for *Stylish Canada* and that turned into a four-year contract with the *Huffington Post*. She has now become a full-time blogger with tens of thousands of viewers. Kayla loves what she is doing, and her media pages are booming.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish Kayla continued success and to share her philosophy that you can blossom wherever or whoever you are.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**NAUGLER, GRACE/BOLIVAR, DREW -
RECIPIENTS: GOOD SPORT AWARD - CONGRATS.**

HON. MARK FUREY: I rise today to recognize Drew Boliver and Grace Naugler. Each year, the Hebbville Academy in conjunction with the Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation gives the Good Sport Award to two Grade 8 student athletes who best demonstrate commitment to fair play, ethical behaviour, and integrity and who show respect and concern for others while participating in school sport.

Drew and Grace, the recipients of the 2018 Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation Good Sport Award displayed the characteristics of good sportsmanship both on and off the athletic field. Grace is a member of the school soccer, volleyball, basketball, softball, and track programs and Drew participates in cross country, soccer, volleyball, basketball, softball, and track.

I ask all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Grace Naugler and Drew Boliver on receiving the Good Sport Award and commend them for being positive role models at their schools.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

CAFÉ ARTWAY: NEW LOCATION - BEST WISHES

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome Kimberly and Mitch White of the Café Artway, a new business, to downtown Amherst.

Café Artway relocated to Amherst for a fresh start. Café Artway has been a bright new addition to the downtown Amherst community and brings fresh food to its customers.

Kimberly and Mitch have worked hard to transition to their new location and have fit in very well in downtown Amherst.

ArtWay Café will be a wonderful addition to our growing economy here in Cumberland County, and I wish Kimberley and Mitch much success in their new location.

[9:45 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

SMITH, DELORES & DOUG: 60TH WEDDING ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate a couple who celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary while we were on March Break.

Doug and Delores Smith were married on March 21, 1959, in Chatham, Ontario. They've been together for 60 years with love and laughter, through numerous moves, career changes, a late-in-life return to college, three children and seven grandchildren.

My parents have always been there for their friends and family in times of need. In fact, at the age of 83, my dad still snow blows a lot of his neighbours' driveways. They always move into our house at election time. Mom cooks, does laundry and dad does gardening and lawn care. When I was widowed at the age of 30, they were there. When my 12-year-old nephew was attacked and left in a coma, they were there. When my brother hit a deer and lost his leg, they were there.

I want to thank my parents for being the kind of people you can count on and wish them many more years together. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

FUNDY GEOL. MUS.: 25TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today and acknowledge the Fundy Geological Museum on its 25th anniversary. The Fundy Geological Museum in Parrsboro held an event in November 2018 to celebrate the silver anniversary of the former and current directors, reminiscing on the past of both the Nova Scotia Museum and the Fundy Geological Museum.

The Fundy Geological Museum is the world centre for experiencing geological history, interpreted from the unique features of Nova Scotia's Fundy region. It was opened and established in December 1993.

The Fundy Geological Museum attracts over 22,000 visitors a year. The museum includes an exhibit gallery, lab space, multi-function room, a gift shop and administration office. I ask this House to join me in congratulating the Fundy Geological Museum on its 25th anniversary and wish them many more years of success.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

SOU'WEST NOVA TRANSIT ASSOC.: ACCESSIBLE VAN - CONGRATS.

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, the Sou'West Nova Transit Association is a well-used service that benefits many in Shelburne County, thanks in large part to a \$10,000 donation from the 100+ Women Who Care of Shelburne County. The association was able to purchase a customized van, equipped with a wheelchair ramp. This acquisition is a welcome addition to the community to ensure wheelchair users are able to enjoy this service.

I would like to congratulate the Sou'West Nova Transit Association and this very generous group of women. I applaud their ongoing volunteer efforts, generosity and commitment to making a difference in the lives of Shelburne County residents.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for unanimous consent of the House to revert back. My Opposition House Leader colleagues have agreed to allow us to ask the House to revert back to Statements by Ministers. We have one for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, so we would like to revert back for a quick minister's statement. I think that the critics are ready for those responses now as well.

THE SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

[STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all the colleagues for allowing us to do this. With your permission, I would like to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

ZACH CHURCHILL: In the East Gallery, we are joined here today by Travis Sampson. Travis, if you could rise for a moment, please. Travis is a child and youth care practitioner who works with students in the Halifax Regional Centre for Education.

As Travis will tell you, a big part of youth care is about building relationships, seeing his colleagues support our students by ensuring they feel connected to their schools.

I want to thank Travis for taking a few moments out of his day to join us and request that members of this House give him a very warm welcome. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reaffirm government's commitment to a safe and inclusive public education system for Nova Scotians. This year, we will invest a total of \$30 million to support a model of inclusive education across the province. This investment will place hundreds of non-teaching staff supports into our classrooms and will support program learning and development opportunities for students and teachers.

We know these inclusive supports are helping. An example of such supports can be seen in the work of our child and youth care practitioners, like Travis Sampson from Halifax, who work closely with staff and students in delivering programs for students who have difficulty coping in school, so they can travel with their peers and place them on a path to success. Or Susan Moore in Annapolis, a program planning specialist who provides supports to students with complex behavioural needs, helping 43 students at 26 schools this school year.

We have heard from teachers in the Strait Regional Centre for Education who said that having access to an autism specialist for their students has been an asset in their classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the outstanding work of those in our public education system who go above and beyond every day to support students and their families in helping ensure that the life trajectory of those who are entrusted in our care achieve they very best they can.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues on this side of the House I would like to welcome Mr. Sampson as well, and I want to thank Travis Sampson and the countless others here in our province who go above and beyond in our schools to ensure that our students have the supports they need.

Mr. Speaker, we do recognize the fundamental importance of affirming our commitments to the inclusion model - and I do want to thank the minister for stating that. I think it's important that our youth in schools who need a different learning environment, who require extra supports hear that message from this House as well, that we are committed to inclusion, a system and an approach to education that, unfortunately, in the 13 years that I spent in the classroom, wasn't always fully supported. Often it was very much an element of sort of a drop in the bucket in terms of the supports that were given.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not remind this House that while there are a lot of stories of success, there are also stories of where we're hearing that the resources that have been committed and promised are not translating on the ground. I know as a MLA that I hear from parents and teachers in my community that the \$15 million committed last fiscal year and the monies committed this year - there are concerns that they are not translating on the ground, that they are not meeting their intended outcome in the classroom.

Mr. Speaker, I think of one of my constituents the other day who reached out to me. Her child is experiencing difficulty in the classroom, and her child is not getting the interventions required to stop the bullying. Let us remember those children. Let us remember that intentions are important, and of course I commend you for those intentions. However, we have to ensure it translates on the ground and those resources maximize and set those students up for the success that they deserve.

Make no mistake that for me, as a MLA and a former teacher, I am committed to inclusion. I want to thank Travis Sampson and many others who go above and beyond. We have to also remember there is a lot of work to do. Members on this side of the House will continue to question and challenge and hold government accountable when it comes to the inclusion model. Let us not forget, let us not have rose-coloured glasses, and let us not forget there are many students out there who still require our support.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I want to begin by congratulating the government for having taken the very first step in addressing the issue of inclusion in schools. The establishment of the commission and the release of the students' first report a year ago were important moments for our province. Teachers, students and families were pleased to hear the government accept the recommendations of that report and commit to making the investments needed to ensure that our public education system is safe and inclusive and meets the needs of everyone.

On behalf of our caucus, I also want to take the opportunity to acknowledge the incredible expertise, patience, and commitment of the people working in the public education system. These are exceptional people doing incredible work, often in challenging circumstances. We know that our children and their families are counting on these

dedicated individuals. This is a huge responsibility and we respect and admire them for taking it on. Thank you particularly to our guests in the gallery.

We know we are still at the beginning of making our schools the inclusive spaces they need to be, and there is still so much to do. We are looking forward to seeing the inclusive education policy framework, including new behaviour, mental health, and autism strategies come forward. We're looking forward to this framework leading to greater coordination across departments so that children and their families have seamless access to services and supports across the lifespan, and we are looking forward to annual reports on our progress towards those shared goals.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for giving me the opportunity to voice my continued support for the road map put forward in *Students First*, and I look forward to working with our partners in public education to make the improvements needed.

THE SPEAKER: Just before we go back to members' statements, I think it would be prudent for me just to remind all members of the House that when ministerial statements are put forth, it is the tradition of this House that the Opposition replies not be longer than the ministerial statements themselves. So, just a friendly reminder.

We will now revert to members' statements.

[STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURS: 50TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the milestone of the Kingston-Greenwood organization Friendly Neighbours, who in 2018, marked the 50th year of supporting local community members and families by providing them with Christmas hampers.

What began in the PMQs of 1968, under the leadership of Jack Beaudin, Flight Engineer at CFB Greenwood, has received unbelievable community support allowing this initiative to be a continuous community success. More recently, the organization has moved to the Kingston area, and each year funds are raised for the annual Christmas Mommies and Daddies Telethon, hosted in Aylesford by the local Kingston, Aylesford, Berwick, and Coldbrook Lions Clubs. This past year, Friendly Neighbours supported 250 families, encompassing 365 in the local area. Hampers included food, clothes, toys, books, a toothbrush, and much, much more.

Mr. Speaker, I request that all members of the House join me in recognizing the efforts of Friendly Neighbours over the past 50 years in ensuring community members are supported during the holidays.

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

NEAVES, MEGAN: RACISM, CREATIVE TEACHING - RECOG.

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring recognition to Megan Neaves, a teacher at Astral Drive Junior High School in Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia.

Meghan went the extra mile while celebrating African Heritage Month, teaching her students about systemic racism and injustice. She created a creative and hands-on approach which was a home run with the students, as they were able to hear stories and testimonials from African Nova Scotians and Indigenous communities from around our province who had their own stories to tell. The open conversation and small group setting helped make the event a great learning environment. Students felt empowered after the event.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in acknowledging Megan Neaves for her dedication to her students and for her ability to initiate a different type of learning within Astral Drive Junior High School.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

BROOKS, ELIZA: 100TH BIRTHDAY - BEST WISHES

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Ms. Eliza Brooks of East Preston, who will turn 100 years old on May 15, 2019, and is one of the oldest surviving members of the Preston communities.

She raised four children as a single mother and was employed as a domestic worker at the Victoria General Hospital. She is a lifetime member of the Ladies Auxiliary ministry and a talented chorus member of the East Preston United Baptist Church. She is noted for her wonderful singing voice and has performed solos in many communities throughout Nova Scotia.

I want to recognize and congratulate Ms. Eliza Brooks on her amazing life and contribution to her church and our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

VERGE, KELLY: VOLUN. OF THE YR. - CONGRATS.

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, a day in the life of Kelly Verge would leave most of us with our heads spinning. Kelly Verge was named the Volunteer of the Year at the 2018 East Hants Sport Awards Gala, most definitely a well-deserved award.

She is a long-time volunteer with the Hants North Baseball Association and serves as treasurer, spending countless hours overseeing the finances of the group. She recruits workers in the canteen, applies for grant funding to hire summer students, looks after registration, distributes and collects uniforms, and organizes the end-of-year banquet. She coaches, score keeps, pitch counts, organizes tournaments, sits on the executive of the Hants North Recreation and Development Association, and also pitches in on numerous fundraisers.

I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Kelly Verge and offer her our admiration and gratitude for her time, energy, and dedication to the sport of baseball and her community.

[10:00 a.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The time allotted for Statements by Members has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY**ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - CARBON PRICING: EXTRA TAXES - CONFIRM

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of this year, gas prices were around 96 cents in Halifax. As of this morning, the same price is about \$1.22 - that's about a third higher in three months. Many Nova Scotians might not know that since January 1st there have been some extra taxes for the carbon-pricing scheme in this province on every single litre of gasoline.

I'd like to ask the Premier: Can the Premier tell Nova Scotians how much his government has collected in carbon price on gasoline since the beginning of the year?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member would know, the price has gone from 15.5 cents to 16.5 cents motor fuel tax on a litre of gas.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I was more interested at this time in the total amount collected and just from the information we have available, which is certainly not

as much as the government's, my back-of-the-envelope math suggests that the government has collected somewhere up to \$26 million in additional gas tax revenue out of the pockets of Nova Scotians just since the beginning of the year.

But what I can't see in the budget that's just been tabled is a special line item for carbon tax-pricing revenue going forward, but if you think about up to \$26 million in a quarter, that's a lot of revenue that's buried somewhere in the budget for the coming year. Cannabis tax has its own line, but the carbon-pricing revenue doesn't.

If the Premier is so proud of his carbon tax plan, why is he hiding the amount that he's intending to collect - why can't he put it on display in the budget?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As we would know, across the country, carbon taxes are going into many provinces, including some of the sister provinces in Atlantic Canada. We're very fortunate here in Nova Scotia to be able to do our own cap-and-trade system. The honourable member referred to the increase in motor fuel tax - he would also know that money does not go into general revenue, it goes into the Green Fund that will be made available for initiatives to continue to help Nova Scotians' businesses to continue to reduce their carbon footprint. All of that money will go back into making sure that we continue to "green" the economy of Nova Scotia.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, we're trying to give an understanding of the size of that Green Fund and the use of that Green Fund, and maybe we'll see it show up in more charging stations in Glace Bay for all those people driving Teslas, or Inverness or New Glasgow for all those people driving \$80,000 Teslas in those communities. But the reality is that this government, with this scheme, is collecting more tax money from Nova Scotians.

I don't know if this government noticed about a month ago it was reported that this province has the lowest median after-tax income in the country. So, collecting more money from them is something that we should always do cautiously, and we should definitely know what it's going to go for - \$26 million a quarter, up to \$26 million a quarter. That's an awfully high price tag for a Justin Trudeau vanity project around the carbon pricing.

Does the Premier think that the carbon price on gas is going to increase or decrease in the coming year, and how much does he expect to collect?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I have said, the honourable member may want to ignore the fact that climate change is having an impact on the global community and our province has a role to play. He continued to ignore the facts, he continued to say the environment doesn't matter.

Well, in actual fact, it matters to Nova Scotians. Canada has taken on its role to ensure that it does its part. What we have said as a provincial government, we want Nova Scotians to be recognized for the work that they have been doing since 2005. The cap-and-trade system inside of Nova Scotia reflects that hard work. It allows us to continue to make investments to ensure they reduce the carbon footprint of individuals in our Green Fund and allow businesses to be able to use that revenue to increase that. But I want to assure the honourable member that the economy of Nova Scotia is doing well despite all the noise and rhetoric from the honourable member.

I want to tell him it's pretty important. A.F. Theriault & Son Ltd. think it's doing quite well at a \$6.7 million investment. Michelin Tires, in his own riding, I believe is doing well putting \$12 million back into the economy of Pictou County. I want to tell him that Surette Battery Company in Springhill believes the economy is doing well. They are making a real investment in the economy of Nova Scotia.

The fact of the matter is, the economy and the businesses of Nova Scotia are doing well, despite the honourable member trying to divide communities across this province for his own political needs. (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please.

The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party.

PREM.: HUNGER CAPITAL OF CAN. (HFX.) - EXPLAIN

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to express concern about the claim that the economy of Nova Scotia is doing well. I expressed concern about it earlier this week when I asked the Premier if he would respond to the disconnect between the budget that his government had tabled and the budgets of households and families in the province, and the Premier said that “. . . every trend in this province is headed in the right direction.”

There is a new addition to the growing body of evidence to the contrary, and I will table it. It is the current issue of the national magazine *The Walrus*, which contains a cover story about food insecurity in Canada in which this sentence appears, “With nearly 20 percent of its population affected, Halifax has the highest rate of food insecurity among Canadian cities.”

This is on every newsstand in Canada, Mr. Speaker. How can the Premier possibly continue to claim that every trend is going in the right direction?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for his question and his leadership to continue to make sure we stay focused on the issues that are important to Nova Scotian families.

He has raised, each and every time, this very issue and I want to say to him that we have a difference of opinion when it comes to the investments that we have made in those - in citizens in our community who require our support.

The basic personal exemption increase - he would know that child maintenance is no longer included in when you are looking at whether it is a housing subsidy, whether it's looking at income support; we've removed that.

He would also know that we continued to increase the number of rent supplements for low-income Nova Scotians to reduce their overall costs and ensure that they are living in affordable housing.

We are going to continue to work, but I want to assure the honourable member that we know there is more work to do. We look forward to hearing his constructive things that we can do together to make sure that we are looking after all our citizens.

GARY BURRILL: The article I've referred to goes on to say that one of the key reasons Halifax is the worst city in Canada for people having to skip meals, not being able to afford their food, or having to go days without eating, is that many of the jobs Halifax offers are in the service sector, often short-term, contract jobs - the kind of jobs that don't come with security or come with benefits. I'm talking about restaurant staff, cashiers, delivery drivers, janitors - all this essential work that people often do in Nova Scotia for the minimum wage.

My question for the Premier is: What makes the Premier think that a mere 55 cents an hour in the minimum wage is going to address the fact that the capital of Nova Scotia is the hunger capital of the country?

THE PREMIER: Again, I want to thank the honourable member for his question. He would know that we are following the model of increasing the minimum wage that was set by the New Democratic Party when they were in power. This time, though, we've increased it to 55 cents this year - it will get another increase of 55 cents. He knows that is towards the average minimum wage across the country.

I think it is important for the honourable member to recognize that we have seen that when the minimum wage is increased in respective provinces, it has pushed its way through the salaries which means the buying power of that has lasted probably for about 18 months, and then those families were in the same position they were.

What we have decided to do was ensure that we continue to increase the minimum wage, but we've also said at the same time, let's do a sliding scale on basic personal exemption. Some low-income Nova Scotians should not be paying the same basic personal exemptions as the members who sit in this House. I believe that and I've always believed that. If we change that, we are leaving more money in the pockets of Nova Scotians.

Again, we continue to make sure that we support those families. Low-income Nova Scotians require support with a number of other initiatives, and I look forward to responding to his third question.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier says that there are things that are important for me to realize. It is important to the people of our province that our Premier recognize the realities of daily life.

The article that I am speaking about profiles a man named John Hemr. John lives in Bayers Westwood. After he pays for his rent, power, phone, and medication, he has about \$20 a week for groceries. He says in the article how he eats one meal a day, often pasta, sometimes rice, oftentimes a can of soup. Now one thing that this article makes very clear, one of its contributing experts says - these are the expert's words: "Food insecurity is about income."

So here in the Legislature we have before us a budget which does not include an increase of one cent in the Poverty Reduction Credit, the Affordable Living Tax Credit or the Nova Scotia Child Benefit. How can the Premier not see that he has tabled a budget that is going to leave a lot of people in our province hungry?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As the 12th of 17, raised by a widowed parent, I do know the struggles that Nova Scotians are feeling today, and it has never left me when I took this position.

That's why, every opportunity I get, I want to make sure that the basic personal exemptions reflect the reality that low-income people in this province should not be paying the same as those of us who sit in this House. It is why I am grateful every day for the fact that my parents bought a house before my father passed away, because we had a house to live in.

Household insecurity, Mr. Speaker, is a real challenge. It is why we put in place rent supplements to ensure that low-income Nova Scotians have a place to live. Each and every item in this budget reflects our commitment to families across this province.

Government after government ignored the fact, Mr. Speaker, and would continue to use the child maintenance against those families. It was not income for the person, it was for caring for those children. We have eliminated using that. That is the reality.

Is there more work to do? Of course, there is, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to continuing to work with that member, to continue to make sure that the voices continue to be heard of those families that require our support.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

GOV'T. (N.S.): AFFORDABLE HOUSING (INVERNESS) - LACKING

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Minister of Housing. I have been following announcements made for affordable housing investments, including one last summer that included Cape Breton. I know that sometimes when Communications Nova Scotia puts out releases about Cape Breton, they are not necessarily referring to the entire island.

Last Fall I met with a single mom who started a new job in Inverness. Her daughter goes to school in Inverness and all of her friends are there. They need a place to live in Inverness. Fortunately, they have a place until this Spring, at which point it will become a short-term rental for the summer.

Mr. Speaker, that is fine. I know people are renting properties to visitors to help grow tourism and that is good, but it means there is less affordable housing on the market. Surely between last Fall and this Spring, Housing could have found her a place to stay in Inverness.

This week we learned that her closest option is over an hour away, in Port Hawkesbury. The affordable housing announcements forget about Inverness.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. The issue raised is a serious one across the province, it is why we continue to make sure that we make investments in rent supplements. It is why, in the current budget, we have set aside funding to actually invest in our own housing, to continue to increase the housing stock that is part of the province's.

We know that in some parts of our province there is the private sector providing the many options for those families, but we know there are parts of our province where it requires government to continue to provide that support. Inverness, Mr. Speaker, is not forgotten. Quite frankly, we continue to work with the good people of Inverness.

I hope the honourable member will continue to work with the department and the minister to ensure that his constituent who is finding themselves in this position today will find a situation that actually works for their family.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I can count three private providers who came to the department hoping to get funding, who were turned down this year. A housing program that works should be able to keep a mom and her daughter close to the same community where they work and go to school. She could lose her job; her young daughter could lose her friends. It's not very nice.

What message does this send to people who are trying their best to participate in the economy and raise a family? These are Nova Scotians we need to keep in their communities because these small communities and the small businesses there need them.

Housing Nova Scotia and, by extension, this government, should support them. They had six months to help them. An apartment in Port Hawkesbury is not a solution.

[10:15 a.m.]

Will the Premier prove that this government cares and provide Housing Nova Scotia with what it needs to better manage the affordable housing needs in Inverness and direct them to find a place for this family, close to Inverness, before their security falls apart?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. We continue to work not only with families in Inverness but families across this province to continue to provide them with affordable housing.

I have laid out a number of options on rent supplements. I said in my first answer, the amount of money we set aside for investment in housing stocks. We continue to work with private developers to continue to make sure that we are providing a myriad of housing options for families.

I don't know the specific case the honourable member is referring to but I can tell you that the minister will look into it. We'll do everything we can, not only to keep this family close to where they are, Mr. Speaker, but all families in our province who are living in communities and find themselves in situations where they need affordable housing and we want to help them.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

SENIORS - LONG-TERM CARE BEDS: SHORTAGE - ACTION

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Seniors. We have heard from families and community organizations about the need for more nursing home beds. Families are concerned that their loved ones are being kept in hospitals instead of receiving proper long-term care. More than 20 per cent of all hospital beds were occupied by alternative level of care patients in 2018.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the minister, is forcing seniors to stay in hospital beds because there are no long-term care beds available, a responsible approach for providing care for seniors?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I thank the member for the question. We know that seniors' issues and a wide range of programs are the purview of the Department of Seniors. We have a number of programs around age-friendly communities and ways in which we do support seniors through our work. Just this week we celebrated the GovLab which is coming up with new and innovative ways of supporting seniors in our communities and staying safely in their homes as long as possible.

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, when seniors are forced to stay in hospital beds instead of being placed in long-term care, they do not have the same quality of life that they would if they were in a proper nursing home. There is no recreation or programming opportunities in hospitals, there are limited opportunities for social interaction. Living in a hospital bed is not good for anyone in the long term.

I have had the experience to chat with people who are living in hospital beds and are missing out on the social interaction that is provided in long-term care facilities, once that is where they need to go.

The average total length of stay in a Nova Scotia hospital for an ALC patient is more than 100 days. This is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what is the minister doing to get seniors out of hospital beds and into proper long-term care facilities?

LEO GLAVINE: That is one of the challenges that has faced all governments for the last couple of decades. What I do know is that the list for seniors in hospitals has been dramatically cut. I remember the days when there would be 30 patients at Valley Regional, now it's down to about 10.

What I could really tell the member opposite is that if I were in Cape Breton, I'd be celebrating the new, long-term care beds coming to Cape Breton.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

H&W - YARMOUTH HOSP.: ONCOLOGY DECISION - REACTION

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Back in the end of January the government, through its committee with Dr. Drew Bethune, made a decision not to put radiation oncology in the Yarmouth hospital, quite to the dismay of the locals, of course feeling that that's a service they could have for those people who have to travel so far here to Halifax to receive that service.

My question to the minister is simply: How are we reacting to that decision? How is the government going to move forward from that decision of not having radiation oncology in Yarmouth?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I do thank the member for the question. I know that this is a topic of great interest to the constituents in Yarmouth. Certainly my colleague the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, the member for Yarmouth, has brought this issue to the fore. That's why we initiated the review in the first place.

The results of the review were made public, and Dr. Bethune and I went to Yarmouth to have the conversations with representatives - and the recommendation did have representatives from the community as well to move forward with enhancing other supports, rather than developing the complete cancer centre. That was after reviewing all of the information and the recommendations of both the clinicians and the community representatives who came forward to work. Work on the next steps is underway.

CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: So what happens is that people with a cancer diagnosis - those who have to go to radiation therapy - make a decision as to whether they travel here to Halifax or not, whether they continue to treat or do they accept their fate to go on. That's a sad discussion to have with anyone's constituent. I believe it does happen far more than we actually know.

The enhancements revolve around psychological support for patients, better coordination of appointments, enhanced use of telemedicine, uses of radiotherapy technology so that there are fewer appointments, and better solutions for transportation and accommodations.

My question to the minister is simply: What are the timelines to get some of these things working for our patients?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, work on the next steps in moving forward with those recommendations that were brought forward - I thank the member for reading off the report recommendation summary, because that's exactly what the recommendations were. Those next steps and the actions have already started.

Dr. Bethune and his team continue with the committee on the clinical work and recommendations, as I mentioned, around psychological supports and scheduling of appointments and efficiencies there. So that work is ongoing.

Within the government's side, we've got the committee established, looking at how we can improve the transportation and accommodation. So again, work started right away and is continuing.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

H&W - ORTHO SURGERIES: BACKLOG WORSE - COMMENT

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. In 2015, a media report highlighted a backlog for hip and knee surgeries in the province. In last year's budget, investments were made that were supposed to erase wait times and clear the backlog, but it has actually gotten worse, and now at Valley Regional there is a backlog of 3,030 surgeries. I'll table both of those media reports that I've referenced.

My question for the Minister of Health and Wellness is: During his time as minister, we've seen a steady decline in these important health services, and what is he going to do about that?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for raising this important question. The area of orthopaedic surgeries in the province is one that this government has taken seriously. I'll remind the members of the Legislature that in October last year, we announced a program that was designed by physicians on the front line, where we tasked them with coming forward with a proposal of how we can properly and successfully attack wait-lists and get more surgeries for orthopaedics, particularly targeting hips and knees.

I know that has been successful. We've seen about 4,000 additional surgeries being performed each year in our orthopaedic services based upon the investments, adding orthopaedic surgeons, adding anaesthetists. So we're taking steps and investing heavily to seek better outcomes and more surgeries for Nova Scotians.

JOHN LOHR: Thank you to the minister for that answer. A primary reason for the increase in wait times is a lack of an anaesthesiologist in the Valley. Pair that with a lack of family doctors and widespread staff shortages in general, and you'll find that both services and staff at the Valley Regional have come under very severe stress. These positions are advertised, but they continue to go unfilled, and it isn't only at one hospital. It's across the province.

My question for the minister is: If the current hiring strategy, which has been in place since the minister was appointed, has not resulted in improved conditions, at what point do the department and the minister come up with a new strategy?

RANDY DELOREY: First, again, I'd like to thank those front-line health care workers who worked on developing this strategy that they brought forward. I'd like to thank my colleagues - particularly the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board - who worked to make sure that we had the money to invest in implementing this plan.

As to whether or not the plan worked, I'd like to refer him to a recent CIHI report that actually reports that our hip fracture repair, 96 per cent of Nova Scotians get their operations within the recommended wait time of 48 hours in 2018. that's an increase from

85 per cent in 2016 and compares to a national average of only 88 per cent of patients getting their hips fixed within that 48-hour period. That's 96 per cent that are getting that surgery completed within that 48-hours in Nova Scotia based upon our investments and the good work of our front-line health care providers.

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

**EECD - COLE HBR. & AUBURN SCHOOLS:
CLOSURE DECISION - WHEN?**

BARBARA ADAMS: As a physiotherapist, I know the difference between the wait time if you fall down the stairs and break your hip versus if you're waiting three years to get one.

As the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development knows, Cole Harbour and Auburn High School and the feeder schools have been in a state of limbo since he used one of his first actions as a minister to put our school review process on hold. I have written to the minister, emailed him, spoken to him in this Legislature many times on behalf of the students, parents, teachers, staff, and businesses in my community. To date, we have not heard what the minister plans to do with all of these schools.

My question to the minister is simple - and I'll table one of the letters that I sent to him: Can the minister now tell me after almost two years since the minister put the school review process on hold, what he plans to do about these schools?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: As we have indicated publicly, the plan is to have both schools remain open, with a new technical focus in the Cole Harbour location. That concept, broadly, has been communicated to the SACs. The member for Cole Harbour-Portland Valley has actually been on top of me for this one. This is very important for his community and we'll continue to work with him and the SAC to find the appropriate model that will ensure that all the students have access to really exciting learning opportunities in both of those facilities.

BARBARA ADAMS: I appreciate that response, so I just want to confirm that you're going to leave Cole Harbour High School open. There were a whole lot of other schools impacted, one of which is Auburn High School, and I'd like to know if he plans on leaving that school open as well.

The residents of those communities are also looking for answers as to what's going to happen to all the elementary schools and the junior high schools because the SACs put over a year's worth of work into it and then the school boards put a whole lot of work into it, and we still don't know what's going to happen to the rest of the schools.

ZACH CHURCHILL: We haven't landed on a decision point on those yet, but I do want to assure the member and I want to assure the community that we appreciate the hard work that they've put in. All of the information and recommendations that that group compiled is informing how we move forward with this, and I want to make sure that the member understands that. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

EECD - CAPITAL PLANNING: DEPT. PROCESS - TABLE

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I also have a question for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, and it's also about an invisible process.

School capital planning is one of the areas covered in the Auditor General's recent follow-up report on 2015 and 2016 recommendations. The AG found that there was little importance placed on capital planning within the department and recommended that the department establish and follow a consistent and clear process for evaluating capital project requests to support long-term capital planning. This recommendation from 2016, like many others, remains incomplete.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell this House when he will be able to table the department's clear and transparent process for evaluating school capital requests?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: We have been working on this for a while. We do want to get this right. The Auditor General's Report is helping inform how we move forward, also transitioning from the former governance structure, understanding how we're going to receive the operational priorities that come from the regions, and categorize them. We're in the process of finalizing that, so I do hope it's sooner rather than later. That is something we've been working on for a bit of time now.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I thank the minister for that answer and look forward to the process being tabled in the House when it's complete.

In the same report, the AG found that the department had failed to appropriately manage decisions related to P3 schools. The AG recommended that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development develop and implement a process to assess future P3 decisions that provides sufficient time for all parties to make decisions and incorporates a full assessment of factors including cost, projected enrolment, and actual future lease rates provided by the developer.

This work has been completed, Mr. Speaker, and we know that government is pursuing P3 projects in other departments. Will the minister table this process so that we can use it to inform ourselves about how the government is justifying its future P3 decisions?

[10:30 a.m.]

ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, we did do a cost-benefit analysis of the P3 model. We also sought feedback from communities. Recognizing that the P3 schools that were built in the 1990s are some of the nicest, most well-kept learning spaces in the province, we are purchasing those from the developer. They will belong to the province and communities across this province, including in my own riding. The member for Sydney-Whitney Pier fought to have the P3 school in his riding kept. We'll continue to give great learning experiences to our students.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

GOV'T. (N.S.): GLAUCOMA PATIENTS - C.B. TREATMENT

EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Approximately two weeks ago, I rose to ask the Premier about a letter on the Minister of Health and Wellness's desk. The intent of the letter is to allow optometrists and ophthalmologists to work together in Cape Breton so that glaucoma patients will be treated at home. This letter has been sitting on the minister's desk for four years.

Since the Premier made the commitment, I'd like to follow up and ask: Has the Premier found the time to review this letter concerning glaucoma treatment in Cape Breton?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I have asked for that correspondence and I have not received it yet.

EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I know a lot of people who are going to be very disappointed to hear that the Premier hasn't had that letter reviewed yet. It's extremely important to Cape Bretoners that they aren't forced to travel for several hours or pay out of pocket for glaucoma treatment. Most of these people can't drive, are unable to drive, or have to have someone to drive them. This government has solutions within reach, but they need to take action and be accountable instead of kicking this can down the road.

I want to ask the Premier: When can those suffering from glaucoma in Cape Breton expect the Premier and the minister to take the action promised only a few weeks ago?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I promised two weeks ago that I would look at the letter that the honourable member is referring to. I will assure him that that will take place and he will be able to communicate that back to his constituents.

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

H&W: SENIORS' DENTAL COV. - PLAN

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, a number of my constituents are seniors and they have approached me in regard to dental health for their demographic. Poor dental health has a huge effect on a person's life. From the ability to eat and maintain proper nutrition, hygiene affects everything.

The government recently announced an extension of dental coverage for youth ages 11 to 14. Considering a recent study by Statistics Canada that identified Nova Scotia as the only province in Canada where child poverty actually increased since 2015, I certainly applaud that decision. But with many seniors also living at or below poverty in Nova Scotia, dental coverage is also out of reach for them.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Does the minister have a plan for the extension of dental coverage for seniors similar to that put in place for youth?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, the changes the member refers to are changes based upon work with the Dental Association. As to where the priority investments and enhancements to our dental program would be, they had indicated that the area that needed the most attention was in enhancing access to preventive services for our youth. That's why we made the changes in the program that we did. Again, that's in consultation and collaboration with front-line dental service providers.

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I guess what I've heard from a number of dentists is that a number of them weren't really consulted. In fact, they ran into a problem. When the extension of coverage came, it changed billing codes that the Nova Scotia dentists were using, which caused a lot of problems for a number of dentists. Some of them have actually stopped taking on new children patients, so I've been told that if we move forward with anything for seniors, that they'd actually like to make sure that there's better consultation done.

With seniors desperately needing dental coverage, in order for it to be effective, it has to be done right. I just want to confirm that the minister said he has worked with dentists in regard to the extension of youth coverage. Will the minister work with dentists to find the best way to provide senior dental coverage, without negatively impacting the dentists as well?

RANDY DELOREY: As with many groups which the government negotiates or interacts with for compensation frameworks and structures, it is the Nova Scotia Dental Association with whom we would engage with for moving forward. That's with whom the agreement is established, and that's whom we consulted. That doesn't mean every dentist would have been engaged or consulted, but the organization representing them as we move forward with that agreement.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

BUS. - CUMB. N.: HIGH-SPEED INTERNET - TIMELINE

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, the lack of internet access and cellphone coverage continues to be one of the largest barriers for economic growth in Cumberland North and throughout all of rural Nova Scotia. The lack of internet access further widens the rural-urban divide. I hear from constituents daily about their frustration with lack of internet access.

Cathy and David Bates moved to the Malagash area a year ago and he frequently has to go to a hotel to run his consulting business because he has no internet access.

I have another business in Pugwash that is considering moving to New Brunswick, due to the lack of effective and reliable internet access.

My question to the Minister of Business is: Can he update the House on the timeline for Cumberland North residents and Cumberland North businesses to receive improved infrastructure for high-speed internet?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I do thank the member for the question and welcome her constituent in the gallery who had the petition with respect to broadband. I can tell the member, the folks in the gallery, the constituency and all Nova Scotians, certainly that help is on the way. Again, it's a ground-breaking and pioneering investment of almost \$200 million in this program. The challenge was that there was no structure, there was no infrastructure, to build out this investment and make sure that it hits the right people at the right time.

What we've committed to, Mr. Speaker, for the member is that we're going to look at the fastest options - satellite, wireless - immediately, which we hope will be by the end of 2019, this calendar year and, after that, that we move into the hard wiring, the fibre op and that will obviously be the bulk of the investment.

The program is moving quickly. It is going to be very much based on regional sort of implications, so I'll take back to Develop Nova Scotia the specific issues that the member mentioned today, and we'll see if we can get a specific update on that particular area.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Thank you for the answer. I think the timeline is really the question. Sometimes our speed of government is too slow for the needs of our people.

I do hear from citizens daily. Recently, this week I heard from a mother of three children who faced challenges of them getting their school work completed, due to lack of internet access; so, it's affecting education, it's affecting health, it's affecting all areas.

Many people need internet to communicate with their employer; many need it to do their banking. It has become essential to the day-to-day lives of people.

I do have a letter from a company that's willing to assist in improving bandwidth on existing infrastructure. It has been sent to Develop Nova Scotia and I will table it for the minister today to take a look at, if he doesn't mind.

My question to the minister is: Does he understand the sense of urgency for the people throughout all of rural Nova Scotia, and I speak on behalf of the residents of Cumberland North, for the importance of moving this along as fast as possible?

GEOFF MACLELLAN: I thank the member for the question. Absolutely, I think that our commitment of the monies that we've set aside for broadband, obviously with a number of social program commitments that we're trying to accomplish here while staying in the fiscal envelope that we've put together in terms of four consecutive balanced budgets, this is a big investment and it's a big commitment. We do understand the urgency.

It was over a decade ago that Nova Scotians were given the indication that every Nova Scotian would have access to broadband. That was an impossible commitment to maintain then. It's more attainable now, by way of technology, but the technology is great in moving quickly, but it doesn't mean anything if you don't have the money.

For us, we do have the money. We've put together the finances to make this work and we are very proud of that. It is going to roll quickly. We get the urgency, certainly from a school perspective, health perspective. All those things are real, but the biggest one for us, from an economic perspective, broadband is the great equalizer.

We will have rural Nova Scotians compete, because broadband will get us there and equalize their opportunities.

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

TIR - AMHERST SCALES: SNOW REMOVAL DEVICE - STATUS

LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

Recently, a constituent of mine, who is a truck driver, was stopped at the scales in Amherst and he was issued a \$180 ticket for having snow on the roof of his truck. He didn't

know the snow was there and he had just passed through Maine and Salisbury, New Brunswick, without incident.

Then he had to pay another \$100 to arrange for someone to come to clear the snow because the snow removal device at the Amherst scales was broken - and apparently has been for approximately five years.

My question: Could the minister check into the status of that particular scale and, if still broken, could he put plans in place to have it fixed before next winter?

HON. LLOYD HINES: I thank the member for bringing this matter forward. I would be happy to investigate that if he will give me the details.

LARRY HARRISON: The thing is, Occupational Health and Safety Standards do not allow truckers to remove snow from their trucks on their own. So, I guess I was wondering - the truck driver was just trying to do his job and he was assessed a penalty because government equipment wasn't working - my question is: Is it fair to charge the truck driver when the necessary snow removal equipment wasn't working?

LLOYD HINES: Rest assured that this government really appreciates the contribution that truckers make in our province. They are the front line of our transportation system. They are extremely important, often unsung heroes of our economy in the province. We take it very seriously what we do and certainly undertake to see what the issue is there.

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

GOV'T. (N.S.): WOMEN'S CTRS. REC. - IGNORED

LENORE ZANN: My question today was for the Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act, but I am told that the Premier would like to answer my questions.

I won't ask him about period poverty; however, earlier this year women's centres across the province wrote to the government asking that the 2019-20 budget reflect an investment in the critical services that they provide on issues ranging from poverty, employability, mental health, and sexual violence.

My question for the Premier is: Can the Premier please explain why the government ignored the recommendations made by the women's centres of Truro, Antigonish, Every Women's Centre, LEA Place Women's Resource Centre, Pictou County Women's Resource Centre, Second Story Women's Centre, Strait Area Women's Centre, the Women's Place Resource Centre, Tri-County, and Women's Centres Connect?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. She is right. The government received recommendations from women's centres across the province. She would also know from her time in government that the Strait Women's Centre was not funded at the same level their sister organizations were across the province.

This budget reflects that we have continued to invest in the Strait area to ensure that they are being funded at the same level as other women's centres across the province.

At the same time, this budget will also reflect the fact that for the very first time the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association is being funded with an equivalent amount of money to ensure that we continue to provide supports to these amazing organizations that are providing support to women and families in many of our communities across the province.

We look forward to continuing to work with them to solve those challenges.

LENORE ZANN: I appreciate that answer; however, women's centres are serving more and more women with really increasingly complex problems, and the staff of these centres have demonstrated incredible skills and expertise on really quite low budgets.

So, they are looking to government as being their partner and, in spite of multiple requests, they have not been able to meet with the Minister of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act once - not once - in the past five years.

[10:45 a.m.]

So, would the Premier apologize to these women's centres and agree that the Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act will schedule a meeting before the end of April?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. We continue to see women's centres across our province as valuable partners as we continue to provide the supports that women, children, and families require in many of our communities.

The honourable member is right, they are seeing many, many more complex challenges. We've recognized that. We will continue work with them. I'm sure the minister and department will be happy to meet with women's centres across the province.

I know I'm fortunate to have one in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, Della Longmire and I meet often. I continue to look forward to those meetings and I will continue to hold those meetings as her MLA, and I will continue to support a voice at the Cabinet Table to ensure that women's centres are always part of the conversation when we look to building our budgets.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

EECD - ÉCOLE BOIS-JOLI: LATE BUSING - ACTION

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Almost every day at École Bois-Joli a school bus is late at that school. Parents and teachers, Mr. Speaker, have indicated to me that these delays are frequent and some of these delays are up to an hour. Now, in some cases parents are having to put off work to wait for the late bus, or I am hearing from teachers that at times they have to adjust their lesson to include these late students, up to an hour - and, most importantly, some students are missing out on valuable class time.

Mr. Speaker, the frequent occurrence of these late buses is having a negative impact on the classroom. My question is this: What will the minister do to ensure students get to class on time at École Bois-Joli?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the member's comments and I share his concerns on some of the logistical issues we're still having with our bus service.

If the member remembers, we did announce a bus review in the Fall. We have compiled feedback from parents, school communities, students from across the province. It's become very clear that we do have a specific issue here in Halifax with the execution of busing duties. We are developing strategies to deal with that and, hopefully, see some improvements. The parents deserve it, the students deserve it, and we know we need to do better on the busing front and we're committed to getting there.

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the minister recognizes the problems we're having in our busing system, the crisis that exists - it's too bad they won't recognize that in our health care system.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, parents in our province simply want their children to get to school on time and to get there safely. It's a very basic fundamental responsibility of the education system, a responsibility that the province has failed to deliver, especially at the beginning of this academic year. Now, I'm sure many members in this House remember running to catch the school bus, but this government leaves some families in Dartmouth East stranded at the stop.

My question is this: Will the minister commit to improving the quality of school transportation strategies and ensure buses arrive on time at their destination?

ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, yes, absolutely.

Although, as a former English major, we often misuse the word “crisis” in this Chamber. I want to recognize that I do not share the member’s view that this is a crisis. We have pressures, we have challenges - that does not constitute a crisis by any stretch of the imagination.

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

TIR - LOCH LOMOND RD.: FLOOD MITIGATION - UPDATE

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, with less than a minute left I’d like to ask the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to give me, and all those present and people in my constituency, an update on the mitigation for the flooding that continues to happen on the Loch Lomond Road, that he gave me assurances that would be fixed last year.

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, along with an overall view that we have in the department to the challenge that climate change brings in our coastal areas, in terms of impacting our highway system, the matter that the member brings up is being reviewed . . .

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

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I’m pleased to take this opportunity to speak a few minutes about some very important issues to the people of Nova Scotia and to my constituents. Of course, I want to start off by saying how proud and thankful we are for the people who work in our health care system. The doctors, the nurses, the lab technicians, the cleaners - all of the people who work in the health care system in the Province of Nova Scotia do a remarkable job, considering the challenges that they have.

I want to thank them for the work that they do, but not only that, I want to acknowledge that if we don’t do something to support them more, those people are going to be worn out.

Just Monday of this week, there was a major announcement made in Sydney. I heard the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage mention it earlier today, and you know what? That was a good announcement. I don't care - that was a good announcement. One of the reasons why that was a great announcement was because it was done and planned and looked at by local people, people who live in the community, who understand the needs of the community, and were trying to deliver a service for their community.

One of the reasons why we seem to have so many problems in this province is because we have this giant Health Authority, and there is no more local decision-making. It creates a problem. This is an example of how local individuals can have an impact on health care.

But there are some challenges with that announcement, and I would feel remiss if I didn't bring them to the attention of the House.

My colleagues on the government side will say, "That guy over there, he sounds like a broken record," and you know, they're probably right. But the reason I sound like a broken record is because I'm speaking about something that is broken, and that is the health care system of the Province of Nova Scotia.

We need more local input. When the government announced the closure of the New Waterford and Glace Bay hospitals, they said we were going to get 50 new long-term beds. Then they said we were going to get 50 in New Waterford and 50 on the Northside. Now, in the recent budget, we're actually going to get 60 on the Northside and in Glace Bay.

What they have failed to talk about is how that is going to impact, because by my calculations, we are not getting 60 new long-term care beds, as a matter of fact, and we're not getting them now. It's three years down the road. Three years down the road, all of us in this House will be changing the demographic of the people who need that service.

A doctor who is very involved with the Northside hospital tells me that today there are 22 nursing beds on the third floor with long-term-care patients. There are 14 people on the fourth floor in long-term care beds, and there are about six on the second floor. That means about 42 of the beds are already occupied that will be going down the road - in three years' time - into a long-term care facility that's going to be built. That means there may be 16 new beds, maybe. My guess is - and I'm sure my colleague for Cape Breton Centre could confirm - that it's very similar, if not worse, in New Waterford in the number of beds that are being taken up.

It's really interesting, when you look at this problem. I think it's important that we go through the steps of why this is so important. Just recently, at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital, in that facility we have 33 emergency-care beds in the current setup, with 27 of those 33 beds taken up by acute-care patients waiting to be put into the hospital. That meant there were only six beds left. Six beds left for the emergency room people to deal with the

ones coming through the door. It also meant that the ambulances, as they were arriving, only had six beds to work with.

So, what happens? Of course, we all know, and we've heard through media reports and through questions in this House, that when an ambulance lands at a facility, the paramedics need to stay with that patient until they can be actually admitted. So, we'll have a tie-up of your ambulances and we've had periods in the CBRM, and indeed on Cape Breton Island, where there were no ambulances available to serve the population.

We get back inside, we have 27 people taking up rooms that need to go to acute care beds. We go upstairs, and we find - in the regional hospital - over 50 people who are in acute care beds, who need to go into long-term care beds.

If you follow that, you will understand that there is a direct need for long-term care in and around our region. I speak about Cape Breton, Mr. Speaker, because that's the area I know best and I represent, but I can tell you from talking to my colleagues on this side of the House and others: this is not a problem that's unique to Cape Breton Island. This is a problem that we see in many parts of our province.

We need long-term care beds in the Province of Nova Scotia. Not three years down the road; not five years down the road. We need long-term care beds today.

Yes, we work hard at making sure that our seniors can stay home and that's not a bad thing. My colleague from Cumberland North identified earlier that when you're staying in an acute care bed, there are actually challenges for the individuals because they don't have the social contact that they would have if they were in a long-term care home. They don't have the programs that are offered for recreation and other things that they would in a regular long-term care facility.

This is an important issue for Nova Scotians. It's an issue for the seniors of our province who built the very economy and are the very fabric of why all of us are able to come to this House of Assembly and represent people.

The other challenge we have, regardless, and there was some talk about how people in Cape Breton reacted to the announcement last Monday - I want to address that. People were not reacting to the announcement; they were reacting to the fact that they don't have a family doctor. They were reacting to the fact that they're in desperate need of having that individual. There are long emergency waits, there are ambulances that are not available, and that's what people were reacting to.

Bricks and mortar are a part of moving forward and it has been said by the government, and I think rightly so, that it will help attract other individuals to our province. The challenge is that people need a doctor today - not six years down the road, not eight years down the road. They need a doctor today. I'm very fortunate I have a doctor, but I

have one of my daughters who doesn't. She can't find a doctor and she's concerned about that. She's like so many other of our friends and our family and our constituents.

[11:00 a.m.]

In the budget, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board took some pains to remind the province of Nova Scotia that they have recruited some new doctors. I have a copy of the page where it says since April of 2018, 125 new doctors have started working in communities across this province: 57 family doctors and 68 specialists.

As of about 10 minutes ago, the Nova Scotia Health Authority indicated that they're looking for 133 doctors in the province of Nova Scotia: 76 for family practice and 57 for specialists.

There are those on the other side of the House that will tell you I'm not the sharpest knife in the drawer.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Hear! Hear!

ALFIE MACLEOD: My colleague, the member for Glace Bay, agrees with that. I have to tell him that it's a two-way street.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is we are not making any net gain. Government takes a lot of pride in telling us about the doctors they are attracting. We've asked on many occasions, please tell me how many doctors have left; please tell me if you are actually doing exit interviews so that we know why doctors are leaving, to see if indeed we as a group of people can challenge that and find ways to fix that.

At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, there is nobody in this House, at least not from my estimation, who doesn't want to make life better for the people of the Province of Nova Scotia. We may not always agree on the route, but I can say to you that we need to look after the people of this province, and part of that is making sure that we have good health care, that we have excellent health care because that's what the people here deserve.

Just recently, within the last year or so, there was an opportunity to go to Newfoundland and Labrador where there were doctors and health care professionals from across this country, provinces, and territories, joined together looking at opportunities for employment. We, in the Province of Nova Scotia, in our wisdom decided we were not going to send any recruiters there. Then shortly after that we sent a group of people offshore, across the water, when we could have sent somebody to Newfoundland and Labrador on a ferry to look at what was going on, but we chose not to - Mr. Speaker, that is a shortcoming on the Health Authority and, in turn, on this government.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, people are tired of me talking about this. Again, I have been told by people much more knowledgeable than I am that in order for something to sink in with people you have to say it to them 10, 12 times. Well I'm doing my part, I am trying to make sure that people understand. But it's not only about listening, and I know the government members over there will say we're listening - it's about comprehending the issue and the challenge that's in front of us; it's about dealing with that issue and that challenge.

In my estimation, Mr. Speaker - and I've had the opportunity to be a member for close to 17 years in this House of Assembly - there has never been an issue that has affected as many people as the concerns and challenges with health care. Let's be clear, it's not just your physical health, it's also your mental health. There are lots of challenges throughout the system and the very lifestyle that we lead as a community and as a population has changed the needs and demands on people. Those are the things that we seem to forget; those are the things that made that group of people in Sydney so upset on Monday.

I truly believe that people are trying to make a difference, but I also believe that in order to make a difference you need to listen to the people who are affected, the people who don't have a family doctor, the people who have to send their child all the way to Halifax, from Sydney or Amherst or Yarmouth, to get mental health services. Those types of things create new challenges for individuals and create more stresses on individuals.

Mr. Speaker, I may sound like a broken record, but the record that is broken here is the promise of "a doctor for every Nova Scotian." The thing that needs to happen is we need to do what's right for the people of Nova Scotia. Thank you.

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

BEN JESSOME: I just wanted to bring the attention of the House to the East Gallery where we are joined by my buddy, Mitchell Caiger. He is doing his work term with the Department of Finance and Treasury Board and Health and Wellness. Mitchell was a player on one of the teams that I coached with TASA Minor Hockey. He is a resident of Timberlea-Prospect, and I just wanted everybody to welcome him here today. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

[11:05 a.m. The House resolved itself into a CW on Supply with Deputy Speaker Suzanne Lohnes-Croft in the Chair.]

[3:12 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 the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise and sit again Monday, April 1st, between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

Following the daily routine, the House will resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply to continue with the Estimates.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise to meet again on Monday, April 1st, between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned until Monday, April 1st - and that's no joke.

[The House rose at 3:14 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 880**

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Preston-Dartmouth)

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

Whereas Mr. Andreas Robinson, founder and CEO of Infinitus, knows the benefits of education, hard work, and dreaming big; and

Whereas he developed Infinitus as an action brand that provides such services as curriculum development, facilitation and consulting, events, and speaking; and

Whereas he is a double major at the Sobeys School of Business at Saint Mary's University and is currently working on an initiative with the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Andreas Robinson on his tireless efforts on youth support work.

RESOLUTION NO. 881

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 on September 23, 2018, Jim Lindsay was rescued by his Prospect Village neighbours and community from a boating accident; and

Whereas one of the key elements in the success of this rescue was the existence of the community wharf; and

Whereas without the use of the community wharf, the first responders and emergency service personnel would have had a very difficult time in transporting Mr. Lindsay from the harbour to the ambulance, and as a result of the importance of the community wharf, Mr. Lindsay has made a donation to the wharf;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Mr. Lindsay for his contribution to assist in the funding for the maintenance and insurance to operate this community wharf, which plays a critical role in the safety of this coastal community.