



House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia

**DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS**

**Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy**

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**Second Session**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 2019**

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House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia

**HALIFAX, TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 2019**

**Sixty-third General Assembly**

**Second Session**

**1:00 P.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Kevin Murphy

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, Brendan Maguire

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

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition.  
The operative clause reads:

- “1) We, the undersigned request that the government of Nova Scotia, in particular, Develop Nova Scotia, commit to the resident [sic] of Pugwash that they will obtain and provide explanation to residents for the continual service interruptions by the various service providers.
- 2) We, the undersigned also request Develop Nova Scotia to commit to residents of Pugwash and Cumberland County that our region is priority to enhanced internet connectivity.”

There are 339 signatures, and as per the Rules of the House, I have affixed my signature.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

## **PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

## **TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

## **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, before I read my statement, do you mind if I do an introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

THE PREMIER: I would like to draw the attention of the House to the East Gallery, where we are joined by a number of extraordinary Nova Scotians and families. I want to recognize Dr. Stephen Beed, who is the medical director of the Legacy of Life and critical care organ donation, who is with us. I would also like to recognize Milena Kazanavicius, who is a kidney and pancreas transplant recipient. I would also like to acknowledge Cindy Ryan, who is a two-time liver transplant recipient; as well as Kelly Patterson, whose son Steven was an organ donor; and Raylene Sampson, whose brother Shane Sampson was an organ donor.

I would like all of you to stand. The four of you represent something that is extraordinary, heartbreaking, and yet special at the same time. Two of you represent families that have suffered tragic loss that none of us want to experience, but in your grief, you have turned and looked to the families and provided them with an opportunity of new life. On behalf of this entire House, I want to say thank you for not only your gift of giving and receiving, but also the people you represent. (Standing Ovation)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, organ and tissue donation is near and dear to the hearts of many Nova Scotians. I can tell the House it is a priority of our government and to me personally. Organ and tissue donation not only saves lives; it gives hope to those waiting for life-saving transplants.

It should be noted that Nova Scotia has the highest rate of donor registration in the country. That does not always mean that that registration turns into a donation. It's clear and not surprising that Nova Scotians place a high value on organ and tissue donation. But

there are still people waiting for life-saving transplants every year, and this legislation will help beginning to make that donation rate go even higher.

I want to tell this House this is our first step to ensuring that we continue to increase the rate because we know there's more work to be done to ensure that, no matter where we are in this province, if our wish is to make an organization donation, we can make that wish come true.

The Human Organ and Tissue Donation Act presumes everyone to be a potential donor, although allowing those who do not wish to be a donor to opt out. Nova Scotia will be the first jurisdiction in North America to have such legislation.

I firmly believe that Nova Scotians who require a transplant will have a better chance of getting the life-saving donation they need because of this bill. We also know that many families have been comforted during their time of grief knowing that fellow Nova Scotians will have a new lease on life as a result of their loved one's donation. It is important to note that through this legislation Nova Scotians continue to have a choice about donations - anyone can opt out of becoming a donor at any time.

There will be a period of time before the legislation comes into effect to allow government to make Nova Scotians aware of these changes and their options. In the meantime, I encourage all Nova Scotians to discuss this topic with their loved ones. When this Act comes into effect, families will continue to be consulted about the wishes of their loved ones regarding organ and tissue donation, but this is an important conversation for families to have at this vital time. We wish this for the loved ones, and we wish for all of them that we can respect the wishes of their loved ones.

Before I conclude, I want to say how pleased I was to be joined today by many people and organizations who play a vital role in encouraging donations and supporting those who are awaiting transplants. I appreciate their help in getting us to this point today.

In our presentation today - I don't think she would mind - Cindy spoke very much about her life post-organ reception. I want to tell you how inspired I was as you spoke about the new additions to your life since you were given this life-saving gift - grandchildren, a new husband, many firsts, a public speaker. Quite frankly, it is the essence of what we're trying to accomplish - in tragedy providing hope and a new life for those who can become a recipient.

To all of you, thank you very much for being part of this journey, and I look forward to continuing to work with you to improve the lives of those Nova Scotians who require our support. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.



KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Premier for his sincere and heartfelt statement and for bringing this most important issue to the Legislature.

The Premier is quite right in saying that this issue of organ donation should be a topic of conversation in every Nova Scotian home. It is vital that your family understand your wishes when it comes to organ donation.

Just recently, at Christmas, with my two children - my son received his health card and had to renew it. At 16, I thought it was time that he could take part in the conversation. My daughter, who is 21, was sitting there and we were going over the list of organs you can donate, and he was like, yeah, yeah. But when it came to his eyes, he said, "Mom, I don't know, those are the windows to my soul. I don't know." My daughter was like, "Oh, Jack, come on." So it's really important we have these conversations with our children and they understand because they do change their mind. We filled it out and he left his eyes out. That was what his wishes were, but I'm certain that the next time he fills it out he'll have a different opinion, and everything will be checked off.

I'm pleased to know that Nova Scotians lead the nation in organ and tissue donation, although I am not surprised. We are a generous group of individuals living in Nova Scotia and we are always ready to give and share what we have. This could be a good measure for the many Nova Scotians who are waiting on the transplant list. Many of those individuals we all know. It will unquestionably mean the gift of life or the gift of a better quality of life for those who need it.

However, there is another side to the equation. For every donation there is someone who has died and a family who is grieving. We all, perhaps, have had those experiences, often in sudden and tragic circumstances, and consideration must be given to those families and what will best relieve their grief at a very difficult time. I anticipate we will have a compelling debate on this issue. It is fundamental to who we are as people and as citizens. This is a debate worthy of the House and I hope we do that debate justice.

[1:15 p.m.]

The key for the success of this legislation, I believe, will be how public education will be rolled out when this Act will come into force and who will be impacted. If consent is to be presumed, the government must ensure that it is informed consent.

I echo the Premier's comments, thanking everyone who has contributed to bringing this legislation forward. I know it has been a long time in coming and the dedication of these individuals and groups is commendable. I thank everyone.

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

GARY BURRILL: I will just add to the fine words of my friends to say very briefly that organ and tissue donation represents what is perhaps the most important principle in our lives - a principle that is honoured in different ways in every faith tradition; that is, the principle that although life has unavoidable dimensions of darkness and unavoidable parts of loss, nevertheless it is possible that out of darkness and loss can come newness of life.

When people make the decision to be one who is a donor, they are participating in this great central principle of what it is to be a human being. Certainly, we're all honoured together today to be able to hold this principle before us on this subject.

### **GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, may I make an introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

RANDY DELOREY: Thank you. I'd like to draw the attention of members to the East Gallery where I'd like to introduce the members of the working group that developed the Human Organ and Tissue Donation Act that will be tabled shortly.

As I reference each individual, please stand: Dr. Stephen Beed, Medical Director, Legacy of Life and Critical Care Organ Donation Program; Janet Gallant, the Program Manager for Legacy of Life; Lisa Grandy, Project Executive, Department of Health and Wellness; Dean Hirtle, the Director of Legislation Policy, Department of Health and Wellness; Leah Hutt, Dalhousie Health Law Institute Representative, Department of Health and Wellness; Cynthia Isenor, Health Services Director, Central Zone, Policy and Planning Critical Care Program; Nancy MacLeod, Project Coordinator, Department of Health and Wellness; Jennifer Morin, Senior Solicitor, Department of Justice; Dr. Tony O'Leary, Department Head, Critical Care, Dalhousie University; and Vickie Sullivan, Operations Executive Director of Central Zone.

If I could have my colleagues give them the warm welcome of the House.  
(Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 900**

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

Whereas organ and tissue donation saves lives and gives hope to those waiting for life-saving transplants, and the month of April is an opportunity to raise awareness; and

Whereas Nova Scotia has the highest rate of donor registration in the country but our actual donation rates are low, which is why the legislation being introduced today is important to increase organ and tissue donation; and

Whereas there are many individuals and organizations that play a vital role in organ and tissue donation;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the hard work of the committee in developing legislation that will increase organ and tissue donation in 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.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 901**

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

Whereas yesterday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, we recognized some of Nova Scotia's amazing volunteers who play integral roles in communities across our province at the Provincial Volunteer Awards Ceremony; and

Whereas more than 410,000 Nova Scotians volunteer each year, contributing an average of 192 hours per year and play an essential role in building strong, inclusive, and resilient communities; and

Whereas volunteers coach our athletes, they help newcomers to our province, assist many great non-profit initiatives, build self-esteem in our children, and restore dignity in our elders;

Therefore be it resolved that this House congratulate the recipients of this year's Volunteer Awards and recognize the many Nova Scotians who selflessly volunteer their time in communities across the province.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

TONY INCE: Thank you. In the East Gallery - if I could have my guests rise as I call their names - we have Ms. Deborah Perkins, Ms. Bowen's daughter; Mr. Clifford Perkins, Ms. Bowen's son-in-law; Colleen Symmonds, Ms. Bowen's granddaughter; Mr. Eric Bowen, Ms. Bowen's grandson; and Ms. Samantha Dixon Slawter, owner of Styles by SD.

If I could ask the House to give them a round of applause, please. (Applause)

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

### **RESOLUTION NO. 902**

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

Whereas Ms. Barbara Bowen, known as Ms. B, is a retired hairdresser, facilitator, and business woman who dedicated herself to her work in professional care and Black hair, making individuals look and feel their best; and

Whereas Ms. Bowen is a graduate of the Viola Desmond School of Beauty and Culture and served as a board member of the Cosmetology Association of Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the beauty industry across our province, country, and globe continues to adopt to the diversity of all individuals to become the most beautiful versions of themselves, regardless of age, race, culture, and gender;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly please join me in recognizing the work of Ms. Barbara Bowen and acknowledging the importance of what she has done in the beauty industry of Nova Scotia, and in the African Nova Scotian communities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for 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. 133 - Entitled an Act Respecting Human Organ and Tissue Donation.**  
(Hon. Stephen McNeil)

**Bill No. 134 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes 1989. The Labour Standards Code, to Eliminate a Different Minimum Wage Rate for Apprentices and Inexperienced Employees.** (Gary Burrill)

#### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

#### **STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Permission for an introduction, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

PAT DUNN: I direct the attention of all members to the West Gallery where we have three gentlemen I'd like to introduce.

Terry Richardson is a friend of mine who has been employed at Graybar Canada, Harris & Roome for the past four decades. He is also president of that organization. Terry is well known for his volunteer service, particularly with Special Olympics Nova Scotia.

With Terry is one who is no stranger to members of this House: Special Olympics Nova Scotia President and CEO Mike Greek, recently back from Dubai; and Program Director with Special Olympics Nova Scotia, Matt Quinn.

I'd ask all members to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

### **RICHARDSON, TERRY: SPECIAL OLYMPICS VOL. - THANKS**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of all the members of this Legislature an individual who I believe is the consummate volunteer.

Terry Richardson, known as Mr. T, a New Glasgow resident, is a compassionate, caring, and community-minded person. His passion for Special Olympics has been an example for all Nova Scotians to emulate. He has held many positions with the Special Olympics, including Chair of the Board of Directors.

He has been selected as a Volunteer of the Year by the Special Olympics; Volunteer in Community Service of the Year by the Pictou County Chamber of Commerce; and he has been presented the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for volunteer service. He was a valuable member of the host committee for the 2018 Special Olympics Canada National Summer Games held at St. Francis Xavier University.

Please join me in thanking Terry Richardson for his tireless efforts. He is a great and valuable treasure.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

### **JONES, JOAN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, yesterday Nova Scotia and Canada lost one of its trail-blazing civil rights activists, Joan Jones.

Joan was a force of nature and the power behind many important struggles for environmental, economic, and racial justice. She was known for her razor-sharp wit and never didn't say what she thought. She expected people to step up when it came to fighting anti-Black racism and not to be self-absorbed in that stepping up.

Among the many projects she led, Joan founded the Nova Scotia Project with her then husband Rocky Jones to tackle anti-Black racism and she advocated with Children's Aid Halifax to make sure that Black children taken into care were properly cared for.

Her selfless work led her to raising and teaching a new generation of civil rights activists around her kitchen table, which served as headquarters in the early days of the Black rights movement in Halifax.

On behalf of the NDP caucus, I want to extend my deep sympathy to Joan's large family and her many friends.

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

### **GEORGE, BLAIR: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I'd ask for the indulgence of the House for a moment of silence after I read this statement.

It is with a heavy heart that I rise today to speak these words of remembrance for my dear friend and colleague Blair George, whose recent and untimely passing left his community and loved ones with an irreparable loss.

Blair was a municipal councillor in Guysborough for over 30 years and one of the most remarkable people I've been blessed to know. He fought hard for the people and issues that were important to him, his friends, and neighbours. He was an optimist when dealing with matters of the municipality, the province, and the country, he had everyone's best interests at heart, and he wasn't afraid to say so.

Blair was so proud of his beautiful children and grandchildren and placed value, not in the material things in life, but in family and the advancement of our communities and having the strength to see things through.

This is how I will remember my dear friend and I ask the House to please join me for a moment of reflection for this great man and all he gave us.

THE SPEAKER: I would ask that all members please rise for a moment of silence.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

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

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Amy Spurway on the unveiling of her book *Crow*, at the Ross Ferry Community Centre on March 30<sup>th</sup>.

Although she now lives in Dartmouth, Amy grew up in Ross Ferry on Boularderie Island.

Amy first took an interest in communications and writing during her involvement in 4-H Canada activities in Cape Breton in the 1980s and 1990s, beginning when she was just nine years old.

[1:30 p.m.]

With the support of her family and community friends, the book launch was a tremendous success, selling out in no time. I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating Amy Spurway on her book launch and wishing her every success in her writing career.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

**WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY:  
N.S. AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MO. - RECOG.**

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to mark the important occasion of World Autism Awareness Day in this Chamber. Under the leadership of the #ActuallyAutistic community and Autism Nova Scotia, there is a full month of opportunities to be part of Autism Acceptance Month in Nova Scotia. It runs for the remainder of April and is about promoting understanding, acceptance, and inclusion in our communities.

In my own family, I'm beyond privileged to count a smart, brave, fun, talented neurodivergent nephew, Hugh Garber, who in his few short years on this earth has taught our family, his peers, and the larger community so much about being ActuallyAutistic and about what it means to have a truly inclusive community and family, and why it's so important.

Where Hugh leaves off, his mother, Ally, picks up. As a busy mother and professional, she has not hesitated to throw herself into organizing and advocating on behalf of autistic families across this province, most recently in Ottawa this week with Autism Nova Scotia and just this morning on national television. Not stopping at advocating for inclusion for her own family, her efforts have touched so many more.



I ask that the members of this House join me in celebrating Autism Acceptance Month and the thousands of Nova Scotian families we mark it for. (Applause)

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

**REPCHULL, MADELINE: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.**

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a fabulous community volunteer who will be retiring from the Burton Ettinger breakfast program. Madeline Repchull started volunteering at the breakfast club about six years ago, when she retired from nursing at Saint Vincent's guest house. She quickly became an essential team member, acting as chief cook. Arriving at 7:00 a.m., Madeline prepares a hot meal for every student every day.

Madeline is well loved not only by the students she serves but by the Mount Saint Vincent University student volunteers who she has taken under her wing. How to make the perfect grilled cheese, pancakes, and old-fashioned porridge are just some of the life skills she has taught the students. According to school staff, Madeline's dedication is a major reason why the breakfast program has continued to grow, and without her, the school will not be the same.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of this House of Assembly to join me in thanking Madeline for her incredible volunteerism and to wish her well in the next stage of her retirement.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**SKILLS CAN. N.S.: YOUTH COMPETITORS - GOOD LUCK**

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Skills Canada Nova Scotia Skills Competition, which will start on Friday, April 5<sup>th</sup> and continue to April 29<sup>th</sup> at the NSCC Ivany, Akerley, and Strait Area campuses.

Skills Canada is a non-profit organization that promotes students to explore the skilled trades through a number of opportunities and various programming. This is achieved through partnerships with the help of industry, labour, government, and education. Skills Canada encourages our youth to focus on integrity, safety, inclusion, excellence, collaboration, continuous learning, and accountability. They want our youth to have the skills in life to find success.

Our youth in Nova Scotia will start competition this Friday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, in trades such as auto repair, baking, plumbing, and welding, to name just a few.

Mr. Speaker, I want to wish students from Dartmouth East at Prince Andrew High School the best of luck in this competition, and I ask all members of the House to wish our students in Nova Scotia all the best as they participate in the 2019 Skills Canada Nova Scotia Skills Competition.

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

### **JONES, JOAN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, if Viola Desmond was Nova Scotia's Rosa Parks, then Joan Jones was our very own Angela Davis. Joan and I both had the pleasure of seeing Angela Davis right here in Halifax after her talk on civil rights and prison reform. Joan and her former husband, Truro's own Rocky Jones, established Kwacha House and the Nova Scotia Project, which tackled racial discrimination.

While Rocky was the founder, he would be the first to admit that Joan was the power behind the throne, as she was to the civil rights struggle in Canada - the "queen of the movement," as Walter Borden remembers fondly.

In their memory and with the voice of Angela Davis ringing in my ears, I pledge to continue to fight discrimination in all its forms, including street checks, which unjustly target people of colour and must be banned.

Joan, dear sister, your watch is ended, while ours continues. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

### **RICHARD, KRISTINA - MEDALLIST: WORLD SPECIAL OLYMPICS - CONGRATS.**

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Antigonish is abuzz with excitement and pride about our own, world-famous athlete, Kristina Richard. Kristina just returned from the 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, and she brought a gold medal and a bronze medal home with her.

She and her Team Canada teammates took the gold medal in the 4 x 400-metre relay. Kristina ran the lead leg and set the winning pace which her team continued across the finish line.

Kristina also took the bronze medal in the 200-metre and placed fifth in the 100-metre.

Before participating in the international games, Kristina competed in several regional and provincial competitions and two national games. She is now training for the 2019 Nova Scotia Special Olympics Summer Games at Acadia University in Wolfville and she hopes to be able to compete in the 2023 World Summer Games in Germany.

I'd like all members of this House to join me in congratulating Kristina Richard on her impressive athletic accomplishments.

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

### **JONES, JOAN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

BRAD JOHNS: I, too, want to rise today to recognize the passing of Ms. Joan Jones yesterday. Ms. Jones was a Nova Scotia activist who worked for decades to fight for civil rights in Canada.

She was one of the founders of Black History Month here in Halifax. Ms. Jones and her husband at the time, Rocky Jones, started the Nova Scotia Project, a social activism organization that tackled racial discrimination.

She was also critical in the creation of Kwacha House in Halifax which became a place where attendees developed ideas for the advancement of African Nova Scotians.

Ms. Jones was a key organizer for the Black United Front, a group that helped many find affordable housing, employment, and legal assistance here in Halifax.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Canada have lost a great treasure with the passing of Ms. Jones and on behalf of all the members of the Progressive Conservative caucus today, I want to extend a sincere sympathy to her family and friends. I would ask that the House rise for a moment of silence.

THE SPEAKER: We'll now ask all members to rise in memory of the passing of Joan Jones.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

### **READY, WILLING & ABLE: NEURODIVERSITY IN PUBL. SERV. - RECOG.**

LISA ROBERTS: On World Autism Awareness Day, I want to recognize the accomplishments of Ready, Willing & Able, a national inclusive hiring initiative which is working to ensure that the public service at federal, provincial, and municipal levels reflects the community it serves, including people with autism.

There are many talented neurodiverse people who can and do contribute to the work of government and many more whose talents are underutilized. Working with Ready, Willing & Able and Autism Nova Scotia, Public Services and Procurement Canada, the Halifax Public Library, as well as the regional office of ACOA, have all hired adults with autism here in Nova Scotia; so has Lands and Forestry, in its Parks division, and I look forward to more commitment from the Public Service Commission.

By accommodating neurodiversity in the hiring process, including by allowing people to show what they can do rather than evaluating how well they talk about it, any employer can tap available talent - Nova Scotians who are ready, willing, and able.

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

### **VOL. FIRE DEPT.: FILL A PORTA-TANK CAMPAIGN - THANKS**

BILL HORNE: I rise today to recognize members of the Beaver Bank Kinsac Volunteer Fire Department who held their inaugural “Fill a Porta-Tank” campaign to raise food donations for Beacon House over the holiday season. The fire department raised 700 pounds of food and approximately \$500 in cash donations; the Beaver Bank-Kinsac Community Awareness Association matched the monetary donation for the grand total of 700 pounds of food and \$1,000 for Beacon House.

I would like to thank the volunteers of Station 48 for caring and supporting their community and wish them great success next year as they plan to build and grow on this year’s campaign.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

### **AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MO.: #SHINEBLUE - SUPPORT**

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker. I rise today in celebration, not only of today being World Autism Day but of April being Autism Acceptance Month. This month is a perfect time to bring communities together to enhance understanding, acceptance, and inclusion. I invite everyone to #ShineBlue this month, joining people in more than 600 cities, in 45 countries, in lighting schools, businesses, and public buildings, in a blue light to help shine a light on autism.

There are events going on across the province this month and I highly recommend checking them out. We all do better when we understand, accept, and include each other. I wish everyone well this World Autism Day and encourage taking a moment to #ShineBlue.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**TAYLOR, TARA: PRODUCTION, *VIOLA: THE MUSICAL* - CONGRATS.**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the efforts of Dartmouth North's Tara Taylor, who has written, directed, and produced a new musical, *Viola: The Musical*. Featuring a cast and crew of 36, most from the African Nova Scotian community, the show follows two present-day sisters, Rayna and Amiah, as they learn about the legacy of Viola Desmond for a school project.

Through a series of flashbacks that take the audience from her early years through to the historic day when she sat in the whites-only section of the Roseland Cinema, Desmond's incredible story of courage unfolds. The show features beautiful music composed by Ross Unger and spirited choreography by Liliona Quarmyne. Tara Taylor was inspired by Viola Desmond to start her own skincare business and writing this musical gave her an opportunity to bring her back to life to share her inspiration with others.

The show premiered at the Spatz Theatre as part of a week of celebrations honouring the release of the \$10 bill, which now features Viola Desmond's picture. Congratulations to Tara and to all involved with this awesome production.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

**RIVERSIDE LOBSTER: MIN.'S EXCELLENCE AWARD - CONGRATS.**

GORDON WILSON: When David Deveau started Riverside Lobster in 1997, he was determined to focus on getting the highest-quality product to his customers. Since then Riverside has established itself as an important lobster exporter known for its premium live lobsters, as well as other lobster products.

The company looks very different today, having grown and changed over the years, but remains very focused on excellence. They have been able to meet the world-wide demand for quality product by improvements to their facilities and production methods. For those efforts Riverside has received best practice certifications for their lobster products, their production facilities, as well as their emphasis on sustainability.

For their employees, Riverside has established a good work environment where the employees are well informed about health and safety issues. The company provides medical benefits, pension plans, and transportation to work for their employees, as well as temporary housing and English courses for their foreign workers. This makes Riverside an ideal choice to receive the Minister's Award of Excellence at the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister's conference and I take this opportunity to add my congratulations.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**SMITH, KIMBERLY: VOL. OF THE YR. - CONGRATS.**

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, for more than 25 years Kimberly Smith has been advocating for inclusive education in cultural programming. He has been the board chairperson for the Community Association for People for Real Enterprise and brought CAPRE to charitable status. He volunteers on the fundraising committee by providing graphic design skills and technical support. He has also been an official adviser for People First Kings County, and an advocate for people with intellectual disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Kim Smith for his dedication to our community. He is this year's Volunteer of the Year for the Municipality of Kings. I ask all members to join me in congratulating Kim on this very well-deserved award.

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

**SEX. ASSAULT MO.: PUBL. EDUC. - EMBRACE YOUR VOICE**

LENORE ZANN: I'd like to recognize April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Over the past couple of years many of us have been speaking up as part of the MeToo movement, which has helped to change the way we think and talk about sexual violence. This has helped to create a better culture of respect, equality, and safety although we still have far to go.

Sexual violence is any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act by force. One in three women and one in six men are affected by sexual violence. This includes unwanted sexual comments or advances, selling or attempting to sell someone for sex, acts of sexual violence directed against an individual, regardless of their relationship to the victim. Consent is defined as the voluntary agreement to engage in sexual activity. Consent should never be assumed or implied, Mr. Speaker, and no means no.

All our voices have power, Mr. Speaker. It's time for everyone to find that voice and embrace it.

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

**TEAM atMSphere: CHILI COOK-OFF - CONGRATS**

BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, today I recognize team atMSphere, a group led by Hammonds Plains-Lucasville residents Falon Jones and Melissa Ryan, who held a chili cook-off in early February in support of the MS Society of Canada at our community centre.

Each of the entrants prepared a minimum four quarts of chili that was tasted by three judges - Tim Dunlop from the MS Society, Vernon Kynock, and me. There was also a ballot box for a People's Choice Award. Admission was free, and tickets could be bought for tasting either sample sizes of the chili or a serving size of one of your choice. After the chili cook-off there was a dessert auction and 50/50 draw.

The event was a great way to spend a chilly winter day, warming up and listening to live music. I would like to ask all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Team atMSphere for their chili cook-off in support of the MS Society of Canada and wish them continued fundraising success.

[1:45 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

**KING, DEBI: VOL. OF THE YR. - CONGRATS.**

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Debi King, this year's Provincial Volunteer from the Town of Shelburne. Debi sets an example of compassion and action and volunteers for a very impressive list of organizations.

She was instrumental in the founding of the King Street Centre, which offers services to families, and the Hillcrest Academy Project. She also spends her time with Meals on Wheels, the Shelburne County Arena, Little People's Place, the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre, the Shelburne County Curling Club, the Osprey Arts Centre, the 100 Women Who Care, and the St. Thomas Catholic Church.

She clearly exemplifies what it means to serve your community. I invite all members to join me in applauding this well-deserved nomination.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**BILL 21, QUEBEC: CHILLING EFFECT - CONCERN**

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to convey my concern at the introduction of Bill No. 21 in Quebec.

The bill would ban the wearing of religious symbols on the job in public roles, meaning effectively that hijab-wearing students could not aspire to be public school teachers and turban-wearing lawyers could not aspire to be judges. I applaud some teachers in Quebec who have begun wearing religious symbols, be they Buddhist prayer beads or Christian crosses, in solidarity with their Muslim colleagues who feel, rightly, targeted by Islamophobia.

This news from Quebec sends a chill to Muslim Nova Scotians. I wish to affirm the work and the value of every individual, recognize that religious belief can be deeply held and deeply personal and that they are not at odds with the secular states or with secular institutions.

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

**VILLAGE GREEN REC. SOC.: PARK/COM. HALL DEV. - CONGRATS.**

HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the members of the Village Green Recreation Society who have volunteered over many years to create a park and community hall for the residents of East Dover, McGraths Cove, and Scotts Branch.

Incorporated in 1994, the society began local fundraising, acquired both municipal and provincial grants, and with hundreds of hours of volunteer labour they opened the park. Since then, the society has added picnic tables, swings, horseshoe pits, a paved basketball court, a canteen and storage building, as well as lighting for evening activities.

In 2012 the society acquired the local church hall, then made numerous improvements to ensure the hall is a year-round venue. The hall now provides a venue for a variety of activities including biweekly lending library, weekly card games, children's Christmas parties, music concerts, coffee houses, movie nights, art exhibits and much, much more.

The Village Green Recreation Society exemplifies the value brought to a community by dedicated volunteers, and I wish them all the best as they carry on.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

**JONES, MATTHEW: CHILDREN'S WISH JOURNEY - BEST WISHES**

EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish Matthew Jones, a 10-year-old North Sydney resident with Cystic Fibrosis, a magnificent trip from the Children's Wish Foundation.

Matthew has always been a fan of Formula One Racing and a trip with a pit stop at a Formula One Race in either Italy or England is being arranged. Matthew is required to take upwards of 30 pills a day, physiotherapy and frequent hospital stays to manage his Cystic Fibrosis. This trip will give Matthew and his family something to look forward to in the near future.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish the Jones family a very memorable trip.



THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

### **HIGHLAND PARK MINOR SOFTBALL: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT - THANKS**

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to recognize an outstanding organization: the Highland Park Minor League Softball Association, run by John-Wayne Matheson, Stephen Matheson, Ruthie Matheson, Bianca Ridler, Jackie Claval, Krissy Arbuckle, Jessica King, and David Lane. They have some outstanding coaches like Benny Laroche. This organization offers t-ball and baseball for youth across Halifax, including my son Oliver, who last year discovered his love for baseball.

To all the volunteers, thank you so much, and play ball.

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

### **WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY: EDUCATORS/SUPPORT STAFF - COMMEND**

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring awareness to the teachers and support staff in our Nova Scotia schools who work daily with children and youth diagnosed with autism. Today being World Autism Day and April being Autism Awareness Month, I pay tribute to the adults entrusted with their care and development.

Mr. Speaker, autism is a disorder with a variety of conditions that challenge an individual's social skills, verbal and written communication, and repetitive behaviours. Educators and support staff work co-operatively with parents and agencies to put forth the best programming possible for children and youth.

We acknowledge that more work can and should be done to understand and best support people with autism, but I ask the members of the Legislature to join me today in sending our appreciation to school staff who dedicate themselves to the countless creative plans and programming to best benefit our children and youth.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

### **AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MO.: COM. EVENTS - ENGAGE**

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was pleased to attend Autism Nova Scotia's flag-raising ceremony at Grand Parade to mark Autism Acceptance Month. During the month of April, we are all encouraged to share positive, respectful, and accurate information about autism and autistic people. People with autism are our family, friends, classmates, co-workers, and community members, and their contributions are valuable.

Awareness is crucial, but acceptance, inclusion, and accommodation of people on the autism spectrum are just as important, as is battling misconceptions of what ASD is. Today, on UN World Autism Awareness Day, Autism Nova Scotia will host Autism 101 at the Keshen Goodman Library. They will be launching a new communication toolkit that will be available for checkout, and I would encourage anyone interested to attend.

I'm proud to see our government introducing new supports for youth with autism through the brief intensive outreach service pilot program. Let's all work together to continue to support families and make our communities more welcoming to people with autism.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**BEMBRIDGE, JEFF: TRAIN STN. REOPENING - COMMEND**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Today, I would like to congratulate businessman Jeff Bembridge and the Town of Amherst for their collaborative efforts to obtain the historic 11-year-old railway station in a deal that will lead to the reopening of the station to train passengers. As well, Mr. Bembridge has plans to open an affordable restaurant in part of the turn-of-the-century structure.

It has taken four-plus years of patience and perseverance to ensure this important heritage building continues to be used into the future. The large size and impressive design of the VIA Rail CN Railway station of Amherst reflects the significance of Amherst to the Intercolonial Railway Company and its expectations for future growth.

I commend Jeff Bembridge and CAO Greg Herrett on their combined efforts over the past four years plus to make this happen. I'm very proud of them.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

**KESHEN GOODMAN LIB.: AUTISM 101/TOOL KIT - RECOG.**

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, in honour of World Autism Awareness Day, I rise to recognize a wonderful library in my riding that is always hosting informative events to help educate the people of Clayton Park West. Tonight, the Keshen Goodman Library is hosting Autism 101 and the launch of the new communication toolkit to end stigma and educate those in our community who may not know a lot about autism spectrum disorder.

Jenny Tyler, a representative from Autism Nova Scotia, will speak with the adults and youth who will attend to spread further knowledge and answer questions. There will also be three different toolkits available to be borrowed from the library tonight, which

include a fidget kit, a sensory kit, and a visual kit. Autism 101 takes place tonight at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, would this House of Assembly join me in thanking the Keshen Goodman Library for teaching our community members to accept everyone with open arms and minds.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

**SWEET-KONTUK, WENDY: ELECTION, TOWN COUNCIL - BEST WISHES**

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Wendy Sweet-Kontuk on her election as councillor for the Town of Oxford.

Wendy Sweet-Kontuk won the February 2<sup>nd</sup> by-election against two other candidates. Wendy grew up in Collingwood and has worked as a summer student with the Town of Oxford. Wendy lives in Oxford now and has worked for 20 years helping seniors as a VON representative, and now manager, and was sworn in as a Town of Oxford councillor during the February 19 meeting.

Please join me in congratulating Wendy on her successful election to the Town of Oxford and wish her all the best in the future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

**GRIPP, MIKE: BREWING AWARD - CONGRATS.**

SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: I rise today to congratulate Mike Gripp, the head brewer at the Saltbox Brewery in Mahone Bay on winning a gold medal at the Alberta Brewing Awards.

The annual Alberta beer awards hosted representatives from 76 breweries. The entries are judged by a panel of beer experts who blind-test the hundreds of beer entries. Mike won his gold medal for his recipe, Ghost Train Stout. Mike has won a total of four medals in his time as a brewer, including the World Beer Cup award.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask that you and the members of this House of Assembly please join me in congratulating Mike on his recent gold medal at the Alberta Brewing Awards.

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

**WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY:  
UNDERSTANDING/ACCESS - PROMOTE**

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, today, of course, as it's been said here, is World Autism Awareness Day. The goal of today is to spread awareness about autism spectrum disorder, a developmental disorder that impairs the communication and social interaction skills of an individual.

The World Health Organization estimates that one out of every 160 children living in the world today live with autism spectrum disorder. In Nova Scotia, the number living with ASD is around 14,000 people.

Mr. Speaker, the healthcare options and technologies that are available today to help manage this disorder barely reach half of all diagnosed with the condition worldwide and I'd like to stand today and say that I look forward to the day when autism spectrum disorder is fully understood, and everyone has access to the supports they need.

I'd be remiss if I didn't stand and recognize my constituency assistant, who has a son with autism, and recognize all he and his wife do for their son.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

**CROWE, RON: CURLING COM. - DEDICATION**

HON. KAREN CASEY: Ron Crowe from Central Onslow, Colchester North has been actively involved with the curling community for five decades both as a competitive curler and a volunteer.

He was one of the original organizers of the Colchester Firefighters Curling League and past president of the league. Crowe curled in the first Nova Scotia firefighter curling playdowns with the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade back in 1972. He was the national secretary-treasurer for the Firefighters Curling Association and served as president of the Truro Curling Club.

Ron won the Nova Scotia Stick Curling championship twice: in 2009 with Ted Lohnes; and again in 2012 with Bill Spinney. In 2017, Crowe and Spinney won a national bronze medal and in 2018, they played in the top-10 nationally in Alberta. In 1996, Crowe was honoured by the Firefighters Curling Association, being named a life member. In 2019, he was inducted as a life member into the Nova Scotia Curling Association.

Sadly, Ron is currently in the palliative care unit at the Truro hospital. Our thoughts are with him.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

**EMBREE, CINDY: VOL. OF THE YR. - CONGRATS.**

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, the Town of Lockeport has named Cindy Embree as its provincial volunteer for this year.

A member of Shelburne County's Women's Fishnet, Cindy is a founding member of the Harmony Bazaar Festival of Women and Song, now in its 14th year of production. She is also a driver for Sou'west Nova Transit, a member of 100 Women Who Care, and a member of the Roseway Hospital Board Foundation. In addition, she has worked with a refugee family to teach them English.

Mr. Speaker, Cindy is a tireless volunteer who has the knack of bringing people with common goals together. I ask all members to join me in congratulating her on this well-deserved nomination.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

**HARDY, CHARLOTTE: HOSP. DONATION - THANKS**

EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Charlotte Hardy, a remarkable young lady from Sydney Mines. Nine-year-old Charlotte watched her younger brother rushed to hospital and then air lifted to the IWK for surgery.

Charlotte wanted to do something to help others who were taken to hospital and used her birthday money to purchase items from the Cape Breton Regional Hospital Foundation's Because You Care catalogue. These items go to help patients in the hospital.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Charlotte and her generosity. She wanted to give back so that we have hospitals, doctors, and nurses when we need them.

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

[2:00 p.m.]

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

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

**GOV'T. (N.S.) - N. PULP: WORKERS SUPPORT - PLAN**

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, for years thousands of Nova Scotians have wondered and worried about the impact of Northern Pulp's future on their future and the future of their community. On Friday we learned that a decision on Northern Pulp's ability to operate in this province and meet our environmental standards is still some time away.

My question for the Premier: Is the government preparing a plan to support industry workers and entrepreneurs in any way in the event of a closure, temporary or permanent, at the mill?

THE PREMIER: I thank the honourable member for the question. As I've said many times, when you look at all options, how do we diversify the residuals that we've seen in our sawmills across the province? Northern Pulp, of all mills in the province, was the most integrated one when it comes to every sawmill in the province. The impact is far beyond Pictou County; it hits every community.

We are looking at options, diversification, but we are also continuing to hope and look forward that the company will continue to provide an EA that meets the environmental standards of our province, so we can continue to keep those mill workers working.

TIM HOUSTON: Northern Pulp has indicated that it may close without a change to the Boat Harbour Act and the Premier has referenced, I think in his words today and certainly a number of times before, a committee that has been struck to look at options to diversify the forest economy and look at ways that we can have a strong forestry industry in this province going forward.

My question for the Premier: Could he elaborate on that committee - when was it struck, and if he can maybe update the House on the work of that committee that he mentioned?

THE PREMIER: It was struck the beginning of the year - late December, early January of this current year.

The work is ongoing. We are reaching out to our partners to see around diversification, ensuring, quite frankly, the stability of the pension plan that is currently there, not just for current workers but those who are currently receiving pensions out of that facility, and how we look at the magnitude of the impact if the mill goes down across a number of sectors. We will continue to do that work.

At the same time, again, it is my hope that the company responds to the request for the information that is required around an EA - one that meets the environmental standards in this province and one that will allow those mill workers to continue to work.

TIM HOUSTON: I do appreciate the Premier's response on that. Many people are worried about the outcome of this situation; many people are worried about the impact on their futures. Whether they work in fisheries, whether they work in forestry, or at the port here in Halifax, people are worried about the impact of this on their future, and I'm worried about contingency plans.

Government has a responsibility to be prepared for every outcome, positive or negative, but particularly potential negative outcomes of things that happen in this province.

The Premier mentioned the pensioners as a specific group, current and future pensioners. My question for the Premier is: Does he have an understanding of the potential ramifications on the pension plan and the pensioners should there be a slowdown in service or should the mill cease to operate in this province?

THE PREMIER: The current owner, upon taking over that company, actually made an instalment into the pension plan to provide stability. There is still some ongoing work that we'll need, information that will be required.

We believe, at this point, that those families currently receiving income from that will remain still supported by that. But I want to again reiterate, for the third time, my hope that the company will continue to comply, to ensure it provides the information that will allow it to meet the environmental standards of this province so that we can protect the jobs not only at that mill but in communities across the province.

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

#### **GOV'T. (N.S.): MIN. WAGE INCREASE - INSUFFICIENT**

GARY BURRILL: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday I was happy to attend a rally for a \$15 minimum wage at the office of the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. Speaker after speaker there made the one clear, repeated point - that yesterday's 55 cent increase in the minimum wage is not enough for anyone to live on.

Even if they bring in equivalent increases, as are planned over the next two years, minimum wage workers in Nova Scotia in those two years' time will still be making less than minimum wage workers make in Ontario and Alberta today.

At \$11.55, our minimum wage is 9<sup>th</sup> out of 13 Canadian jurisdictions.

My question for the Premier: Why does the Premier think that people in Nova Scotia can afford to work for so much less than everybody else?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As you know, we are using the formula put in place by his government when they were in power. We continue to follow that, but at this particular time we increased it more than what that formula would have allocated for. The minister has also announced there will be a similar increase next year. That is one component of how we support Nova Scotia's low-income families across the province.

Basic personal exemption is on a sliding scale. Those who require support the most when it comes to income tax bracket are getting it. At the same time, we have increased the rent subsidy so that we can provide an affordable living option for low-income Nova Scotians, to look at not just their paycheque but also at how we can support them through the entire living experience in Nova Scotia.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, the low-income personal exemption that the Premier speaks of brings to the average person filing taxes a benefit of \$13 per month. To move from \$11.55 minimum wage to \$15 minimum wage would change one's income by \$550 per month. I'm not the most brilliant mathematician in the world, but I can even do that in my head. That's \$537 monthly.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday's 55 cent increase doesn't even make us the highest in the Maritimes. That's P.E.I., which by the way continues to have the region's highest projected economic growth. There's a reason for that. Economic growth is impossible unless ordinary people have some money in their pocket that they can spend.

I want to ask the Premier: How can our economy in Nova Scotia generate the spending we need in order to move out of being the poorest province in Canada when the government has us stuck at \$11-something?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the success of Prince Edward Island is that no government has had to follow a New Democratic Government in P.E.I. That has been their success.

Mr. Speaker, after we dug ourselves out of a \$600 million hole in 2013, we continued to make investments, ensuring that we follow the formula that was set out by the New Democratic Party when it comes to raising the minimum wage, except at this particular time, we have increased it by 55 cents. The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has also indicated that there will be another increase of 55 cents.

We continue to make sure that we reduce the basic personal exemption. We look at how we provide rental supplements and how we continue to deal with the issue of affordability. As he would also know, when he was in power, he saw power rates skyrocket under the leadership of the New Democratic Party. Today, Nova Scotians see stability when it comes to power rates.



Those are all positive ways, Mr. Speaker, as we continue to work with the one issue that the honourable member is focused on, which is the minimum wage. It is more helpful for low-income families, I believe, that we look all the myriad of options that can help them with the expenses of living.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier touts the credentials of his government in the area of economics, but in my view the real outstanding economists in Nova Scotia today aren't anyone in the government or anyone in the banks. Rather, they are the people who - through resourcefulness, hard work and their wits - manage most of the time to more or less get by, although they're not making any more than \$11, \$12 or \$13-something an hour. Not one of those people thinks that we're going to be able to seriously address having the lowest median income our country with a minimum wage of \$11-something, and not one of them thinks either that this change is going to make an appreciable difference in their spending power.

I want to ask the Premier: Does he think it's fair that so many people are having to live in Nova Scotia today on \$11.55?

THE PREMIER: Again, the honourable member is focused on one aspect of the supports we provide to low-income Nova Scotians. I want to tell him that there are a myriad of options of how we continue to provide stability for families in this province.

I also want to tell the honourable member that the most important thing that we can do for all the citizens of this province is continue to grow the economy and provide good jobs, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is that there are more people working in Nova Scotia today than ever before in our history. Unemployment is at an all-time low. Those are all positive signs we're helping lift Nova Scotians into success, allowing them to charge their own destiny, providing them with job opportunities, growing the economy, letting them see their hopes for themselves.

He should celebrate the fact that, for the first time, for three consecutive years, more young people are staying in this province than leaving. Those are all good signs. Is there more work to do? Of course there is. We're going to continue to work with those Nova Scotians to make sure that everyone sees themselves and sees their future here in this province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

### **H&W - MENTAL HEALTH: SUICIDE STUDY - DETAILS**

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Last week during Budget Estimates, I asked the Minister of Health and Wellness if the government was studying suicide. He said there was work under way and that it involved experts in the field.

It's important to study suicide so we know that the mental health investments are being spent in the right way, but I worry when a study is limited to professionals.

My question through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister is: Does he intend to include first-voice accounts and have public input, or will the study be limited to the professionals?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I thank him for raising this important question. I think it's a question and a topic in which interest is shared across the floor. In fact, as we discussed during estimates, this is the fulfilment of a commitment - a recommendation was made by Dr., and now Senator, Stan Kutcher back when I first came into this role, to update the provincial suicide prevention framework. So, this isn't a review in the context that I think the member is raising the question now, but more broadly, specifically towards a clinical type of a piece of work with respect to an approach for reducing and preventing suicides in the province.

JOHN LOHR: I thank the minister for that answer. Mr. Speaker, an article in *The Chronicle Herald* this week states that more public engagement is needed to prevent suicides. I'll table that argument. Some of the most valuable insight I've had in the mental health services have come from those who have experienced the system first-hand. Advocacy groups like #HowManyNSHA-IWK provide insight and experience from a different perspective than professionals, and it shapes a fuller picture.

My question to the minister is: Has the minister reached out to mental health advocacy groups to help gather statistics and know where investments are most needed?

RANDY DELOREY: Again, the work on the suicide prevention framework is in response to a recommendation that this piece of work, which I believe was somewhere in the vicinity of 20 years old, was appropriate to be updated.

In light of the circumstances, it would be appropriate to look at the data and the information in Nova Scotia, but also look at best practices from across the world, across the country, and engaging with experts who have the clinical expertise to help inform the path forward and the steps forward that we can then roll out throughout our mental health system. Again, to achieve the objective that I think we all share, which is a reduction in the number of attempted - and certainly reduce the number of completed - suicides in this province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

#### **LAE - MIN. WAGE: PROB. PERIOD - WAGE DISCRIMINATION**

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. Nova Scotia is the only province in Canada with a separate minimum wage for inexperienced employees.

While other provinces have separate minimum wages for liquor servers, home workers, security guards, live-in camp leaders and other specific occupations, no other province imposes a three-month probationary period on all employees who are new to an industry.

Mr. Speaker, when no other province imposes a blanket policy like this one, why is Nova Scotia leading the way in wage discrimination?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise and explain the 50 cent differential we have for inexperienced workers. It lasts three months because that is the period that we look at for a worker to gain some experience on the job.

The member brings up what other provinces do. What they do is they have differentials of 80 cents or \$1, which target the liquor servers, which target youth. I will add that, in those differentials, that differential always remains.

In the process we have in Nova Scotia, which we have currently, which we had under the NDP government, which we had under the Progressive Conservative government, is a very small amount that the employer would save, which would amount to about \$240 over three months. What that is, is to assist the employer to pay for training costs, to actually have job-shadowing for that employee and to allow that employee to gain the skills in their first job so they can move on and have more employment and have more income.

TAMMY MARTIN: What a perfect segue into my next question. We are worried that low-wage workers, and especially young workers, are being taken advantage of by this policy. Those moving back and forth from their home communities to go to college or university are particularly vulnerable.

We've heard stories of young workers who, having worked for years at a McDonald's in Sydney, are told by their new employers at a McDonald's in Halifax that they will be paid the inexperienced rate.

If employers want to reduce costs associated with training new workers, the department could provide assistance to help them make business decisions to reduce that turnover, rather than passing those costs on to the workers.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to ending the discriminatory inexperienced minimum wage now?

LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, what I would say to the member is that if any employee is working at a McDonald's for three months and goes to another McDonald's or a Wendy's or a Harvey's or anything in a fast-food industry, after three months at one

organization, even if they go to a completely separate company, they cannot be paid the inexperienced worker rate.

What I would say that if that practice is happening, those companies are breaking the labour laws in Nova Scotia, and that employee should report them to the department. We will investigate, and that employee will be owed back wages.

[2:15 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

### **H&W - MASSAGE THERAPY INDUSTRY: STRICTER REGS. - CLARIFY**

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. A CBC article yesterday outlined the lack of regulations in the massage therapy industry, and I will table it. It tells the story of a massage therapist facing nine - nine - accounts of sexual assault and awaiting trial, yet he is still able to see clients.

This lack of regulation has left women feeling vulnerable, and I can only imagine how the women who came forward with complaints feel about this individual. A lack of regulation in the industry means his only condition right now is being supervised when he is with female clients.

My question is: Does the minister believe that the massage therapy industry is adequately regulated in this province?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. As the member would know, there are a number of self-regulated professions within the province. In fact, one of the bills before us here in the Legislature around the nursing profession relates to that topic.

As the work gets done to inform the self-regulation, a lot of it is focused on the clinical aspects. Of course, the situation highlighted in the article is concerning. I think it's concerning to all Nova Scotians if an individual in a position of trust violates that trust, and the allegations in the particular case that's been presented in the media, again, raise concerns for many Nova Scotians, including us.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, this story would be troubling any day, but it's especially troubling to hear this story during Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Massage therapy clients are vulnerable. They're often at least partially nude, many are battling chronic pain, and they trust their massage therapist to act professionally.

Not properly regulating the industry gives people who put their trust in the hands of the massage therapist only to have it violated very few options to seek justice. Allowing

someone who is accused of these nine crimes to continue practising is a failure of this system in this province.

I will ask the minister: Will the minister work with the industry to ensure that stricter regulations are put in place to keep clients and therapists safe?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, we work with many stakeholders, organizations, and health industry organizations to establish and define the parameters for self regulation and oversight in the health professions. By and large, these are self-regulated professions.

As a government, we've developed a more formalized framework for what it entails to put forward a self-regulated body. That's some work that's been done in the last couple of years, and we apply that. We do work with groups and organizations and we have a number that are in progress now throughout the health system. We continue to do that work and advance self-regulation opportunities as we are able to do so.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West on a new question.

#### **H&W - N.S. HEALTH CARE: ADMIT CRISIS - RESPOND**

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, continuing on with the Minister of Health and Wellness, this government may deny it at every opportunity, but health care in Nova Scotia is beyond a crisis situation. It's gone to a whole new level. Everyone who works in health care knows it, and every person seeking health care knows it. In fact, everyone in this Chamber knows it, although many will continue to deny it, with a government member recently preferring the word "pressures" to the word "crisis."

Front-line health care workers have offered ideas and solutions through two reports, *Code Census* and *Code Crisis*. I would ask the minister: Why has he largely ignored these two reports from front-line workers?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member. What I would advise the members of the Legislature is, in fact, we do take the concerns of our front-line health care workers seriously.

With respect to the concerns being raised, we do work with our stakeholders, who work with our partners in delivering the health care to Nova Scotians and we see changes. We see actions being taken for example as we've talked about at the Health Committee recently in our emergency departments for off-load transfers from paramedics into the hospital system to get our ambulances back out on the front line. That was one of the predominant themes and requests from the paramedic field. That's listening, that's responding to those concerns.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, the first step to fixing a crisis is admitting there is a crisis. As long as this Liberal government continues to split hairs and refuses to acknowledge the crisis, our emergency departments will continue to be overcrowded, chaotic, or close altogether. You will continue to read those stories daily in *The Chronicle Herald*.

I implore the minister to do the right thing and stop denying a crisis situation. Will the minister please put away the talking points and tell Nova Scotians he hears them loud and clear, that he agrees with them that Nova Scotia is in a health care crisis?

RANDY DELOREY: Indeed, I can assure the members opposite and indeed all Nova Scotians that I do hear them. I hear from Nova Scotians in communities across the province. I hear from health care professionals from a variety of fields. Where perhaps the member and I make come to disagreement is that I believe actions speak louder than words. I believe the efforts we make, the investments we make, and the changes we make in our health care system are the actions we're taking to improve the health care system for all Nova Scotians.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West on a new question.

#### **H&W - CODE ORANGE: WORKERS' CALL - RESPOND**

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question again is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. The only way to address the health care crisis is through and open, honest dialogue. That is what we need because we aren't seeing any action. Front-line workers have been pleading with management to call a Code Orange in hospitals, but they have been denied time and time again. They are calling for a Code Orange because they are entering a work environment they know is in a crisis.

Being denied that request only increases uncertainty and anxiety for both patients and staff and family members. So, my question for the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Does he believe that front-line workers should be the ones who decide whether or not Code Orange is a call worth warranting?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: As the member has raised the question around our emergency departments and the environment there, again I'll reiterate this is a concern we've heard raised and it's one that we've engaged and brought together. The partners at our emergency systems, the Health Authorities, and the EMC that provides our EHS ambulance services had them come together to put together some planned course of action to take action to improve the situation.

The first action point of focus is on the transition. That is for paramedics that arrive at the hospital to transition the patients into the hospital system. That will have a positive impact and there are more actions coming from that plan as well.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Well, I hope there's more action because, right now, that may be happening in HRM but, from what I understand, that's not working very well either. What about the rest of the province?

Calls for a Code Orange are a symptom of a system stretched well beyond a breaking point. It's a symptom of emergency departments that are backed up and overcrowded creating chaos for both patients and health care workers.

My question for the minister is: When will he admit our emergency departments are working in less-than-favourable conditions creating a dangerous environment for our patients and our employees?

RANDY DELOREY: Again, I'll share with the member action is being taken as part of the planning and the work being done by the Nova Scotia Health Authority to help improve patient flow through our emergency department and our hospital system. I've talked about the off-load piece quite extensively, but another piece of action being implemented by the Health Authority includes the ability of nurses to requisition things like X-rays and digital imaging from the emergency department so that the patients don't have to wait for a physician to move that through.

Mr. Speaker, whether or not the member believes that's happening on the ground, I had a family member who was at St. Martha's Hospital in Antigonish, a health care worker themselves who came home and started to explain to me how this great new change was happening at St. Martha's. That's part of the action that's taking place because of the planning and implementation, because the Health Authority and the government knows that we have challenges and we're working to improve them.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

#### **F&A: FISH PLANT WORKERS - MIN. APOLOGIZE**

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. Last week, the minister dismissed the NDP's call for a \$15 minimum wage saying that no one is going to pay minimum wage for a good employee.

Mr. Speaker, the majority of the 4,000 Nova Scotians - mostly women - who work in fish processing are paid less than \$15 an hour. The minister's comment suggests that they are receiving such low wages because they are not good workers, when in fact the reason they are paid so little has nothing to do with their work and everything to do with this government's refusal to raise the floor to a minimum wage of \$15 an hour.

My question is: Will the minister please apologize to all fish plant workers and explain his comments?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: First of all, at no time did I ever say that workers in the fish plants don't do great work, they actually do. Indeed, I remember my comments very clearly. I very clearly said that anybody working in a fish plant who does great work gets more than minimum wage.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, the Premier constantly reminds us that our seafood exports are booming. Yet, workers in that industry are not seeing the benefits. Average hourly compensation for fish plant workers has decreased every year since 2014, and is in fact now lower than in 2009. Wages can't be dropping because of global competition, because our exports are booming. Wages can't be dropping because of a labour surplus, because fish plants can't find workers. The only reason wages are so low is because this government refuses to do the right thing and raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

Will the minister support a \$15 minimum wage so that our export boom actually benefits workers?

KEITH COLWELL: Indeed most of our workers in the fishing industry of 10,700 make well above minimum wage - very much above minimum wage when you look at the whole industry. As I said earlier, anyone in the fish plant who is a really good employee, comes back to work all the time and gets more than \$15 an hour.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

### **H&W - HEATH CARE PROFESSIONALS: CONDITIONS - SAFETY ENSURE**

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Overcrowded and understaffed emergency departments come at a long-term cost. Allied health care professionals, believe it or not, are exiting for other provinces and actually leaving our country completely.

They are headed elsewhere, where they know working conditions are safer for them and their patients and they will actually feel respected by their government. Morale for our health care professionals is at an all-time low and continued inaction by this government only worsens that.

My question for the minister is: What is his plan to ensure safe work conditions and put an end to out-migration of health care professionals?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Indeed the question of safety in our health workplace is something that came up just, I believe, in the month or so before I came into this role. In particular, unions representing the nurses brought forward some recommendations. We've been working with them to implement changes. Indeed some of those changes have been implemented, particularly in areas like our long-term care sector, helping to provide the



equipment needed to help ensure that there's more safety in the delivery of the care, both for the residents and for the staff who have to move residents around.

[2:30 p.m.]

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, there is no dignity for someone who goes to the hospital for treatment and spends days, even weeks, on a stretcher in the hallway. Doctors, nurses, and health care professionals shouldn't have to apologize to patients and feel guilty for the conditions they are being treated in; family members shouldn't come to visit loved ones and leave bewildered at the state of health care in their very own province; and people shouldn't have to drive across this province to receive care in an emergency department.

What specifically does the minister believe will change these negative experiences that we are all reading about in the papers and watching on the news daily, to positive ones for Nova Scotians?

RANDY DELOREY: First, I believe that the member opposite, although she is focused on the negative experiences that she has referenced, I have to expect that like other MLAs, including myself, that the member also receives and hears positive experience from the health care system. There are many positive experiences that Nova Scotians are receiving great health care in many parts of our health care system.

Mr. Speaker, we still have some challenges and we are focused on implementing changes to improve the situation where we do have challenges. Make no mistake, there are many, many parts of our health care system that are providing great care for Nova Scotians.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

### **H&W - EMERG. DEPTS.: RESOURCES - LACK**

KARLA MACFARLANE: There are some good stories, but we all know that no one comes through our constituency doors with good stories. We are here to oppose - there isn't an emergency department in this province that isn't under immense stress. Patients are being treated, they're sleeping, and they're dying in hallways - they are dying in hallways. Paramedics and front-line health care workers are burning out and finding themselves overwhelmed with a lack of resources to allow them to properly do their jobs. These conditions don't set us up to be able to properly treat our sick.

My question for the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Will he admit that there is a lack of resources for our emergency departments in our province?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for the question about our emergency departments. We understand the pressures faced at many of our emergency departments in various parts of the province.

Mr. Speaker, I've recounted before the experience in Cape Breton where in my first trip down there the emergency department was really the highlight. That was a focal point that staff wanted to bring me to, to show me at the Cape Breton Regional that it needed to be redeveloped, that it needed to be expanded. They needed those investments; they needed those additional resources.

We've listened to them, we've implemented, and we're making those changes. We're listening, we're hearing, and we're making those changes.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, denial gets us absolutely nowhere. Both patients and staff across this province are being forced to muddle through unacceptable and dangerous environments as they attempt to provide or obtain health care. We know better than this; we can do better than this - we have to do better.

Does the minister perceive this crisis to be the fault of administrative and bureaucratic barriers, or does he feel there's an obvious lack of political will by the Liberal Government to fix it?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as the member would know, being the Health and Wellness Critic, the challenges we face in parts of our health care system, attachment to primary care services in emergency departments, two that are most frequently talked about and are public, that these are challenges that are reflective of challenges in the health care system across the country.

Indeed, in many of these areas the investments, the changes and the work that we've been doing, we see ourselves faring fairly well on that national stage. For example, in primary care Stats Canada shows that in 2017 that we are the fourth most people in the province attached to primary care providers. That is the situation on the ground here in Nova Scotia.

We know we have the fourth best coverage of the country, based on Statistics Canada, but we know there is more work to do and that's why we continue our investments to improve primary care access across the country.

### **H&W - EHS FUNDING INCREASE: AMBULANCES - PURCHASE**

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, ". . . there may not be an ambulance when you need it . . ." - these are the stark words of warning from Terry Chapman, the executive director of the Paramedics Union in Nova Scotia. Think about that. You call 911, and there may not be an ambulance available.

Mr. Chapman believes that the province needs 30 more ambulances and 200 additional paramedics. That's just to alleviate the short-term off-load delays. A sustainable system is a whole other matter.

My question for the minister is: How much of the \$4.6 million increase in EHS funding is dedicated to purchasing more ambulances?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: The vast majority of that increase of \$4.6 million to the EHS system is actually targeted towards responding to increased call volume. That is money going to pay for the ambulance calls that Nova Scotians make when they require an ambulance to ensure that it's there for them.

The exact dollar figure and the breakdown, I have to look up, but again, the vast majority of the \$4.6 million is going towards responding to increased call volume. That is going to pay for those ambulance calls so that when Nova Scotians call, we make sure that we're paying the bill.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Paramedics, Mr. Speaker, are feeling undervalued and defeated by this government. They have been working four years without a contract. These are the men and women who answer our calls during our darkest and most vulnerable moments. They save lives, 24/7 they're out there saving lives. They sometimes work 12 hours or more with no breaks. Working conditions have become so stressful that some paramedics are moving out of Nova Scotia to work in more favourable conditions elsewhere.

Is the minister concerned that many paramedics would sooner move to Alberta than wait around hoping for better conditions in Nova Scotia?

RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for again raising this question about the work environment for paramedics in the province. We've talked about this in Question Period before, frequently; we have had a Health Committee meeting on this very topic.

As I have assured the members of this Legislature in the Fall, this is an area of concern. It's an area where I felt that the appropriate course of action to take and improve the situation for paramedics was to bring the Health Authority and the EMCI together to come up with actions to move forward. We heard at the Health Committee that that work is ongoing, targeting the five regions that have the most pressure, the transfer of patients from ambulance to the hospital, and that work is under way.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**H&W - EMERGENCY CARE: ALL-PARTY SOLUTIONS - COMMIT**

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, currently the Department of Health and Wellness has no long-term strategy in place to ensure stable emergency care capacity for all regions within our province. The state of our province is one in which patients are being treated and, sadly, again, dying in hallways. It is a state in which the morale of doctors, nurses, paramedics, and many other allied health care professionals is dangerously low.

With our health care system in such a state, will the minister put aside partisan concerns and commit to bringing all Parties together to find solutions to the emergency care crisis in our province?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: First, again, I want to highlight and stress, Mr. Speaker, that the member is only bringing examples of one particular perspective of the challenges being experienced in emergency departments.

I want to assure the member, and all members of the Legislature, that what happens in our emergency departments is people's lives are being saved. People's lives are being saved when they go to our emergency departments because of the hard work and the dedication of our front-line health care professionals. Let that not be lost on any member of this Legislature or any person in Nova Scotia. That is what happens. More often than not, Mr. Speaker, that is the experience of Nova Scotians when they show up to our emergency departments and let that not be lost.

I find it ironic that the member would be talking about politicizing the situation and ignoring that the vast majority of experiences are not as the member has illustrated.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Believe me, Mr. Speaker, I listen. I have been sitting down with front-line health care professionals. They know how appreciative I am, how appreciative our government over on this side, is of their work. The message that the minister and the Liberal Government is sending out to Nova Scotians is that they only know how to work in silos. We all know that working together towards a common goal is the best way to achieve results.

Several weeks ago, the government denied my call to bring us all together with stakeholders to examine solutions for paramedics. I asked to be united so we could share some good stories. In fairness to the minister, he was not at that meeting. I'll ask the minister today: Is he willing to meet with paramedics and Opposition Parties together to try to improve the conditions for emergency care workers?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, of course hearing the voices of the front-line health care workers is important, part of influencing the work that we do. I can assure the member that throughout our health care system those conversations take place at the staff level and right up to and including myself. I meet and have met on multiple occasions with

representatives of front-line health care and that includes the paramedics' union, the nurses' unions, and unions representing other front-line health care workers. We listen to them, I hear from them, they influence the path we take. We also meet with our partners and the employers, the Nova Scotia Health Authority and EMCI to come together with the plans to move forward, and that is exactly what's happening in our health care system today.

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

### **ENVIRON. - GHG EMISSIONS: REDUCTION - URGENCY**

LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment. An Environment Canada report leaked yesterday shows that due to climate change, Canada's temperatures are going up twice as fast as the rest of the world. This report says if we stay on the track we're on now we'll have storms like Hurricane Juan every second year. The report concludes that Canada needs a dramatic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions immediately, that this is urgent. But this government has chosen a target that slows down the pace of our reductions. That's like watching a house on fire but turning down the fire hoses.

I would like to ask the Minister of Environment: Given the findings by Environment Canada, in all honesty, does she not regret her government's choice to slow down our emission reductions?

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the honourable member for that question. It certainly was alarming to hear that statistical information yesterday. We think in the last few years our temperatures have risen by 1.7 degrees, I believe it's been just in the last few years.

I am glad to report that Nova Scotia is a leader in reducing greenhouse gases. We have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 30 per cent. Actually, it's more like 32, 33 per cent now, below the 2005 levels. We have made the most aggressive commitment across this country of 45 to 50 per cent goal by the year 2030. We know that coastal mitigation, we have some issues that we have to deal with, and certainly coastal protection is part of that. That's why I hope to be able to pass the coastal protection bill in the next few days in this House.

LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my follow-up question is for the Minister of Agriculture. The sea level around the Bay of Fundy has already gone up 40 centimetres and it will go up even faster in the next 10 years. The Isthmus of Chignecto has almost flooded twice in the last decade and fiercer storms are on the way. If the next hurricane hits at high tide, projections show that the Trans-Canada Highway will be flooded up to our car windows and flood right into Amherst. The minister told me in Budget Estimates that he's

partnering on a study to figure out what to do about this, but the study might not be done for another 18 months.

As David Kogon, Mayor of Amherst said, “If I were in charge of it, it would be under way now.” I’ll table that. Will the Minister of Agriculture please tell us why the request for proposal has not been issued yet and will he commit to starting preparations now so work can get started as soon as the study is done?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, indeed, we’re doing a tremendous amount of work around the dykes in the province. We have a \$50 million project under way now and we described it earlier in Estimates.

[2:45 p.m.]

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

### **TIR - LOCH LOMOND RD.: REPAIRS - TIMELINE**

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, on March 2, 2018 I raised a question to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal regarding flooding conditions on the Loch Lomond Road. A truck from the minister’s own department was engulfed in the flooding conditions and at the time, the minister stated that he was aware of the Loch Lomond Road situation and that staff were looking at some solutions in terms of drainage there.

Again, in May 2018, the minister was made aware of a potentially fatal situation when two seniors had their car fully submerged on the flooded roadway. They were lucky to escape with their lives.

In both instances, there was no permanent signage to warn of the danger.

Mr. Speaker, I’d like to ask the minister when he plans to make the necessary repairs to Loch Lomond Road.

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. The Loch Lomond Road, like many other low-lying roads in the province, is the subject of ongoing review by the department to find the proper mitigation. We’re in a situation where we’ve had quite a significantly wet winter, and that continues. We have more rain coming. We’ve had all kinds of activity, which has been highlighted in the House because of the climate change issue. We are constantly reviewing those situations, including the Loch Lomond Road.

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, the people of Loch Lomond and the travelling public deserve to feel safe and not run the risk of drowning on a local roadway. I’ll say that again: drowning on a local roadway.

The solution on the Loch Lomond Road goes well beyond the few thousand dollars that were spent last year to try to do some ditching mitigation at the end of the line. We've got a series of collapsing culverts on the old mine site. If the minister would like to come take a walk with me - I've walked the entire site. It doesn't take a lot to figure it out.

I would like to ask the minister again: Will he direct his staff to please permanently rectify this public safety issue on the Loch Lomond Road this fiscal year?

LLOYD HINES: I thank the member opposite for the kind invitation to go for a walk. However, I would like to point out that in the last four years, this government has driven the capital budget for road repairs in this province to in excess of \$1.025 billion - the largest sustained increase in the history of this province. It's only going to get better. We are going to take care of the problems universally across the province, including the Loch Lomond Road.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

#### **H&W: SPECIALIST APPT. - WAIT TIMES**

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. On March 12<sup>th</sup>, I asked the minister about a constituent's experience being sent back from Halifax to Roseway in the middle of the night because no beds were available. I'd like to update the minister and let him know that this constituent has now been waiting over a month for a specialist that could make the difference between mobility and potential paralysis. That's over a month, not for an appointment but for a call to confirm an appointment date.

My question for the minister is: Does he think that's an acceptable wait time for such a serious, time-sensitive medical need?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for the question. I have to say, I don't think I have enough clinical details from what the member's described there to draw the conclusion that she would like me to. But I certainly hope, Mr. Speaker, through you, that if the member does have more details on the specific case and constituent, we can take a look into that and the specific clinical condition and the specialist they're looking to meet with to further evaluate their situation.

Again, obviously with the broad description - we're not going to get into individual personal details on the floor of the Legislature - but I do want to make sure that the member knows I'm open to having that conversation.

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I don't have enough time to finish the rest of my question, so I will thank the minister for that response. I do have a signed authorization, so

I will follow up with him after the House today so that we can talk about how we can go forward and help this constituent in Shelburne County.

RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for that. I look forward to getting the additional information.

As the member noted, I'll just take the opportunity for a little PSA: just a reminder to the members of the Legislature to remind your constituency assistants, when you have health-related concerns from constituents, to get the privacy waiver signed in advance. We can move forward a lot more smoothly and quickly for those members.

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

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

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

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 119.

#### **Bill No. 119 - Builders' Lien Act.**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. MARK FUREY: I move that Bill No. 119, the Builders' Lien Act, be read a second time.

It's a pleasure to stand today and speak to this legislation. These amendments will support thousands of Nova Scotia workers and businesses in the construction industry. As we can all appreciate, the construction sector is critically important to the economic growth of the province and to the well-being of men and women who work in the industry. This sector generated \$6 billion in economic activity in Nova Scotia in 2017, and it's responsible for 5.5 per cent of the province's GDP. The sector directly employs more than 30,000 men and women, not to mention the many people and businesses that benefit from the economic activity generated by the sector.

The construction industry quite literally builds our province. That's why it's important that we support it so it continues to be strong. We have heard from many people engaged in the construction business over the last number of months. They have shared



with us their concerns over the slowness of payments to contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers by the owners who hire them to build their projects. We know that these practices are having a real and negative impact on businesses across Nova Scotia, and that hurts our economy in the communities in which they operate. They have told us that the existing legislation needs to be stronger to address these concerns.

I think we can all understand the frustrations of these companies when many of them are small businesses that cannot afford to wait months to be paid for work that they have long since completed on a construction project. If you are a contractor on a project, you should be paid within a reasonable time period after providing an invoice for the work you have completed. What that reasonable time period would be will be part of our upcoming consultation, but in Ontario, as an example, it's 28 days. Sixty-five per cent of the construction industry is comprised of small and medium-sized family-owned companies consisting of 50 or fewer employees. Delays in payments impact efficiency and productivity within the industry, and that increases the cost of doing business, costs that are then passed on to the consumers.

Money has to flow in a timely fashion from the project owners to the general contractors and then on to subcontractors and suppliers so that they can meet their payroll, purchase supplies, and meet other expenses. Prompt payment legislation will clearly set out the rights and responsibilities of all parties on a construction project. It will establish rules so that contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers in the construction industry are paid based on clear timelines set out in regulation. Late payments will be subject to interest. The legislation will also allow for an adjudication process to resolve disputes faster when payment timelines aren't met. This process will also ensure payment disputes are less likely to be held up by a lengthy and expensive court process.

With this legislation, we will also be amending the title of the Act, renaming it the Builders' Lien and Prompt Payment Act. I want to add that the regulations that will be developed to support this legislation will require extensive consultation and input from the sector, from municipalities, and from members of the public. We will hear from all stakeholders before this bill is proclaimed into law. Our plan is to have both broad and targeted consultation with contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, trade unions, engineers, road builders, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities, project owners, developers, and other interested stakeholders beginning this Spring. These consultations will be important, as they will help us determine much of the detail we need to inform timelines and the appropriate model for the adjudication process.

I look forward to the comments of my colleagues.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

TIM HALMAN: I want to thank the Minister of Justice for his comments on Bill No. 119. It is my duty this afternoon to rise at second reading to discuss Bill No. 119.

Mr. Speaker, many years ago I married into a family from southwest Nova Scotia. The Thibault family were small-business contractors in Digby County. Certainly I gained an appreciation of the demands that are on our contractors, what it means to make payroll, and how often there is an enormous amount of uncertainty that goes along with owning a small business.

I appreciate the remarks of the minister. I think he captured well the feeling that exists among many of our contractors and subcontractors as to the uncertainty that their businesses encounter day to day.

On the surface, my understanding of this bill is that the bill will enforce strict limits on payments to contractors and will also assist contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers to receive prompt payment. It was alarming to learn that just last year 35 construction companies went bankrupt. Many of those bankruptcies, I suppose, could be attributed to late or absent payments. My understanding is that under this legislation it will be 20 to 30 days to make a payment, and the new legislation will also establish a rate of interest for late or missed payments.

Now, that is my understanding of this bill on the surface. Of course, it is always when delving into the details that I have a few questions that I'm hoping the minister can address in his closing remarks.

First and foremost, my question is related to process. I have always fully believed that it is imperative - and I'm sure that's the case of many members here - that one does a comprehensive consultation before a member brings a bill before the House. In this particular case, the minister has indicated that he will consult with industry to make sure the industry is satisfied with the regulations before the bill is proclaimed. I'm wondering if the minister at a certain point can address that? Why is it that we are not consulting first, then bringing the bill forward, and then following the legislative process?

Just a few other questions, Mr. Speaker. The mechanics of the bill - some of the stakeholders I've spoken to feel that the details need to be worked out, that the language in some parts of the bill seem to be complicated. The concern I've heard is that the new regulations could potentially create another level of bureaucracy, more paperwork. So if we could get clarification on the extra and perhaps cumbersome paperwork and levels of bureaucracy that could be created and could be problematic for our subcontractors and suppliers - I guess essentially the question being, what new steps would be created that would add to the workload of our small business owners?

Also with respect to Section 4J, the remedy section, I'm hearing that that section seems to be vague, and I'm hearing from stakeholders that that may require it being more explicit as to clarify the process for remedy.

Mr. Speaker, as with any bill, we will continue to listen to stakeholders, as I know all members will. We certainly look forward to hearing from stakeholders at Law Amendments Committee.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I also am very happy to speak on Bill No. 119, the Builders' Lien and Prompt Payment bill. I do appreciate that the name of the Act is going to change with this piece of legislation.

I met with the Prompt Payment Coalition earlier this year and was very shocked to hear some of the issues that their members have been facing for many, many years around this issue. We know that these issues not only put businesses and workers in harm's way in terms of them just not being viable but also that it creates delays in federal, provincial, and municipal procurement and construction work.

It's a significant problem for small businesses and workers. We know that 30,000 people work in the construction industry in Nova Scotia and that the industry generates about \$3.8 billion in economic activity every year. That's a lot of money, and those are a lot of workers who need to be able to count on their jobs, and there are a lot of small-business owners who need to make sure they can continue in their businesses and pay their workers.

[3:00 p.m.]

Almost all the email I received about this issue came from businesses in my own district, Dartmouth North, largely from Burnside. Burnside is a home to many different types of organizations and businesses in the construction industry, including the trade unions, including tons of suppliers, and lots of contracting companies. So it's of particular interest to me to make sure those businesses and workers are served well by this piece of legislation.

I will echo my colleague from Dartmouth East and my concern that broad and robust consultations have not been done prior to the tabling of this legislation. I am happy to hear that there will be more consultation done, but it is in the interest of everybody to make sure that work is done before legislation is tabled and to make sure that the bill that is brought before us to debate is the strongest one possible.

I'm sorry that hasn't happened, but I do understand that members of the Prompt Payment Coalition were here on the day the legislation was tabled, so I'm hoping that it is good enough to satisfy the coalition at this point.

I do look forward to hearing from members of the community at the Law Amendments Committee and to debating this further on third reading.

Thank you very much. I'll end my comments for now.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from my colleagues. I won't go into a lot of detail around the process, but I do want to acknowledge that in normal submission of legislation, much of the consultation work is done. The industry has been very up front in seeing this legislation move. We wanted to make a commitment to the industry that we take their concerns around prompt payment and the challenges that the construction industry faces when payments aren't made. To my colleague's point - as many as 35 companies went bankrupt last year because of their inability to meet payroll and pay for purchases and supplies.

In these circumstances, Mr. Speaker, we want to clearly demonstrate that we hear the construction industry loud and clear. We are committing to moving the legislation and, in these circumstances, committing to robust consultation with the industry and multiple stakeholders to ensure, as my two colleagues have mentioned, a full discussion around this piece of legislation and its contents.

I make that commitment to both my colleagues that we will continue, with those efforts forefront.

Mr. Speaker, with those few comments I rise to close debate on Bill No. 119.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 119. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 121.

**Bill No. 121 - Nursing Act.**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 121, the Nursing Act, be now read a second time.

I am pleased to stand today to talk for a few moments about the Nursing Bill. When Nova Scotians imagine front-line care, it is often nurses who come to mind. They provide essential and expert care in our hospitals, family practices, and our communities. But nursing is also a self-regulated profession and that means that government has delegated the oversight of nurses to nurses themselves, given their knowledge of the profession and the services provided.

Right now, there are two nursing regulatory bodies in Nova Scotia - the College of Licensed Practical Nurses and the College of Registered Nurses. Both protect the public by ensuring that nurses provide safe, competent, ethical, and compassionate care. Mr. Speaker, the colleges have been working together, consulting thousands of stakeholders to jointly submit a request for new legislation to government to bring the two regulators together as one.

Mr. Speaker, this new Nursing Act will create the Nova Scotia College of Nursing, a single regulatory body for the nursing profession in Nova Scotia. It will bring together registered nurses, nurse practitioners, and licensed practical nurses.

The bill will maintain many of the elements of the existing separate laws and enhance and expand other areas. For example, the existing designations of LPN, RN, and NP - their distinct scopes of practices, and their entry to practice requirements, will remain the same. However the new Nursing Act will allow the college to expand scopes of practice for individual LPNs and RNs with the additional education, if needed, in the future.

These kinds of changes will enable the college to stay current, relevant, and nimble. It also supports our goal of having the right mix of health professionals working to their optimal scope of practice. The bill also expands the power to impose disciplinary fines, if needed, and requires the college to be more accountable and transparent to the government, the public, and to nurses.

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure you, the colleges have done a great deal of work to create one nursing regulator in Nova Scotia, and I'm pleased to move this legislation forward. A single college of nursing will continue to regulate the nursing profession and protect the public interest, while being nimble to meet Nova Scotia's evolving health care needs. I look forward to hearing the remarks of my colleagues as this second reading debate proceeds.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for introducing this piece of legislation and for his remarks.

I definitely believe that this piece of legislation is moving in the right direction. It's good to hear and learn from the minister that there were consultations with those stakeholders that definitely needed to have voices in moving forward with this piece of legislation.

It is wonderful to know that now all LPNs, NPs, and RNs will all be under one umbrella instead of having two regulatory bodies. We will be morphing the two together, and I do believe that morphing these two regulatory bodies together is definitely much needed. There will be a lot more clarity and direction that will be taken.

It is wonderful news for the nurses of any capacity in their profession. Certainly, I'm happy to learn of that. I think that there will be an opportunity for more collaborating. We know that there's more than, I think, 15,000 licensed nurses in Nova Scotia.

When I was reading over the legislation, there were a few things that stood out that I do have concern with and had an opportunity to speak to some stakeholders. We certainly will be looking forward to having some of these stakeholders come to Law Amendments because I think there needs to be clarity on a few things.

I have some concerns around perhaps - the college will have a board consisting of ten individuals. We know that one has to be a licensed practical nurse and one a registered nurse, but I'm hearing that there should be perhaps a nurse practitioner or representative from Doctors Nova Scotia, a pharmacist, and perhaps a representative from EHS or a paramedic on board. The reason is the intention to ensure there is adequate expertise on the board to understand the overlap of scope of practice with other health care providers.

I think this is something that is bringing a lot of confusion right now. I'm hearing from nurse practitioners and doctors where sometimes they're starting to feel like their scope of practice - are they starting to overlap? They don't understand where the boundary is. I think that we want to make sure that we ensure that there's a healthy working relationship between them, that there's clarity on what their scopes of practice are.

Looking at the bill as well, I see "respecting the approval procedure for expanded scopes of practice and for educational prerequisites for expanded scopes of practice." I'm wondering if there should be an amendment further to state that this can be undertaken following consultations and a review by Doctors Nova Scotia as well as the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia.

I would say that sounds - and maybe there is more clarity that the minister can explain to me - like this permits them to self-determine what health care services their members can offer without any regulatory oversight or meaningful input from other health care providers who currently offer the services as well. This should be in place primarily, in my opinion, to basically safeguard our constituents - to safeguard public safety, really. That is a concern of mine.

One of the other things that I would be interested in Law Amendments to hear is, right now:

“For the purpose of this Act and the regulations,

(a) a registrant in the Province who is engaged in practice by electronic means with clients outside of the Province is deemed to be practising in the Province;

(b) a person, other than a registrant, who resides outside of the Province and who engages in practice by electronic means with clients within the Province is deemed not to be practising in the Province”

Doctors are not allowed to engage in practice electronically outside the province, so why would nurses be allowed to do so? That is a big concern. I have heard from a number of doctors who are concerned about that, but perhaps there is misreading of the bill. The bigger question to that would be: Are nurses going to be able to be permitted to prescribe to clients outside the Province of Nova Scotia?

There are some concerns, but overall, I’m looking forward to continuing to listen to those who I’m reaching out to and to the many health care professionals who have been reaching out to me and to my colleagues.

There is no doubt that this bill definitely strengthens the nursing profession. I believe the minister used the word nimble, and I would have to agree on that. I think it’s about making the efforts in going forward for nurses more conducive, so they can collaboratively work together to be most effective and efficient. That’s what we want. We know that they are doing wonderful work right now in this province. Where would we be without them? I would like to give a shout out, actually.

You’ve all heard me stand in my place here for the last couple of years and tell you that I don’t have a doctor. I still don’t have a doctor, but I have been recently granted a nurse practitioner and I just want to say that she is absolutely fabulous. We are so grateful and honoured to have her drive from Antigonish every day to Pictou, but my understanding is that soon she will be moving to Pictou because it’s the nicest constituency in the province.

Again, I would hope, and I'm not certain that, this is quite a big bill, but it's pretty well straightforward. I do want to acknowledge that right now we have almost 300 vacant positions in Nova Scotia for nurses. I'm not certain that this bill is going to do anything to fill that void, but perhaps the minister feels there is something in this bill that will do that, and I would enjoy hearing so.

In moving forward, I do think that we are on the right track with this bill. We are looking forward to Law Amendments, hearing from all stakeholders, and moving forward.

Again, I thank the minister for introducing it and I'll take my seat.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

TAMMY MARTIN: I, too, will concur that I think this is an important bill going forward, and combining the two colleges will only strengthen the profession.

Having them be the drivers of their own cart, so to speak, I think is imperative with the work that they do. I think it's a positive step forward and I look forward to hearing any stakeholders with comments at Law Amendments.

For now, I shall take my seat.

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

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

[3:15 p.m.]

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I thank my colleagues for their input at this stage of the legislation. I'm pleased in broad summary that all three Parties of the Legislature seem supportive in principle of this piece of legislation. I would like to first say thank you on behalf of the many people within the two nursing bodies as well as the staff - the legislative staff and the Department of Justice - who have all worked together to get us to this particular point. We'll get into more detailed debate as we do further progress on this piece of legislation, but I'll speak to a couple of the concerns raised by my colleagues.

I think at one point that the question of the scope and lack of regulatory oversight was something or a phrase to that effect. Indeed, just a reminder, this body is the regulatory oversight that governs. These are self-regulated bodies, much like physicians have a College of Physicians and Surgeons that operate with self-regulated oversight. They don't engage with the nurses formally in their legislation to look at the scope of practice. They work within their educational institutions, the research that's done to identify what capacity their particular profession has and what care they can provide based upon the education,



training, and experience that they have acquired and how that relates to the care they can provide safely.

It is that safety that is what they are operating for and underlining all of the principles in all of our self-regulated bodies. It is about how these professionals can operate safely in the public interest. That's the mandate and the direction for all of the bodies.

What I would advise is that in fact there is a table of health professionals. For self-regulated professionals, there is a table where they all do come together already to engage in conversation within the health system broadly. I think many of the potential concerns that were raised get addressed at that table, rather than it necessarily having to have all professions on everyone else's professional bodies.

I think that should address some of the concerns being raised by the members. Again, we'll get into more details as we move this bill through legislation.

I close second reading on Bill No. 121.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 121. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

#### **PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 122.

**Bill No. 122 - Entitled an Act to incorporate the Pine Grove Cemetery Company, Lower Stewiacke, Colchester County.**

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

LARRY HARRISON: This may sound a little bit weird, but wherever I travel in any community, whether it be in the province or throughout the country or even in other

countries, one of the first things that I look at is the way in which those communities respect those who have passed, looking after the cemeteries.

In my constituency, the cemeteries are looked after by a lot of caring people. The reality is that the forms of governance are no longer appropriate for the changing times and for some of the cemeteries that come before us.

I want to thank the government, by the way, for putting this bill on the agenda so that the changes of governance can be made, and the work of respect can be continued. The Pine Grove Cemetery is one beautiful cemetery. It's in a beautiful location, very well kept. This bill will allow the form of governance to meet the needs of the cemetery at this particular time.

I thank the government for helping me put this bill through. I move second reading of this bill.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 122. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Private and Local Bills.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

### **GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

THE SPEAKER: The House will now recess while it resolves itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

[3:21 p.m. The House recessed.]

[3:28 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Suzanne Lohnes-Croft in the Chair.]

[3:44 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. The Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please.

The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole House on Bills has met and considered the following bills:

**Bill No. 103 - Justices of the Peace Act.**

**Bill No. 105 - Judicature Act.**

**Bill No. 109 - Pension Benefits Act.**

**Bill No. 112 - Education Act.**

each without amendment, and the chairman has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House.

[3:45 p.m.]

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to have the opportunity to say a few words on Supply. For those who don't know what that means, it means having a moment in a time-honoured tradition that the Opposition in this committee has the opportunity to voice its concerns about the government bill, the budget which is before the House and being considered in Budget Estimates. It is my pleasure to do that.

We have many concerns about the budget, frankly, Mr. Speaker. However, it would be remiss of me not to say that we do appreciate that the budget is a balanced budget and do recognize that the government has done that, I believe the third balanced budget - but at what cost?

We look at circumstances in the province and I was rethinking as I was at the Volunteer of the Year Awards yesterday, as we were hearing about great volunteers in our community, we have many unsung heroes in our health care system in this province who are struggling to work in conditions that are discouraging and frustrating. I had a doctor say to me in an ER, John, we are practising unsafe medicine every day. We've learned recently that some of our nurses have been told that they will not be able to have vacation time this summer because they are simply overwhelmed.

When we are in a situation where we are in a crisis in health care, I have to say that I question some of the government's spending and some of the government priorities. I will be specific - for example, I question the track that is going in, in Bridgetown, which I believe is a \$2.6 million provincial government expenditure, a \$1 million federal government contribution for a track in Bridgetown. I question that at a time when we are overwhelmed with concerns in health care. I question that expenditure and I know that in a very unusual move - and I may be wrong, and I welcome any comment on this - I don't believe there was any community fundraising for that track.

I understand that Communities, Culture and Heritage has accepted five years of maintenance, also a very unusual move for something, and a piece of infrastructure like that. I question those, the logic of that funding at a time when we are struggling to provide health care services around the province. In that environment we have people who are serving our province - doctors and nurses who are going above and beyond the call of duty, undoubtedly, to do more in a day, in a week than is meant to be done.

As I said, I quoted a person I know who said: John, we are practising unsafe medicine every day. In that environment we know there are hundreds of doctor positions across the province unfilled. I've asked the Minister of Health and Wellness in this Legislature if the recruiting practices and policy of the Department of Health and Wellness, of the Nova Scotia Health Authority aren't working, at what point do you say we have to try something different?

I'm not sure that I see in this budget anything different; in fact, you can see, and I may be wrong, but I believe on Page 13.2 of this budget that physician services estimated to be \$869 million comes in at \$860 million. You might say well great, that's \$9 million under budget on that one line item; in fact if the average fee that a physician would put in on fee-for-service for a doctor services is about \$35, that's probably about 250,000 doctor visits that didn't happen this year. We have about 100,000 people without a family doctor in our province - it may be plus or minus, I don't know the exact number, but it has been reported to be that high. It may be less. I know there are less on the actual waiting list. But we see despair in our system, despair among our people. If there are that many people without a doctor, then there are 250,000 doctor visits that didn't happen. I know that this is a crisis and I think it will need to be dealt with as a crisis.

I have to say that one of the very first things I learned as a young farmer, when I purchased the farm from my father at age 25, was that everything that happened on that farm was my responsibility. If something wasn't going right, I couldn't say to an employee who took the clutch out of a tractor, for example, which happened, "That was your fault."

It was really my fault for not teaching that employee what to do in the right situation. I had to accept that every single thing that happened on the farm was my responsibility. I believe that's true for this House - for this government.

Every single thing that happens in this province is the responsibility of this government. The first step to dealing with a problem is to call it for what it is, acknowledge it, accept responsibility, and deal with it. I'm not sure I see that happening in this budget. That being said, yes, there are good things.

We called for increased funding for mental health services and we see that happening. However, we know that we are short psychiatrists all around the province. If you have a mental health issue, the very first step to having it dealt with is having a diagnosis; the person in the system who gives you that diagnosis is a psychiatrist.

I know that if you look at the NSHA website for physician recruitment you will see, I believe, four psychiatrist positions open in Cape Breton. We know that, in fact, they are 10 or 11 or 12 psychiatrists short in Cape Breton. For whatever reason, the other positions are not being advertised and maybe it doesn't matter. If you happen to fill one, you just still leave that opening advertised.

Maybe that's a moot point, but the reality is that there are psychiatrist positions in other parts of the province that are open, too - that are unfilled.

We know that people are going to our ERs who are otherwise healthy, physically healthy, but have mental health issues, and they are waiting there. Put that into the environment of an ER that is overwhelmed with other issues: with accident victims; with people, maybe children, who may or may not have meningitis coming in with a fever. Is that meningitis or not? That's a pretty important thing to figure out pretty quick; and other issues, people with pneumonia. All these very serious health issues which come in through the ER door, every sort of health issue, and then you have somebody with a mental health issue coming in to that ER.

The best practices would be for the ER physician to refer that person to a psychiatrist and for an assessment to be made. In fact, I tabled a letter earlier in the Legislature today during Question Period of a Dr. Joseph Sadek who had an article yesterday in *The Chronicle Herald* saying that very statement, that when someone went into an ER it was very important that they have an assessment.

However, if you are the ER doctor, you're not trained in mental health assessment and what happens more frequently than not, that person is sent home. Were they a risk for suicide? Who knows.

To be fair to all health professionals, and as Dr. Joseph Sadek said last night - I was at a session that he had at the library in Halifax here - it's very difficult to predict; very difficult to determine. There are a series of best practices on how to evaluate that and we know that it is psychiatrists who are able to provide that diagnosis. If they're not available, that diagnosis is not happening.

It's a very, very serious concern for us with the health care situation and the mental health issues we see around the province. I was able to ask the minister earlier today about - as he mentioned, I know the minister is concerned about this and looking into it too. As Dr. Stan Kutcher said, we have to look at our suicide prevention strategy. Will the public have input into that? That's a question that we've asked. I believe that we need to see that.

In my own area, I'm very concerned about the state of the Valley Regional Hospital. We've been very proud. We believe we've had one of the absolute best-performing hospitals in the province. Very recently, there were two news stories out on Valley Regional that show a disturbing trend. One was about the backlog of 3,030 surgeries. What we see is that, for various reasons - and I don't think it's the government's fault, but we see an exploding need for health care. Maybe it's just simply demographics. Maybe it's lifestyle. I'm not sure why we see that, but it's probably just raw demographics. The baby boomers are 56 and older now. There's a huge bubble of baby boomers, and later in life, you have many health needs. We know that there's a great demand for all types of health care services.

At the same time, there's a great demand for long-term care, which has not been met. There was a long-term care strategy. This government has not followed that strategy, so what we see is people in the Valley Regional Hospital - a number of them probably should be in long-term care, but there's no space available for them, and they're tying up a bed in long-term care.

Our ER, which should be the primary admitting way that you get into the hospital - you get admitted into the ER, the ER determines that you need to be in the hospital, you go in the hospital. But if there's no beds available in the hospital, you're in the ER, and you stay there. If the beds in the ER are all filled, and somebody comes in otherwise healthy but with a mental health issue, we see that they are sent home.

It's a huge concern, this cascade effect that we see happening with lack of space in long-term care tying up some space in our hospitals, tying up some space in our ERs, at the same time that a lack of family doctors means more people are going to ERs. At the same time, a lack of psychiatrists, so that the diagnosis is not being made. All of these issues provide a cascading effect on the demand for health care services and put our health

care professionals working in incredibly stressful situations, which I outlined at the beginning. Our nurses are being told that they can't go on vacation this year. ERs are being shut down.

Many of us in this House who lived through the 2013 election will remember that one of the major pieces of platform of this government was that there'd be a doctor for every Nova Scotian. I would encourage the Minister of Health and Wellness to dig back through and find the plan that that was based on and look at what the plan was to put in a doctor for every Nova Scotian. I have to question if there was even a plan, but presumably there was in the Liberal platform of summer 2013. A doctor for every Nova Scotian.

I believe it's gotten worse since then. I know that in 2014, it was widely reported later on that, in fact, doctors were told, don't renew the lease on your building, because we don't need as many doctors. Despite the fact that there was a statement that we were going to have a doctor for every Nova Scotian - this has been well documented - there was a certain moment that the Nova Scotia Health Authority told doctors, don't renew your lease, we don't need as many of you.

I'll go back to saying that it's my opinion that the Minister of Health and Wellness, the Premier, and this government are responsible for everything that happens in this province. They need to set the agenda and I question the logic of that. It's the lack of those services, which we see cascading down to many tragedies in our province. I hesitate to even talk about those because, as painful as they are, I know our front-line health care workers are overwhelmed with all of the things that are happening. They're doing their best and things are slipping through the cracks.

I don't want to in any way say that what we see happening is because of the lack of their caring or effort. I believe it's a lack of management, a lack of putting the resources in place to see . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for the member's comments has expired.

[4:01 p.m. The House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply with Deputy Speaker Suzanne Lohnes-Croft in the Chair.]

[8:08 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 some progress, and begs leave to sit again.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Madam Speaker, this concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise to sit again tomorrow, Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

In consultation with the House Leaders of the Official Opposition, we believe that we made more than "some progress" in Estimates, Madam Speaker. Therefore we're going to forgo the Estimates process for tomorrow. We'll go through Opposition Day and finish with the moment of interruption.

It being the PC Opposition Day tomorrow, I turn it to their House Leader to call the agenda.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to thank the Government House Leader for his kind remarks - much more kind than the Minister of Health and Wellness, whom we just heard.

After the daily routine and Question Period tomorrow, we'll be calling Bills for Second Reading; Bill No. 107, the House of Assembly Act; and Bill No. 117, the Adoption Information Act.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now rise to meet again on Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

The House stands adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 1:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 8:10 p.m.]



**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 903**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's volunteer fire brigades are made up of individuals who show their dedication to serving others by contributing hard work, skills, and time, and by often risking their lives, taking on the role of first responders, and dealing with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas training, fundraising, recruitment, and public relations are only a few of the additional responsibilities of members of a fire brigade; and

Whereas the members of volunteer fire brigades seldom receive the accolades they deserve, and an annual banquet is usually held to thank all their members and to present special awards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Karen MacAulay of the Valley-Kemptown and District Fire Brigade for 5 Years of Service at the 2019 annual banquet.

**RESOLUTION NO. 904**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's volunteer fire brigades are made up of individuals who show their dedication to serving others by contributing hard work, skills, and time, and by often risking their lives, taking on the role of first responders, and dealing with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas training, fundraising, recruitment, and public relations are only a few of the additional responsibilities of members of a fire brigade; and

Whereas the members of volunteer fire brigades seldom receive the accolades they deserve, and an annual banquet is usually held to thank all their members and to present special awards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Merlyn Smith of the Valley-Kemptown and District Fire Brigade for 25 Years of Service at the 2019 annual banquet.

**RESOLUTION NO. 905**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's volunteer fire brigades are made up of individuals who show their dedication to serving others by contributing hard work, skills, and time, and by often risking their lives, taking on the role of first responders, and dealing with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas training, fundraising, recruitment, and public relations are only a few of the additional responsibilities of members of a fire brigade; and

Whereas the members of volunteer fire brigades seldom receive the accolades they deserve, and an annual banquet is usually held to thank all their members and to present special awards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jason McRae of the Valley-Kemptown and District Fire Brigade for 10 Years of Service at the 2019 annual banquet.

**RESOLUTION NO. 906**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's volunteer fire brigades are made up of individuals who show their dedication to serving others by contributing hard work, skills, and time, and by often risking their lives, taking on the role of first responders, and dealing with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas training, fundraising, recruitment, and public relations are only a few of the additional responsibilities of members of a fire brigade; and

Whereas the members of volunteer fire brigades seldom receive the accolades they deserve, and an annual banquet is usually held to thank all their members and to present special awards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Graham Jacobs of the Valley-Kemptown and District Fire Brigade for 15 Years of Service at the 2019 annual banquet.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 907**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's volunteer fire brigades are made up of individuals who show their dedication to serving others by contributing hard work, skills, and time, and by often risking their lives, taking on the role of first responders, and dealing with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas training, fundraising, recruitment, and public relations are only a few of the additional responsibilities of members of a fire brigade; and

Whereas the members of volunteer fire brigades seldom receive the accolades they deserve, and an annual banquet is usually held to thank all their members and to present special awards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Nigel Leggett of the Valley-Kemptown and District Fire Brigade for receiving the Officer of the Year Award, as well as for 35 Years of Service, at the 2019 annual banquet.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 908**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's volunteer fire brigades are made up of individuals who show their dedication to serving others by contributing hard work, skills, and time, and by often risking their lives, taking on the role of first responders, and dealing with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas training, fundraising, recruitment, and public relations are only a few of the additional responsibilities of members of a fire brigade; and

Whereas the members of volunteer fire brigades seldom receive the accolades they deserve, and an annual banquet is usually held to thank all their members and to present special awards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Brad Moore of the Valley-Kemptown and District Fire Brigade for 15 Years of Service at the 2019 annual banquet.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 909**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's volunteer fire brigades are made up of individuals who show their dedication to serving others by contributing hard work, skills, and time, and by often risking their lives, taking on the role of first responders, and dealing with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas training, fundraising, recruitment, and public relations are only a few of the additional responsibilities of members of a fire brigade; and

Whereas the members of volunteer fire brigades seldom receive the accolades they deserve, and an annual banquet is usually held to thank all their members and to present special awards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jacob Beukeveld of the Valley-Kemptown and District Fire Brigade for receiving the Firefighter of the Year Award and the John MacAulay Training Award at the 2019 annual banquet.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 910**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's volunteer fire brigades are made up of individuals who show their dedication to serving others by contributing hard work, skills, and time, and by

often risking their lives, taking on the role of first responders, and dealing with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas training, fundraising, recruitment, and public relations are only a few of the additional responsibilities of members of a fire brigade; and

Whereas the members of volunteer fire brigades seldom receive the accolades they deserve, and an annual banquet is usually held to thank all their members and to present special awards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Robert Harris of the Valley-Kemptown and District Fire Brigade for 30 Years of Service at the 2019 annual banquet.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 911**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's fire departments are made up of individuals who are dedicated to serving others; and

Whereas these firefighters and first responders not only contribute hard work, skills, and time but often risk their lives and must deal with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas firefighters seldom receive the accolades which they deserve, and most fire brigades hold a banquet and awards ceremony to thank all members and to present special honours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Adrienne MacKay, a member of the North River & District Fire Brigade, for Most Medical Training Hours at the 2019 banquet.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 912**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's fire departments are made up of individuals who are dedicated to serving others; and

Whereas these firefighters and first responders not only contribute hard work, skills, and time but often risk their lives and must deal with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas firefighters seldom receive the accolades which they deserve, and most fire brigades hold a banquet and awards ceremony to thank all members and to present special honours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Cheryl Reade, a member of the North River & District Fire Brigade, for 30 Years of Combined Services at the 2019 banquet.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 913**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's fire departments are made up of individuals who are dedicated to serving others; and

Whereas these firefighters and first responders not only contribute hard work, skills, and time but often risk their lives and must deal with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas firefighters seldom receive the accolades which they deserve, and most fire brigades hold a banquet and awards ceremony to thank all members and to present special honours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate LeRoy Hansen, a member of the North River & District Fire Brigade, for 35 Years of Service, as well as Member of the Year, at the 2019 banquet.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 914**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's fire departments are made up of individuals who are dedicated to serving others; and

Whereas these firefighters and first responders not only contribute hard work, skills, and time but often risk their lives and must deal with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas firefighters seldom receive the accolades which they deserve, and most fire brigades hold a banquet and awards ceremony to thank all members and to present special honours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tracey Hill, a member of the North River & District Fire Brigade, for 30 Years of Service at the 2019 banquet.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 915**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's fire departments are made up of individuals who are dedicated to serving others; and

Whereas these firefighters and first responders not only contribute hard work, skills, and time but often risk their lives and must deal with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas firefighters seldom receive the accolades which they deserve, and most fire brigades hold a banquet and awards ceremony to thank all members and to present special honours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Brittany McLeod, a member of the North River & District Fire Brigade, for 5 Years of Service at the 2019 banquet.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 916**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's fire departments are made up of individuals who are dedicated to serving others; and

Whereas these firefighters and first responders not only contribute hard work, skills, and time but often risk their lives and must deal with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas firefighters seldom receive the accolades which they deserve, and most fire brigades hold a banquet and awards ceremony to thank all members and to present special honours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Evan Hansen, a member of the North River & District Fire Brigade, for 20 Years of Service, as well as Medical First Responder of the Year, at the 2019 banquet.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 917**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's fire departments are made up of individuals who are dedicated to serving others; and

Whereas these firefighters and first responders not only contribute hard work, skills, and time but often risk their lives and must deal with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas firefighters seldom receive the accolades which they deserve, and most fire brigades hold a banquet and awards ceremony to thank all members and to present special honours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Nathan MacKinnon, a member of the North River & District Fire Brigade, for Top Medical & Top Fire Responder at the 2019 banquet.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 918**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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



Whereas Nova Scotia's fire departments are made up of individuals who are dedicated to serving others; and

Whereas these firefighters and first responders not only contribute hard work, skills, and time but often risk their lives and must deal with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas firefighters seldom receive the accolades which they deserve, and most fire brigades hold a banquet and awards ceremony to thank all members and to present special honours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Charles Toole, a member of the North River & District Fire Brigade, for Rookie of the Year at the 2019 banquet.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 919**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's fire departments are made up of individuals who are dedicated to serving others; and

Whereas these firefighters and first responders not only contribute hard work, skills, and time but often risk their lives and must deal with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas firefighters seldom receive the accolades which they deserve, and most fire brigades hold a banquet and awards ceremony to thank all members and to present special honours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jason Burke, a member of the North River & District Fire Brigade, for 20 Years of Service at the 2019 banquet.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 920**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's fire departments are made up of individuals who are dedicated to serving others; and

Whereas these firefighters and first responders not only contribute hard work, skills, and time but often risk their lives and must deal with incidents of great emotional stress; and

Whereas firefighters seldom receive the accolades which they deserve, and most fire brigades hold a banquet and awards ceremony to thank all members and to present special honours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Scott Smith, a member of the North River & District Fire Brigade, for Most Fire Training Hours at the 2019 banquet.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 921**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas the Canadian Engineering Competition is an annual competition that brings together 150 of the most innovative and creative engineering undergraduate students from across the nation, competing against each other in design, consulting, presentation, and debate; and

Whereas in 2018, a team of four second-year engineering students from the Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture brought home the top prize for a second year in a row; and

Whereas Justin Thorne, Shannon O'Connor, Logan Miller, and Paul Diamond won the Junior Design category for their hydraulic claw on a telescopic arm, designed for loading and unloading cargo from incoming ships;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate these students for winning the Junior Design category at this competition and for being such excellent representatives for Nova Scotia.