



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 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. I will recognize the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition who will present to the House the newly elected members for Sackville-Cobequid, Argyle-Barrington, Northside-Westmount, and Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to you Mr. Steve Craig, the member for the electoral district of Sackville-Cobequid. He has taken the oath, he has signed the roll, and claims the right to take his seat.

THE SPEAKER: Let the honourable member take his seat. (Applause)

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I present to you Mr. Colton LeBlanc, the member for the electoral district of Argyle-Barrington. He has taken the oath, he has signed the roll, and claims the right to take his seat.

THE SPEAKER: Let the honourable member take his seat. (Applause)

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I present to you Mr. Murray Ryan, the member for the electoral district of Northside-Westmount. He has taken the oath, he has signed the roll, and claims the right to take his seat.

THE SPEAKER: Let the honourable member take his seat. (Applause)

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I present to you Mr. Brian Comer, the member for the electoral district of Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg. He has taken the oath, he has signed the roll, and claims the right to take his seat.

THE SPEAKER: Let the honourable member take his seat. (Applause)

Congratulations to all those new members and welcome back, everybody. Now we will proceed with the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

THE SPEAKER: As Speaker of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly and pursuant to Section 163 of the Elections Act, I am pleased to table the Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer for 2018-19.

The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 1210

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas on September 7th, Hurricane Dorian made landfall in Nova Scotia, threatening many with high winds and leading to extensive damage to property and infrastructure, leaving many without electricity and other services, in some cases for days; and

Whereas despite the harsh conditions brought on by the storm, Nova Scotians were able to count on the dedicated service of our first responders, emergency service agencies, and volunteers who worked tirelessly to mitigate the damage and provide help to those in need; and

Whereas this response came from across the province and beyond, from our own emergency service providers, EMO and government staff, to members of the Canadian Red Cross, the Salvation Army, Halifax Regional Police and RCMP, the Canadian Armed Forces, Nova Scotia Power, and of course many other Nova Scotians who provided whatever help they could to their neighbours in their time of need;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly join me in expressing our sincere gratitude and thanking all those who in the days prior, during, and after the storm's end, exhibited a professional and dedicated spirit of service, community, and charity towards their fellow Nova Scotians.

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.

RESOLUTION NO. 1211

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

Whereas this week is Gender Equality Week, a time to recognize that when we make progress towards gender equality, everyone benefits; and

Whereas women, girls, and gender-diverse Nova Scotians don't always have the same access to economic opportunity and personal safety as men, and this needs to change; and

Whereas we ought to focus on gender equality, not just this week but all the time, so we can strengthen communities for all Nova Scotians;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly recognize that gender equality benefits everyone, and we all have a role to play in ensuring Nova Scotia is an inclusive and safe place to live for women, girls, men, boys, and people of all gender identities.

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 Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 1212

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

Whereas September 23rd to September 29th is Canada's Right to Know Week, which is a celebration of the importance of access to government information, transparency, and accountability; and

Whereas Nova Scotia was the first province in Canada to enact a Freedom of Information Act in 1977, which was later replaced by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; and

Whereas government has proactively made a broad range of data sets on the Open Data Portal available and has made information access and privacy training mandatory for all provincial employees;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in celebrating Right to Know Week and its importance in promoting public confidence.

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 Lands and Forestry.

RESOLUTION NO. 1213

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

Whereas National Forest Week inspires Canadians to learn about our forest heritage and serves to raise awareness about this valuable and renewable resource; and

Whereas healthy forests are fundamental to our environment, economy, culture, history, and our future; and

Whereas Spence Managed Forest was named Nova Scotia's top woodland owner for 2019, in recognition of exemplary forest and resource stewardship practices, and will welcome visitors to their woodland in Hants County on Saturday, September 28th;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly celebrate National Forest Week and recognize outstanding woodland stewards who encourage sustainable resource management and increase public awareness of the importance of private woodlands.

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

[1:15 p.m.]

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 the Public Service Commission.

RESOLUTION NO. 1214

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

Whereas the Victoria Road United Baptist Church in Dartmouth celebrated its 175th anniversary this year; and

Whereas the Victoria Road United Baptist Church, founded in 1844 by Reverend Richard Preston, is a member of the African United Baptist Association and is one of Canada's historic places that welcomes all individuals who serve both God and their community; and

Whereas the early congregation of the church was comprised of the descendants of Black Loyalists, Jamaican Maroons, and Black refugees who settled in Nova Scotia in the late 1700s;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly please join me in congratulating the Victoria Road United Baptist Church on their 175th anniversary and recognizing long-standing contributions that this Church has made to our 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.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 152 - Entitled an Act to Reduce the Use of Plastic Bags and Other Single-use Products. (Hon. Gordon Wilson)

Bill No. 153 - Entitled an Act Respecting Clean Air. (Karla MacFarlane)

Bill No. 154 - Entitled an Act Respecting Free Menstrual Products. (Claudia Chender)

Bill No. 155 - Entitled an Act to Establish the Office of the Healthcare Ombudsman. (Karla MacFarlane)

Bill No. 156 - Entitled an Act Respecting the Viability of Cape Breton Regional Municipality. (Tammy Martin)

Bill No. 157 - An Act to Amend Chapter 114 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Crown Lands Act, and Chapter 297 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Motor Vehicle Act. (Brad Johns)

Bill No. 158 - An Act to Amend Chapter 31 of the Acts of 2004. The Police Act. (Claudia Chender)

Bill No. 159 - An Act to Amend Chapter 31 of the Acts of 2001. The Fatality Investigations Act. (Tammy Martin)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

RECENT BY-ELECTIONS: CANDIDATES AND SUPPORTERS - CONGRATS.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind all the members of this House that since the last time we sat, we had four by-elections; we lost four long-serving members of our House.

I want to extend my thanks to all those who represented everyone in this House in these by-elections and all those who worked on their behalf. But I also want to extend my congratulations to the four members who we introduced earlier in the session: the member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg, the member for Argyle-Barrington, the member for Northside-Westmount, and the member for Sackville-Cobequid. Each of you has been given the privilege that has been bestowed upon the rest of us, to represent your constituents.

I watched you in your campaigns, I know that you are ready to have their voices heard in this place. I look forward, as the Premier of the province, to continuing to work with you to make sure that the representation is done in the fullness of their spirit. Thank you all. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

TIM HOUSTON: Seated in the West Gallery we have Mr. Dave Ritcey. Dave is the Director of Community and Business Development for the Community Credit Union for Cumberland Colchester.

Mr. Speaker, you may recognize Dave, he has a long-standing involvement with minor hockey and junior hockey; he was the coach of the Screaming Eagles at one point, I think. He was the chairperson of the 2017 World Junior A Challenge Event held in Truro that was very successful.

He's a loving husband to Amber and father to two beautiful girls, Addison and Alexandra. His grandfather was a member of this House; Mr. Gerry Ritcey, was a PC MLA for Colchester from 1968 to 1974, I think.

We are very optimistic that Dave himself might be the next MLA elected to this House. Thank you, Dave, for joining us. Please stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

NEW MLAs - WELCOME

GARY BURRILL: I would like to add to the Premier's remarks the warm welcome on behalf of the NDP caucus to the new members of the House - the members for Argyle-Barrington, Sackville-Cobequid, Northside-Westmount, and Sydney River- Mira-Louisbourg - and I want to say that we share the sense, which has been very well expressed

by the Premier, of the privilege that has been extended to you, that of extending this service to the people who have elected you. We wish you all the very best in carrying out that privilege. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

COTTREAU, PERCY - CAPT.: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: After 44 years as a commissioned officer, Captain Percy Cottreau of Yarmouth is retiring from uniformed duty with the 299 Yarmouth Lions Air Cadets. Captain Cottreau joined the reserves for four years while in high school, and during that time he spent two months in Alert, Nunavut, which he says was a highlight of his time in the reserves.

He became a full lieutenant in the mid-1980s after graduating from several courses and much time volunteering with the 299 Air Cadets squadron. From 1993-1996, he was the commanding officer, and he returned to that position from 2011 until late 2018. He was also chief of competition for the provincial marksmanship competition for three years.

Captain Cottreau has instructed hundreds of cadets over the last four decades and will continue to volunteer with the cadets as a coach for the shooting team.

I would like to ask this House to join me in congratulating Captain Percy Cottreau on his retirement from the cadets and in thanking him for over four decades of dedicated and valuable service to his community, province, and country.

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

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

BARBARA ADAMS: I would like to draw everyone's attention to the West Gallery, where we have Rhonda Vickers from Eastern Passage, my constituency assistant Lisa Rochon, and Dr. Lisa Bonang, whom we'd like to wish a happy birthday.

I'd like all members of the Legislature to join me in welcoming them. (Applause)

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

NORTHWOOD FDN.: SUPPORT FOR DIGNIFIED LIVING MO. - RECOG.

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize September as Dignified Living Month in the Halifax Regional Municipality. A special flag raising at Grand Parade Square will bring much awareness to dignified living.

Northwood Foundation fundraises for the Dignified Living Fund, which is there to purchase items and devices that range from Kobos for audiobooks, chairlifts, and vision aids for those in need. All of these items are aimed at maintaining a person's independence and dignity. This year the annual fundraiser Walk of Ages is scheduled for September 28, 2019.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in acknowledging September as Dignified Living Month and all of the hard work Northwood puts in to make this possible. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I'd like to draw the members' attention to the gallery opposite, where we're joined by Suzanne Lively, founder of Friendly Divas, an advocate for the recognition of period poverty and the various efforts being made in that regard. I'd like to extend the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

PERIOD POVERTY: WIDE AVAILABILITY - REQUIRED

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to take notice of an equality issue that has recently come to the forefront in Nova Scotia, namely the difficulty and expense of acquiring menstrual products. The many activists who have been advocating on this front have coined the term "period poverty," and that term is telling.

I recently read a book by a high-level staffer in the Obama Administration in the United States, who opened the book by saying that the single accomplishment she was most proud of was getting menstrual products placed in White House bathrooms. She was speaking as a privileged professional woman for whom the lack of these supplies in an emergency had been an ongoing irritation. For people living in poverty, it's much worse and can mean the difference between full participation in community or not.

I'm pleased to see steps being taken in this House and elsewhere to address this issue, and along with the community will keep advocating for broad access to this necessary toiletry.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West on an introduction.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction. We have with us today in the East Gallery a staff member of the New Jersey Legislature, Andrew Ward, and his partner, Lawton. They are visiting and touring Nova Scotia, P.E.I., and I believe the Magdalen Islands. My colleague the member for Cumberland North and I had the pleasure of meeting Andrew at the Eastern Leadership Academy in August.

Andrew works in legislative services in the New Jersey Legislature office, and one of his responsibilities was staffing the General Assembly's new Committee on Science, Innovation and Technology.

Our time at the Eastern Leadership Academy was really valuable for both of us and it was my first time to meet our American counterparts from the States - state senators and state representatives - and it was a very good time for us. Please welcome them to Halifax. (Applause)

[1:30 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**BRIDGEWATER BARRACUDAS SWIM CLUB:
PROV. CHAMPS - CONGRATS.**

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, the Bridgewater Barracudas swim team captured their ninth straight provincial championships in a riveting win this August at the O'Regan's Subaru Outdoor Pool in Bridgewater. The Cudas defeated the unrelenting Bedford Beavers by a narrow margin of 23.5 points, the closest in the recorded history of the Nova Scotia summer swimming provincial championships. A total of 504 swimmers competed in the event.

Cheryl Fougere, the president of the Barracudas, felt that the energy and intensity during the final relay was nail-biting, a memorable experience for all swimmers and their families. Jonas Talbot and Nakalya Wight were named to the age 13-14 Provincial All-star Team, and Jonathan Haas, Nathan Fougere and Lucas Sangster were named to the 17-18 All-stars, and Adam Culbert received the Rene (Gallant) MacIntyre Memorial Assistant Coach of the Year Award.

Congratulations to the 2019 summer swimming provincial champions, the Bridgewater Barracudas swim club - a spirited team with a focus on fun, sportsmanship, and fair play.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MORIN, LESLIE - FOUNDER: JUST ASK PROGRAM - COMMEND

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring awareness to the amazing work being done by Leslie Morin and the various community members involved in starting the Just Ask program. This program has been implemented into pharmacies and local businesses to offer women free feminine hygiene products. This program will give women a chance to save money on items that are not a luxury but a necessity, as the need for feminine hygiene products can often become a financial burden for many women. It offers young girls a safe space to ask for the products they need, in a discreet manner.

I commend Leslie for taking the initiative to start this program and I look forward to seeing it grow in years to come. It is women like Leslie who empower young girls and give them self confidence to achieve their goals.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

TAMMY MARTIN: I draw the members' attention to the gallery opposite where we have labour leaders from the union world: President of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, Danny Cavanagh; Tammy Gillis with the NSGEU; and the President of CUPE Nova Scotia, Nan McFadgen, who was there. I would ask that you rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, CBRM is critically important, one of two cities in Nova Scotia. CBRM makes crucial contributions to the economy and culture of Nova Scotia. It should not be allowed to drown.

Some people have said they think CBRM is not deserving of any additional support and I wholeheartedly disagree. I believe that CBRM needs an injection of concentrated support and, Mr. Speaker, an immigration pilot, for example, could help hundreds of people discover everything that Cape Breton has to offer. Short-term fiscal relief and stimulus could help this wonderful place get back on track.

Mr. Speaker, this province has a duty to support the CBRM . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member that members' statements are not to be used for purposes of debating bills that are currently on the order paper.

The honourable member for Bedford.

BEDFORD CENOTAPH: NEW CONSTRUCTION - CONGRATS.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to thank all of the people and organizations that came together to build a new cenotaph in Bedford. The project was the dream of Bedford resident Kent Nickerson. He got the ball rolling a few years ago.

There were some structural issues with the old cenotaph and it needed to be replaced. In the end, multiple levels of government, the Bedford Lions and of course the Legion were all involved. It was a team effort.

Last Saturday on a beautiful, warm day, Kent's dream of a new cenotaph became reality - a new and improved reality. The cenotaph will now be lit at night. There is seating for folks who need it. There are new walls added just behind the cenotaph with "In Service to Canada" inscribed in English, French and Mi'kmaw. The Afghan War has been added as well and the lion on top faces the proper direction.

Sadly, Kent Nickerson passed away before this project finished but on the day we dedicated the new cenotaph his family was there and his widow Diane placed the first wreath on the cenotaph. Speaker after speaker acknowledged Kent's leadership on this project, and it felt like Kent was there.

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

VIC. CO. 4-H CLUB: 42nd PROV. SHOW - BEST WISHES

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, on September 4th, Victoria County held its 4-H county days in Baddeck. The event featured exhibits and displays along with life skill projects and competitions as well as livestock projects.

In all, recognition was given to individuals in 28 categories, and many of the 4-H members earned the opportunity to represent the county at the 4-H Nova Scotia Provincial Show in Truro, being held September 27th to 29th.

It is also interesting to note that this will be the 42nd anniversary of the 4-H Nova Scotia Provincial Show.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating all members of the Victoria County 4-H Club and in wishing them well in the 4-H Nova Scotia Provincial Show in Truro.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

COOPER, AFUA - PHD.: LORD DALHOUSIE RPT. - RECOG.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, as an alumna of Dalhousie University, I want to recognize the work of an inter-disciplinary scholarly panel, chaired by historian Dr. Afua Cooper, that produced the report on Lord Dalhousie's history on slavery and race. The Lord Dalhousie report was released on September 5th, as Hurricane Dorian bore down on Nova Scotia. That deprived it of the days of news coverage that it truly deserves.

The report details how a significant part of the revenues of the colonial government in Nova Scotia and a significant part of the wealth accumulated by some private citizens were derived from the trans-Atlantic slave trade and how inequities and anti-Black racism that continue in this province to this day can be traced to our history.

I hope many more Nova Scotians will read and reflect on the Lord Dalhousie report for its well-written, riveting history that bears directly on our present day.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

**SUGAR MOON FARM:
FEATURED, FOOD NETWORK CAN. - CONGRATS.**

HON. KAREN CASEY: During the past summer, Food Network Canada joined Tourism Nova Scotia to showcase the province's fast-emerging culinary scene.

One of their visits involved a taste of the true Canadian culture when the Food Network Canada host and crew visited Sugar Moon Farm, near Earltown, Colchester North. The foods chosen by the TV station to use on their program were the Maple Mac and Cheese, sourdough French toast, and their signature pancakes with local blueberries, made with local red flour, and of course, all served with their own maple syrup.

Sugar Moon Farm already receives about 30,000 visitors a year, mainly from outside the province and Canada. They are hoping the national and international exposure will help increase that number and make people aware that they are open year-round.

Be sure to stop at Sugar Moon Farm if you're near Earltown, off Highway No. 311, and needing something to eat. You will be in for a treat.

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

MACLEOD, ALFIE: POLITICAL ENDEAVOURS - BEST WISHES

BRIAN COMER: It is a great honour for me to sit in this House. I cannot help but think of the great people who sat in this Chamber before me. One man in particular comes to mind - a man of very few words from Gabarus Lake, a man who transcends partisan politics, a friend, a mentor, and a community leader.

I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to formally recognize Alfie MacLeod for his many years of dedicated service for the constituents of Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg, for his passionate voice, compassion, and dedication to his constituents. I would also like to acknowledge his rock Shirley, for her continuous support for Alfie.

I ask all members of the House to join me in wishing Alfie all the best as he pursues the next step of his political journey, representing those he has served so faithfully.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I would like to draw the members' attention to the gallery opposite where the new constituency assistant for Dartmouth North, Rebecca Rose, has joined us today. Rebecca was born in Cape Breton but raised in Dartmouth. She's a queer and trans activist and author. She's about to launch her first book in November, and today is her birthday. Welcome, Rebecca Rose. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, for people who live with low or limited incomes, everything is expensive including getting their period.

We've talked about period poverty before in this House and we've echoed many calls from many activists who have been working in the community on this issue. Earlier this year, I asked the minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women if she would include funding in the budget to provide free pads and tampons in universities, schools, government buildings, libraries, and all public buildings.

While I was pleased to hear that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is going to require all schools with Grades 4 and up to provide free menstrual products, I was disappointed to know that there would be no new funding to purchase these products. This means that funds for absolutely necessary supplies will have to come out of already tight school budgets or out of the pockets of teachers.

If we're going to get serious about ending period poverty in this House, we have to be willing to invest and provide free menstrual products in all public buildings in the province and require private businesses to provide products in all workplace washrooms.

THE SPEAKER: The previous members' statement is also on the topic of a bill that the member had just introduced earlier on the Order Paper, so I'd just like to remind all members we're going to disallow that member's statement. Member statements are not to be used as a tool for debate for bills that are on the Order Paper. I want to remind everybody of that on our first day back.

The honourable member for Yarmouth on an introduction.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: If I could bring the attention of members of the House to the East Gallery, I have a special introduction to make. My family's here with me today: my wonderful wife, Dr. Katie Churchill; my first-born, Cecilia Louise Churchill, who's here with us; and the newest addition to our family, who was born the last session that we had, Eva Irene Churchill, and it is her first visit to the Legislature. If everyone could welcome my family, I'd definitely appreciate it. Thank you. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

TOWN OF BERWICK: CAROL'S PLACE TRIBUTE - THANKS

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I stand today to recognize the community and employees of the Town of Berwick for opening Carol's Place, a new recreation building in memory of Carol Boylan-Hartling.

On June 29, I was among the multitude of people who were present for the grand opening, which was wrapped up in Berwick's celebrity Canada Day events. For those of you who may not be familiar with Carol, she was involved in just about every community engagement activity going and has left behind an incredible legacy.

From working in the town's recreation department to volunteering to attending and organizing many annual community events, Carol touched the lives of many. This gesture is an incredible and very fitting way to honour Carol, whose impact on the community continues to be felt and will absolutely be everlasting.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the House to join me in saying thank you to the Town of Berwick and the community at large for ensuring Carol's memory lives on and her legacy continues to be felt, for Carol's Place is, indeed, a very special place.

THE SPEAKER: Just before we proceed to the next members' statement, I have an administrative note just handed to me by the Clerk. I've been advised that earlier the number for the first bill as we started Introduction of Bills was recorded incorrectly.

Bill No. 151 had previously been assigned to the Appropriations Act, 2019. Just an advisory that accordingly all bill numbers assigned today will increase by one number. Just make a mental note of that.

[All bill numbers are correct in today's Hansard.]

[1:45 p.m.]

The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

ROYAL CDN. LEGION: 40th ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

STEVE CRAIG: It is indeed a pleasure to be here among all members who are serving our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place to recognize the Royal Canadian Legion, Calais Branch 162, in Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia, on the occasion of their 40th anniversary, which they celebrated on August 4, 2019.

Members of the Royal Canadian Legion, Calais Branch 162, have invested many selfless hours of outstanding volunteer service over the past 40 years, serving our veterans and community, including the creation of the Sackville Heritage Cenotaph that increasingly draws hundreds of citizens for the commemoration on Remembrance Day and Battle of the Atlantic Sunday.

I would like to congratulate the members of the Royal Canadian Legion, Calais Branch 162, of Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia, on the occasion of their 40th anniversary and thank them for all they have done in the past and for their continued service to our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

SPIDLE, ARON: ADVOCACY, RENT CONTROL - RECOG.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, Province House is one of the few public buildings downtown where you won't find a stack of Halifax's free weekly newspaper, *The Coast*, but I encourage all members and especially those on the government side to pick it up this week and read the "Voice of the City" column by Aron Spidle.

Mr. Spidle has already demonstrated his bravery in speaking publicly about his life on income assistance, including in the documentary *My Week on Welfare*. Now he's written about his housing predicament, that he can't afford to stay in his home of more than 12 years, an older apartment building in Fairview. That building changed hands recently and the rents are going up dramatically and, as is the case in many previously affordable rentals,

Mr. Spidle is left to look for a new home in a market where we know that there is a very small vacancy rate.

The government must take urgent action to immediately regulate short-term rentals that are removing stock from the housing market and to impose rent control.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

MACNEIL, PAM: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, today it's my honour to rise to speak about a truly extraordinary woman in our community. Pam McNeil is the owner of Cup of Soul, a gem in our community, serving up great food and kindness to locals and tourists alike in the heart of Elmsdale.

More than a café owner, Pam also volunteers on countless boards and committees in the area. She's on the board of the East Hants Family Resource Centre and the East Hants Chamber of Commerce. She chairs the East Hants chapter of 100 Women Who Care and the Think Local First initiative, just to name a few. Pam also freely shares her café and contributes financially with the worthy causes in our community. She will rarely accept any awards or accolades for her contributions. She believes that this is what a community is all about, and she's just doing her part.

I would like to ask all members of this House to join me in thanking Pam for her contributions and dedication to our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**PALLIATIVE CARE UNIT, ABERDEEN HOSP.:
EXEMPLARY CARE - RECOG.**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a unique group of professionals. Hospital staff are definitely some of the hardest working people, taking care of our loved ones during very difficult times. The palliative care unit of the Aberdeen Hospital in New Glasgow is exceptional. The display of compassion, dedication, and professionalism provided by doctors, nurses, and support staff is overwhelming. They continue to make an enormous difference in the lives of families through their thoughtfulness, kindness, and expertise.

Although they are often faced with physically and emotionally difficult jobs, they persevere, determined to make a difference under challenging circumstances. I would like all members of this Legislature to join me and thank the palliative care staff for their most pleasant and caring attitude.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

COOMBES, KENDRA/BROWN, MATT: DAUGHTER - BIRTH CONGRATS.

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, on July 13th, our NDP family welcomed to the world a beautiful, feisty, aptly named baby girl, Rory Christine Brown. Proud parents are Kendra Coombes, CBRM councillor, and Matt Brown, a teacher with the school board. In this world with so much sadness and tragedy it is wonderful to stop and appreciate a new life, one of which I'm sure she will follow in her mother's feisty footsteps. Get ready, world, another strong, independent, wonderful young woman is coming for you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

LEBANESE FESTIVALS: SUMMER SUCCESS - CONGRATS.

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, Summer in Halifax would not be the same without the numerous festivals, including the two annual Lebanese festivals. In July, I was delighted to bring greetings on behalf of the province at the 18th Annual Saint Antonios Lebanese Festival's opening ceremony. Over the four-day festival, scores of Nova Scotians stopped by to experience the Lebanese culture, music, entertainment, and food. From live music and Dabke dancing to a documentary screening and Zumba instruction, there was something for everyone. I'm also proud to see that the festival ran a charity dunk tank this year that ended up raising \$2,500 for the IWK Foundation.

I want to extend my thanks and congratulations to the festival co-chairpersons and my constituents, Giselle Hage and Michael MacDonald, as well as the entire festival committee and their volunteers. I know how much work goes into organizing the festival and I'm pleased to see everything came together so well again this year.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

BROWN, JEFF - CST.: COM. SERV. - THANKS

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, as I'm sure we're all aware, Hurricane Dorian had a major impact on Nova Scotians, Dartmouth East included. There are several individuals who stepped up in aid of their community, going above and beyond to help their neighbours.

One such individual is Constable Jeff Brown. In the days following Dorian, I joined Constable Brown on the doorstep, checking in on Dartmouth East residents. Constable Brown was calm and understanding while listening to people's concerns and was sure to arrange wellness checks on family members they couldn't get in touch with.

Mr. Speaker, Constable Brown has worked extremely hard to ensure that Dartmouth East residents feel safe and secure. I would like to thank him on behalf of our community for his efforts.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

FRANK, ROBERT - PHOTOGRAPHER: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. IAIN RANKIN: I would like to recognize the recent passing of Robert Frank and, on behalf of the Legislature, extend heartfelt condolences to his wife, June Leaf.

He was iconic in every sense of the word, someone who challenged and did change the way of taking and presenting still and moving images. As an immigrant from Switzerland, he helped define the United States with 83 photographs in his seminal book *The Americans*, published in 1958. He was described as revolutionary, with an uncanny ability to capture the snapshot aesthetic and graphically portray all walks of life as they are, including many pictures of those who may have struggled or experienced racism.

His connection to Nova Scotia was centred in Mabou Coal Mines, with the ocean beside him, every year since 1969, with the *Inverness Oran* appropriately describing Robert as the good man among us. Indeed, Robert Frank was one of the most influential photographers of the 20th century. More than that, he was a friend to Nova Scotia, to my family, and to those who were lucky to have spent time with him.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY: TASKS - BLESSING

LARRY HARRISON: I just want to take a moment to welcome everyone back to this session of the Legislature and to welcome the four new members to the Legislative Assembly.

Many issues are going to come before us in the upcoming weeks. We may even differ on a few, I'm not sure. I am hopeful that we will come into this special place to tackle the issues in a manner that is respectful of each other and respectful of all Nova Scotians, whom we serve. May God bless us in the task that lies before us.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

DARTMOUTH N.: AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS - RECOG.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, over the Summer, my constituency office has been flooded with constituents who are being evicted or are on the verge of eviction.

Many people, especially those earning minimum wage or receiving income assistance, can no longer afford to rent in Dartmouth North, and Dartmouth North has always been a place where people can find an affordable place to live - or mostly affordable. Some people are experiencing renovictions. Housing support workers are so busy that they cannot take on new clients and must prioritize their work to help homeless people first. People are living in unhealthy and unsafe conditions because there is nowhere else to go. People are sleeping outside or in their cars, or jostling for one of the eleven shelter beds available on the Dartmouth side of the harbour. I am truly fearful of what will happen when the weather turns cold.

We have a full-blown affordable housing crisis in Dartmouth North and across the province, and it's going to get worse. The government must take immediate action to address this crisis.

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

BORDEN, CHESTER: WHITNEY PIER YOUTH CLUB - RECOG.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place to congratulate again Chester Borden and all of the staff and volunteers with the Whitney Pier Boys and Girls Club.

For the last number of years, they have had some major expansions which have allowed them to take on more children and to provide more activities in the community of Whitney Pier and beyond. In the last number of weeks, they had a grand opening of their new sports facilities in the back, a new hockey rink, and a new outdoor volleyball court for the kids. This is on top of the hundreds of thousands of dollars that the organization has been able to raise through various levels of government and community leaders to support activities and programming for kids, and they're providing thousands of meals each year.

I rise in my place today, and I ask everyone to congratulate Chester Borden for being such a champion not only for Whitney Pier but for our entire community.

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

N.S. YOUTH: CLIMATE CHANGE RALLY - RECOG.

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, September 27th, hundreds of Nova Scotia students will take to the streets of Halifax to participate in the youth-led general strike, march, and rally in support of climate change.

Students from across Nova Scotia will be joining their peers from across this world, demonstrating the effects of climate change and the need to address it. I'm sure there will be many students from the Halifax Regional Centre for Education, which has an in-service

day tomorrow, as well as many post-secondary students who will be meeting at 11:00 a.m. at Victoria Park, marching down to Province House and then to City Hall, where they will be holding a climate change rally at Grand Parade at 12:00 noon.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the youth who will be participating in this event and I'm sure members of this House will certainly hear them as they go by chanting: Ho ho, climate change has got to go.

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

SPEAKER'S OFFICE: ACCESS TO MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS - THANKS

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, as we've discussed and are aware, access to menstruation products is extremely important. That said, I would like to thank the Speaker's Office for leading the charge in having menstruation products available for members and in all washrooms here in our Legislature. They are setting the example of how we can all move forward, and I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

COLEMAN, ED: CONTRIB. TO HISTORY - THANKS

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, Ed Coleman is a prolific writer, bagpiper, and beloved member of the Annapolis Valley community. He has published three books, with the latest being *Gone Fishin'*. This is a collection of over a hundred of his articles, published in various Valley newspapers. The first two books were collections of his historical columns. Ed's columns on local history and nature have long been appreciated by Valley readers.

Ed is a noted bagpiper and offers his services to many local events. He has piped in the official opening of the Kentville Relay for Life for many years.

On behalf of the Valley community, I wish to express appreciation to Ed Coleman for his willingness to serve and for his contribution to the community's written history.

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

**HUBBARDS WATERFRONT PARK ASSOC.:
TUNA FLAT RACES - CONGRATS.**

HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Hubbards Waterfront Park Association for holding the recent 37th World Tuna Flat Races. This event helps to preserve an important part of Nova Scotia's fishing and boat building history.

Tuna flat boats are a classic wooden boat, unique to the southeast corner of St. Margarets Bay, that were used in our fishing industry for over 100 years. The boats are no longer used commercially, but the volunteer rowers in the World Tuna Flat Races show off the surviving boats to enthusiastic audiences. To win the coveted title, participants must row these heavy boats for a quarter-mile around Hubbards Cove.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating the Hubbards Waterfront Park Association for the successful 2019 World Tuna Flat Races.

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

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY: EQUAL VOICES - RECOG.

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, 2019 marks the 200th anniversary of the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly, a symbol of our democratic history. Two hundred years ago, women were not permitted the privilege of membership in this House. They were not permitted to vote, and they were not even seen as a person.

Today, we have 17 female members in this House, and I'm very proud of that. I've always stood in this House as an independent woman; today, I stand in this House as an Independent member. I want to make certain that my constituents in Cape Breton-Richmond know that I will continue to represent their voice in this Legislature in the way that I always have and that I truly believe that every voice should be treated equally and heard equally and respected in this House - especially in this House of Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MIDWAY MOTORS: 90th ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Congratulations to Midway Motors for over 90 years of successful business. Since 1926, the MacDonald family's been helping people enjoy their experience at finding an automobile solution for their needs.

In May of this year, they received the Jack Hartery Memorial Lifetime Achievement in Business Award by the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce. Starting in Middle River and later expanding to Port Hastings, the staff at Midway Motors has gone all the way for their customers and has built a loyal following for their Chrysler, Dodge, and Jeep brands.

May we in this Legislature acknowledge their success and contribution to our Nova Scotia economy.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

JESSY'S PIZZA: SUPPORT DURING HURRICANE DORIAN - THANKS

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, on September 7th, Hurricane Dorian made landfall in Sambro Head. Dorian left a path of destruction, leaving people without power and water for days. During this trying time, there were a lot of people and organizations that stepped up, including Nova Scotia Power employees, 311 employees, first responders, the military, local police, and more.

But I would like to take a moment to recognize a Spryfield business: Jessy's Pizza, who set up shop throughout our communities providing free pizza and water to individuals and families in need. A huge shout-out to the staff of Jessy's Pizza, one of Spryfield's unsung heroes.

[2:00 p.m.]

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

The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Rule 43(1), I am making a motion for an emergency debate on climate change. This is an issue that is important to all members of this House and, indeed, all Nova Scotians.

We have seen this issue take the forefront of the global community, and it is important for Nova Scotians to be recognized for the work they have already done, but also for all of us in this House to recognize there is way more work for us as a province to do.

I ask that the business of the House be set aside to deal with this urgent matter.

THE SPEAKER: I have received more than two hours' notice required under Rule 43(2). Notice had been received yesterday at my office shortly after 5:00 p.m.

Under Rule 43(4), I am required to decide whether the matter is proper to be discussed, and I have considered the factors set out in Rule 43(4A).

This is a matter of grave concern to Nova Scotians which concerns the administrative responsibilities of the government and could come within the scope of ministerial action.

The United Nations has stated: "Climate change is the defining issue of our time and we are at a defining moment."

All members will be aware that the United Nations held its Climate Action Summit this past Monday and that there is a worldwide demonstration taking place tomorrow, including here in Halifax.

While there is a bill on the order paper restricted to the establishment of a fund for municipal assistance on climate change projects, the issue of the climate change crisis itself is not on the order paper for discussion and I have no indication that it is likely to be debated within a reasonable period of time by other means. So I will read the motion and ask whether the member for Annapolis has leave of the House for the debate to take place.

The motion is that the business of the House be set aside for the purpose of dealing with an issue of urgent public importance, and the subject of the issue has been described previously by the member for Annapolis as the issue of climate change.

Does the House agree to give leave for the motion to be debated?

It is agreed.

Leave has been given. This debate will take place today at the time of adjournment, as provided under Rule 43(11).

I will also advise at this time, for the House, that I did receive a request for an emergency debate from another member this morning at 9:58 a.m., which was subsequent to the request just dealt with by the House.

Rule 43(10)(b) provides that the right to make a motion for debate on a matter of urgent public importance is subject to the restriction that “not more than one such motion can be made at the same sitting.”

By sitting, the rule contemplates a day on which the House sits - accordingly, I am not able to entertain another motion for an emergency debate today.

We will now move on to Question Period, and I will add four minutes to the end of Question Period.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

GOV'T. (N.S.) - HEALTH AUTH.: DOCTOR RECRUIT. - DELAY

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, in 2013 the Premier promised Nova Scotians that each and every one of us would have a family doctor. I think it's charitable to say that the government has fallen just a little short on that commitment.

Bill No. 1, introduced almost five years ago to this day, created the Nova Scotia Health Authority, but from an interview with Janet Knox this summer, we learned that the Premier waited almost two years to give the Nova Scotia Health Authority responsibility for doctor recruitment.

I would like to ask the Premier: If doctors were the centrepiece promise and the Nova Scotia Health Authority was the first act of business for this government, why did it take so long to get the Nova Scotia Health Authority working on doctor recruitment?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, first of all I'd like to thank the honourable member for the question, and I want to thank Janet Knox for her tremendous service to the people of Nova Scotia to help us transition to a single health authority.

The honourable member is correct - as we transitioned from the nine district health authorities, and the silos we had created across this province, it took a period of time to unite all of the different organizations to ensure that we streamlined the process.

Mr. Speaker, as you would know, before that it would have been handed over to the health authorities. There was work ongoing through the Department of Health and Wellness that had been happening under successive governments. When it became time that the Health Authority was ready to deal with the issue, we transferred that responsibility to the Health Authority.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, the former district health authorities handled the recruitment. There was never an issue like there is now, and for the Premier to suggest to Nova Scotians that he had to wait for two years, until he was ready to focus on doctor recruitment - that is part of the reason we are where we are right now. When the Premier ultimately gave responsibility to the Nova Scotia Health Authority, it came with all of one full-time equivalent. One person.

We still don't know exactly how many Nova Scotians are without a doctor, and this government has missed out on many recruiting opportunities, like last year's meeting in Newfoundland and Labrador. We're starting the seventh year of this government, and the health care issue, the crisis, is the number one issue on the minds of Nova Scotians.

Can the Premier tell this House how many Nova Scotians are without a family doctor today, but more importantly, how many doctors are actually needed to close the gap?

THE PREMIER: I thank the honourable member for the question. Mr. Speaker, as he would know, we continue to recruit physicians into our province. He would also know that Nova Scotia is number four in the country when it comes to attaching citizens to primary care givers. That means there are only three Canadian provinces that do better than we do.

He would also know the phenomenon that has hit actually started with district health authorities across the province. We continue to work in a collaborative way to look at this province holistically. Tomorrow we'll have our second trip to the U.K. It will be great work by the Minister of Immigration. We've adapted a new immigration stream after working with the doctors, the 41 physicians who are either already practising or are about to start practising in this province. This stream will allow us to welcome more new Nova Scotians to come, to continue to ensure that we provide primary care from one end of Nova Scotia to the other.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, every time we ask these questions, we're promised a rosier tomorrow, that tomorrow will be better. The reality is that health care continues to get worse and worse. People are concerned about their ability to access health care. Despite the Premier's promises, the problem remains. Despite the creation of a giant Health Authority in Halifax, that Health Authority never made recruitment a priority for over two years. From the first day, the Premier has made promises on health care, but the problems continue to get worse.

I wonder if the Premier would be willing today to restate his promise to find a doctor for every Nova Scotian?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, since this session started and the honourable member has been chosen to be the Leader of his Party, he stood in this House and accused us that there were 100,000 Nova Scotians without a family doctor. Then he stood the next session and described there was only 50,000 without a family doctor. By his own math, we are moving in the right direction, and quite frankly, we are joining the leaders in the country when it comes to fighting a global shortage of family physicians, and we are winning.

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

GOV'T. (N.S.) - HOUSING: RENTAL COSTS - ACTION

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier about some areas of real struggle in the province. One of these is rental housing. Twenty per cent of renters in the province are paying out more than half of their income in rent, and people are regularly reporting having to leave their homes because of sudden rent increases that are in the hundreds of dollars.

There is a solution to this problem: rent control. Other jurisdictions have adopted this solution. We ourselves in Nova Scotia had it until it was done away with by the Liberal Party in the 1990s.

Will the Premier acknowledge that as his government comes towards its sixth year in office, a lot of people are having a very hard time because of this government's tepid and inadequate approach to rental housing?

THE PREMIER: I thank the honourable member for the question and for raising this very important issue. He is very right that housing can be a real challenge for many Nova Scotians, eating up much of their disposable income when it comes to trying to make sure they put a roof over their family. It is why we brought in rent supplements.

We continue to work with people across our province to provide them with a safe home. We are very pleased with the housing announcement we made with the national government - some announcements about improving our own infrastructure when it comes to our own housing across the province to ensure that we have more affordable units in communities from one end of Nova Scotia to the other, and then continuing to make sure that we are providing affordable housing as we continue to see this city grow.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, a second area where many people are really struggling is the area of getting access to mental health support. Wait times that are measured in months to see a mental health clinician are a scandal in our province. This, too, is a problem that has solutions. In P.E.I., Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, and B.C. they have developed systems of same-day, next-day, counselling appointments for people needing mental health supports; but here in Nova Scotia nothing of this sort has been brought forward.

As we stand at almost a six-year mark of his period in office, does the Premier realize how disappointing this lack of real improvement on this front is to so many people in our province?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for bringing this important issue to the floor of the Legislature. He would know we continue to invest in schools, providing more opportunities in schools across the province for early identification and detection of mental health issues. That's what our panel of experts have identified. He would know that we continue to expand the CaperBase program - something that started in Cape Breton that we're using across the province - to provide supports for families and those suffering from mental illness.

We've increased the funding at Laing House to provide those supports. There's always more work for us to do. We continue to reach out to the experts to get evidence-based solutions to the challenges facing our province to ensure we can provide the entire

supports, not only around those who are suffering mental health, but around those who love them.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, as we speak about areas of struggle today in Nova Scotia, there's no greater area of struggle than the climate emergency. This is, as the Speaker has rightly said, the defining challenge of the era. Here again there is in our province a path in the direction of solutions. All over the world, scientists, NGOs, other jurisdictions are putting forward plans, are putting forward goals for emissions reduction targets that are actually consistent with containing global heating within 1.5 degrees.

But here in Nova Scotia, at the almost six-year mark in office, this government has failed to put forward any kind of transformative solutions towards such a framework.

Does the Premier recognize, here on the eve of the climate strike, that the government's record on climate change is for so many people in our province an object of dismay?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member for the question. That will be part of our Emergency Debate tonight. I look forward to hearing all members of the House comment on this very important issue. I am very proud of the work that not only we have been doing as a government, but quite frankly successive governments in the province have been doing to lead towards being a national leader in GHG reduction.

We continue to work towards ensuring that we reduce our carbon footprint. We will continue to make sure that we are leading the country. There will be targets set for us to achieve, and we'll exceed the targets set out by the federal government because Nova Scotians have been doing that work really since the mid-2000s. We as a government look forward to continuing the effort that so many Nova Scotians have put in.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

H&W - PREM.: HEALTH CRISIS - ADMIT

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, in August, Nova Scotians learned of a tragic incident at Soldiers Memorial Hospital in Middleton. A patient was waiting at that hospital to be transferred to another hospital, Valley Regional Hospital, for a scan. He and his wife waited and waited and waited. He eventually lost consciousness due to a brain bleed and passed. That ambulance still didn't arrive. This shouldn't be happening in this province. I'd like to ask the Premier: Do situations like this cause this government to stop and realize this is a system that's in absolute crisis?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I represent that community, that hospital. It's an important part of providing care

to my family, to the people that I represent. The incident the honourable member refers to is under investigation and we will ensure that that information will be turned over to the family as soon as the investigation is complete.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Premier's response on that specific incident. The issue is there are too many incidents around the province; too many people are concerned about their ability to access care. We've said time and time again in this House, if you are unwilling to recognize that there is a crisis, you will be unwilling to solve it.

This is a government that needs to take a hard look at service delivery; this is a government that needs to start listening to front-line health care workers; this is a government that needs to really acknowledge the issues that are happening in the system right now. If these types of incidents aren't enough for the Premier to stop and listen to front-line health care workers, we have to wonder, what will be enough.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for his question. I want to thank all those front-line health care workers across the province. You would know, we work with the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union to ensure we deal with violence that is happening in the workplace and in emergency rooms across the province. I want to thank that organization for its tremendous help. We continue to work with health care providers who are providing primary care to ensure that we have the infrastructure of today.

[2:15 p.m.]

We have been fought at every step of the way when we want to make investments to improve health care infrastructure in communities that will help us attract and retain more health care providers and provide the services that Nova Scotians want as close to home as possible as we continue to build a modern health care facility.

The reality of it is - and let me be very clear about this. I get stopped on many streets. There are those who ask me about finding a doctor, but there are many, many more who tell me that their experience in the health care system in this province has been nothing but first rate and first class.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

FIN. & TREASURY BD. - CRANE REMOVAL: COST RECOVERY - ASSURE

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

After Hurricane Dorian made landfall on the province, many people lost food and had damage to their homes and businesses. For three weeks, a private company, the WM

Fares Group, left a large crane - now a tourist attraction - collapsed onto a building under construction, endangering public safety, closing local businesses, and forcing people out of their homes.

Due to this inaction, last week the government took over management and financing of the removal of that crane, which is still lying crumpled on South Park Street. Nova Scotians have questions about the financial impact of the government stepping in to help one large private company.

Can the minister assure Nova Scotians of exactly how she plans to recover the uncertain costs related to this government decision?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Thank you to the member for the question. I think it's important for all Nova Scotians to understand - and I believe all Nova Scotians, especially those impacted, appreciate the fact that the decision this government made was to first of all provide protection for people and property. As a result of that, the area has been out of bounds. It has been declared an emergency area.

That's the first step. That's what people want. They want to know that their people and their property will be protected, and we took the first step to do that.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, my question was how the government would recover the cost of that action. Especially since, given the uncertainty, another concern that Nova Scotians have is about the perceived conflict of interest in this particular decision.

Directors of the WM Fares Group are major donors to the Liberal Party, contributing more than \$10,000 over the six years this government has been in office. I will table those records.

Mr. Speaker, did the minister or her government consult with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner before making the decision to assume all liability for the crane belonging to the WM Fares Group?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. She would know that the crane does not belong to the WM Fares Group. The crane is an independent firm. The crane did not collapse on a WM Fares facility. It collapsed on an adjacent building.

The reality of it is, this is about public safety, and to impugn the reputation of someone who has contributed to many political Parties in this province for political gain - it's pretty early in this session to take that step.

The reality is that this is about ensuring that Nova Scotians will have a safe community to live in. We will move or remove that crane, and we will take every step to recoup the loss to the people of Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

H&W - EMS: FITCH & ASSOC. REPORT - PUBLICIZE

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness.

Nova Scotians are increasingly worried about getting an ambulance when they need one. We hear it every day. Nearly a year ago, the Department of Health and Wellness spent \$145,000 on a report of recommendations to create an “. . . efficient, effective and sustainable EMS system . . .” I will table that.

That report was due December 2018. However, that deadline has come and gone without any clarity on the status of the report. My question to the minister is: Has he received the Fitch and Associates report on the EMS system?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I appreciate, as she does, the concerns Nova Scotians have, and also the confidence we have in the EHS system to be there for us when we dial 911.

The member is correct that there's a report that's been worked on. That work is continuing. I had an update a couple of weeks ago that indicated that the report is essentially finished. They are going through last-minute data-validation verification in the report before it is submitted to me.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Wow, 11 months. I do have confidence in our paramedics. I don't have confidence in this Liberal government.

I have to wonder though, Mr. Speaker, why this government is so eager to pay for reports and recommendations, yet is so unclear on the status of those reports and the conclusions made in those recommendations. This report simply could have a critical impact on emergency care for Nova Scotians, but they're more concerned, for whatever reason, why this government will not be forthcoming with the report's conclusions.

I would like to ask the minister: Can he confirm if this report will ever be made public or only kept within his office? Will Nova Scotians have a chance to see this report? Perhaps we will all have to file a freedom of information request in order to see it.

RANDY DELOREY: First and foremost, to address the member's confidence in myself, the government, the Department of Health and Wellness, and our partners at EHS

and the Health Authority - I have also been quoted and spoken publicly on the fact that I wasn't waiting for the Fitch report to take action to improve aspects of our health care system and the emergency system.

With the directive that I provided back in the Spring, we've seen the Health Authority and EHS respond by taking steps upon the review. We've seen improvements in the ambulance off-load times, dramatic improvements that hadn't been seen for many years. The problem had been getting worse under successive governments. We took action, took advice from the front lines, and implemented that advice.

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

H&W - AMBULANCE OFF-LOAD TIMES: NEW STANDARDS - EFFECTIVE

KARLA MACFARLANE: This is a great segue into my next question. Earlier this year, the Nova Scotia Health Authority announced new off-load times for ambulances at the five busiest emergency departments in this province.

The Minister of Health and Wellness expressed that this would ease the number of emergency patients waiting in hallways and the number of ambulances delayed from responding to calls. However, we have heard from critics and we've heard from Nova Scotians that setting new standards without the appropriate resources wouldn't do much, and we've witnessed that. I will table this document.

Can the minister confirm, what percentage of off-loads at the five pilot emergency hospitals have been completed within the 30 minutes?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: A directive was made earlier this year, as the member noted, to have the Health Authority and EHS work together to improve the transfer. That off-load that the member is referencing is the transfer from an ambulance that arrives at the emergency department into the hospital environment.

For example, we have seen improvements at the Halifax Infirmary, one of the busiest emergency departments, where the off-load time averaged somewhere in the vicinity of 180 minutes. It's down somewhere in the vicinity of 60 minutes. That's a significant improvement in just a few months.

There's still more work to do, Mr. Speaker, but we're seeing progress on that work.

KARLA MACFARLANE: The problem is that there's no consistency across this province. Not everyone is being treated equally. Mr. Speaker, these guidelines are intended to help balance the intense pressures that paramedics are under and as well ensure that an ambulance is available when someone needs one. We know from cases reported over the summer that that is simply not the case. They are not available in critical cases that literally

constitute a life-or-death scenario - once again, the Premier has admitted there's a case being investigated right now.

Paramedics and patients are both desperate to know if these new off-load measures are working, and if so, when they will be rolled out to other hospitals. My question is: When will these new standards be introduced at additional emergency departments across this province? If so, please name the ones.

RANDY DELOREY: As I have previously indicated, the Nova Scotia Health Authority did take the direction to heart, and I want to recognize and acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, the staff and the front-line health care personnel who have been part of that.

We hosted earlier this year in Halifax the national emergency department physicians. There are about half a dozen Nova Scotia emergency physicians that I bumped into during that time who lauded me for taking the steps that we did. They said they have never seen that type of initiative, and they recognize that it was the direction that I gave to the Health Authority that allowed the system to start making these positive changes.

It's listening to front-line health care professionals, and we're receiving the feedback from those emergency doctors and paramedics on the front line that they're seeing these improvements on the front line.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

H&W - PARAMEDIC WORKLOAD: BURNOUT RATES - IMPROVE

COLTON LEBLANC: I am one of those front-line healthcare workers and I've worked in health care for nearly five years as a paramedic. I've heard from dozens of paramedics about being overworked, about having to work overtime hours shift after shift, about having trouble even getting a bathroom break.

I acknowledge that the Minister of Health and Wellness has met with some paramedics and is doing his best to listen to their concerns, but the persistent state of chaos in the system, and the problems that they're still dealing with day after day, month after month - it suggests that not enough action or not enough of the right action is being done.

It's great for the minister to stand here and say "we're listening, we're working together," but people are concerned, and people want to see data supporting those claims. What analysis has the department conducted to determine if the new emergency off-load standards have improved or worsened burnout rates for paramedics?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I'll take a brief moment to acknowledge the member and his first question in the Legislature. Welcome here and congratulations on your first question. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, as I've previously noted, we continue to monitor the off-load times and the performance for paramedics transferring patients into emergency departments at those hospitals. One that I recall that stands out the most significantly is the location that had the longest average times for transfer, and one that impacted paramedics from across the province because it was here at the HI where patients could be transferred in from really anywhere in the province to receive that advanced level of care at that site.

We've seen a reduction in wait times from about 180 minutes down to 60 minutes and it's been less than six months in that effort. We're continuing that effort to continue those improvements in emergency departments and paramedic off-loads, but also throughout the healthcare system.

COLTON LEBLANC: This caucus stood in this House last year and discussed this very issue about paramedic burnout. We asked the minister if he'd taken up the offer from paramedics to spend a 12-hour shift experiencing what the job actually is like on the ground. The minister's answer at the time left some uncertainty as to whether that had happened, and I'll table his answer.

It's been a year. Has the minister found the time to take part in a full 12-hour shift with paramedics as previously promised in this House?

RANDY DELOREY: As previously acknowledged in the Legislature, I did attend a ride-along with EHS. It was probably about a year ago - I don't remember the exact dates. That was an opportunity for me to see, and we stopped at various hospitals, bases, et cetera to talk to the paramedics in the line of duty while they were waiting in the hallway, for example, at the QEII.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I talked to them at Dartmouth General where they spoke very highly of the off-load program that they had in place at that transition unit. That was a very informative experience for me, hearing directly from them. I also engaged with the union representatives and heard from them.

On the topic of burnout, the feedback that I got from the union representatives is that addressing the offload time was one of the most important steps that I could take to address the burnout concerns.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington on a new question.

H&W - OFF-LOAD STANDARDS: CODE CRITICAL INCREASE - EXPLAIN

COLTON LEBLANC: Two weeks ago, paramedics issued nine Code Critical warnings about low ambulance availability in a seven-day span. The week prior, there were seven instances of Code Critical across Nova Scotia. In the month of August, paramedics

reported a total of 41 Code Critical warnings. This is particularly worrisome because these new ambulance off-load guidelines were intended to reduce the incidences of Code Critical, but it doesn't seem like they have.

Can the minister explain why Code Critical instances have continued across the province even with the new off-load guidelines?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: As we've been discussing, it was the primary concern when asked in terms of prioritizing - of paramedics that I heard from both front line and from union representatives - was addressing the issue of off-load times. That is the transfer time that it takes when an ambulance shows up at a hospital to transfer them into the care of the hospital facility that they're visiting.

[2:30 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, we know, we saw the reports, we saw the news, patients would see and people in the communities would see ambulances backed up outside the Halifax Infirmary and other hospitals around the province. That's why that was a focal point. It is the action that we took and we are seeing those improvements.

The work is not done. We'll continue to work with the Nova Scotia Health Authority, EHS and other health care partners to seek more improvements.

COLTON LEBLANC: Again, I appreciate the minister's assurance that there's progress and hard work, but we are interested in the data that the minister and NSHA are replying on. Paramedics have been publicizing Code Critical calls for years. This concern speaks to the very heart of the health care crisis here in Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotians want to know if the system will be there when they need it. Will an ambulance arrive in an acceptable time frame when they need it? Data can ease their fears, but where is the data?

Mr. Speaker, does the department itself collect its own data on instances of Code Critical throughout the province? If so, will it commit to make it public?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, first I want to clarify for the members of the Legislature that the reference to term "Code Critical" is not a code or a reference to a program or identified term within the Department of Health and Wellness or the health care system. I believe that's part of work within the union environment to draw attention to concerns that they have, so the terminology there.

To answer the member's question, that's not a particular item but I assure the member opposite that we do monitor and track information around our EHS and other aspects of the health care system.

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

H&W - ER BACKLOGS: LONG-TERM CARE SHORTAGE - CONNECTION

BARBARA ADAMS: Even if people manage to get off-loaded into emergency there is often nowhere for them to go. We've got over 20 per cent, or 700 frail seniors sitting in acute care beds, waiting for long-term care. Last Spring, a vice president of the Nova Scotia Health Authority noted that the ambulance and emergency care problem is compounded by the lack of long-term care beds. He said there are increasing numbers of individuals who need housing or accommodation or long-term care but their needs are becoming very complicated and it's very challenging for us to find locations for them to go. I will table that.

Mr. Speaker, this sounded to me like an acknowledgement that any changes to ambulance off-load directives, without sufficient funding for personnel, is just window dressing until the very serious shortage of long-term care beds can be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister acknowledge that there is a connection between the shortage of long-term care beds and the worsening situation of backlogs in the emergency departments in Nova Scotia?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. The member raises a concern that we're well aware of for Nova Scotians. I believe everyone in this Legislature recognizes the importance of ensuring that the appropriate care, whether that's in our primary acute care system or in our long-term continuing care environment for Nova Scotians, receive the supports required. That is why we continue.

The member made reference to the off-loads being only one part of the work that needs to be done. That's true, Mr. Speaker, that's why the Nova Scotia Health Authority is also continuing the work, looking at patient flow throughout the hospital system, to improve those processes. It's why we've announced, I believe, over 120-some new long-term care beds.

We continue to work and invest in home care programs and other programs, to allow Nova Scotians to stay where they want to, in continuing care space.

BARBARA ADAMS: One of the things I've gotten used to over the last couple of years is that announcing 120 new beds when you need at least 2,000 doesn't reassure very many Nova Scotians.

Mr. Speaker, the simple fact of the matter is that this government has had oversight of this matter for over six years and for those six years issues around long-term care beds and ambulance availability have persisted. They have gotten worse under this government

and there is no other way to frame it. This is a crisis this government has denied and it's a crisis this government has paid lip service to.

I'd like to ask the minister: Considering that a couple of weeks ago I was in the emergency with two people who attempted suicide and were sent home within 24 hours, why is the minister taking only minor steps to improve the number of long-term care beds in this province? Does he agree that this is having a dramatic impact on the health and home care for seniors in this province?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I guess you would perhaps rule that there's a disagreement of fact between myself and the member opposite where she had suggested or stated that the wait times have only gotten worse under this government.

In fact, if the member wishes to compare the wait-list for continuing care/long-term care services from when we came into government in 2013 and what they are today, we have seen a reduction in the wait-lists of almost about 50 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

We have seen a reduction in the number of people waiting both in hospital waiting to be discharged to a long-term care facility as well as those people waiting in their homes or communities for long-term care accommodations, and Mr. Speaker, not just the number of people waiting, but how long they wait has also been reduced significantly.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

H&W: NURSING HOMES - EVAC. SAFETY

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness.

We know from the minister's expert panel on long-term care that people living in nursing homes need more help than they did 20 years ago. Residents are older when they move into nursing homes today than a generation ago.

Residents entering nursing homes also are much more frail than they used to be and many more are using mobility devices like wheelchairs and walkers than residents have in the past. Many nursing homes were built for a more mobile population.

Mr. Speaker, in the event of the need for an emergency evacuation in the case of a fire or natural disaster like Hurricane Dorian, how confident is the Minister of Health and Wellness that nursing home residents would all get out safely?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: The member is correct. It was about a year ago - as of now, about a year ago - when we implemented or established the expert panel on long-term care. They did their work providing the government with a number of recommendations -

22 specific recommendations - to improve the quality of care within our long-term care sector.

They provided an update to Nova Scotians yesterday and I am happy to table that report card which is available online for all Nova Scotians as to the progress we are making and the work that remains to be done to continue this important work and improve the quality of care in the long-term care sector for those Nova Scotians who need that care.

TAMMY MARTIN: Sadly, the report card won't help seniors get out in the case of a disaster.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday's announcement that the government will allow retired RNs to work as continuing care assistants in nursing homes does nothing to solve the problem that our continuing care facilities are facing. It is the staffing ratios that need to be improved. The current workload of CCAs makes providing adequate, quick care to seniors impossible and I don't know what is so hard for this government to understand.

Mr. Speaker, if the staffing levels in our nursing homes are not adequate to ensure that residents get to go to the bathroom when they need to pee, what would happen to these residents in the case of an evacuation?

RANDY DELOREY: First, I want to assure the member opposite that, in fact, we have various reviews and inspections that do take place, of the emergency processes, Mr. Speaker and, indeed, requirements under the fire marshal and rules and assessments also take place to ensure the safety of our residents.

In terms of the staffing aspect, the member is correct. Staffing is an important part and many of those recommendations of the expert panel focus exactly on that, but the announcements I made yesterday are two initiatives to address what we recognize as a concern.

Regardless of what the ratios are, there are many sites that are under-staffed because they do not have the workforce available to fill the positions. There are chronic vacancies, Mr. Speaker, and the announcement we made yesterday, following the direction and advice of the expert panel, was to make changes to help address that immediate concern and get support in those sites that are there today for those chronic vacancies.

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

H&W - VIC. CO. MEM. HOSP.: ER VISITS - INCREASE

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Health and Wellness.

This Summer residents of Baddeck and the surrounding area were very troubled by a sharp increase in visits to the emergency room of the Victoria County Memorial Hospital. A family doctor at the hospital said that overcrowding at Cape Breton Regional and closures elsewhere force patients to drive from as far away as Louisbourg and Eskasoni for treatment in Baddeck.

That influx of unexpected patients fell to the four family doctors who struggle to treat the hospital's emergency patients while also managing their own practices, and I will table that, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to ask the minister: Can the minister confirm the percentage increase in emergency room visits to the Victoria County Memorial Hospital over the Summer?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Obviously, we know that health care broadly and emergency care access are important to Nova Scotians. That's why we've been taking steps to help improve the access to care and maintain emergency coverage.

Some of the steps we've been taking include establishing and enhancing local incentive programs to cover emergency department shifts, and through those initiatives we've seen almost 600 days of emergency department coverage because of those changes we've made in the last year. Again, the work's not done, these are just some of the parts that we are taking to help address those pressures in emergency departments across the province.

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, action or inaction has consequences. Dr. David Heughan says those consequences include times when they run out of stretchers, and the corner of the hallways that is normally used for linens is now a patient area. They include days when no ambulances can be off-loaded at all and they include instances of triple closures at North Sydney, New Waterford, and Glace Bay, going from rare to routine according to the Victoria Memorial physicians - and I'll table that as well.

The doctors have said they have received only lip service from the Department of Health and Wellness and the Health Authority. My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Will the minister admit that these are consequences of this government's failure to plan for appropriate resources in health care?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, again, the member is raising concerns and also highlights through his question the integrated nature of our health care system, recognizing the interdependency of resources and facilities. That's why we recognize it in Cape Breton Island, the importance of emergency department and a strong emergency department particularly at the Cape Breton Regional facility.

In 2017 when I was first appointed Minister of Health and Wellness, one of the first hospital sites that I visited was the Cape Breton Regional. The most significant part on that tour was the emergency department where they stressed how that emergency department was not adequate, was not large enough to provide the care for the people in that region. That's why we have a capital initiative under way that we've announced in the redevelopment of Cape Breton's hospital infrastructure - we're doubling the size of that emergency department to address the very concerns the member has raised.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

CCH: TAAC REVITALIZATION PROJ. - FIN. SUPPORT

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

The grounds of the Truro Amateur Athletic Club, or the TAAC, have been a popular spot for sport and outdoor activity for over a century. Over time the grounds have fallen into a state of disrepair. At one time TAAC hosted provincial and regional track events, but that's no longer an option in its current state.

A fundraising drive has been launched, pulling in well over \$600,000 from the community and \$1 million in kind from the County of Colchester and the Town of Truro. But the TAAC Revitalization Committee needs provincial support to get across the finish line. My question for the minister: Has the province considered any level of financial support for the TAAC revitalization project in Truro?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the important question, as sport and recreation infrastructure is of great importance across Nova Scotia. In this particular year we've invested heavily in a number of major projects. I'm certainly pleased with the \$1 million we put into 29 trail projects. With regard to the project that the member references, I met in June with Brian Wood to take a look at the existing facility and to hear from the Truro Amateur Athletic Club Revitalization Society as to what their plans are, and I know our department now is engaged in those discussions.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's response. It's an important project for the community. As we can see, the committee has sought and received support from the county and from the town. We know the community is supporting it and willing to push it forward. We also know in other cases across the province where the province went ahead and picked up the municipality's share of the tab for a track facility - and that facility happened to be in the Premier's constituency. We need to make sure that the province is treating communities fairly and is not willing to pick up the tab - no questions asked - for a community project just because it's in the Premier's constituency, while other communities like Truro are forced to scrape by.

[2:45 p.m.]

Can the minister maybe inform the House as to when his department intends to respond to the TAAC committee, as to whether they'll be able to proceed with their project, just like the Premier's community was?

LEO GLAVINE: I do want to point out that Truro and that area is a very significant track and field community; Cobequid has had a remarkable history in terms of championships and track and field achievements. Our department will work very closely, and we've already had a conversation with the MP prior to the federal election. It is my belief that the town, the County of Colchester, the province, and the federal government - all four levels of government - will work for a successful project in Truro.

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

H&W: OCEAN VIEW CONT. CARE CTR. - PHYSICIAN AVAILABILITY

BARBARA ADAMS: On June 18th, the medical director of Ocean View Continuing Care Centre sent a letter to the Department of Health and Wellness and the Nova Scotia Health Authority advising them, and their only other part-time doctor, that both doctors were leaving effective September 19th.

I was advised during our last Health Committee meeting that a normal response from these two departments to a letter like this would be one to three days. It took six weeks before the medical director had a response and it was simply an acknowledgement that they sent out an email to doctors to express a request for interest. It took the halting of admissions to this long-term care facility before a meeting was held two and a half months later.

Can the Minister of Health and Wellness tell me if halting admissions to the long-term care facility is the only thing that would get the attention of the Department of Health and Wellness and the Nova Scotia Health Authority these days?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: As we've been discussing quite at length today, the care that's provided - and the importance to ensure that that care is available to our loved ones requiring long-term care, or if it's in the community, in their home care settings - is important. That's why we continue as a government to recognize those needs, to invest heavily in home care supports to allow Nova Scotians to stay home, and recognize the caregivers that support them. In the long-term care sector, we have a plan in place with guidance from the expert panel.

I assure the member opposite that when facilities have needs, when they reach out to the department, I would expect a quicker turnaround than six weeks.

BARBARA ADAMS: I appreciate the acknowledgement that six weeks is too long. My cousin lives in that facility and I certainly hope that they find physicians for it soon.

This is not the only issue facing our long-term care system. The Camp Hill Veterans Memorial Hospital has federally funded long-term care beds for our veterans, but the facility itself is owned and funded by the province. Veterans groups have been advocating for the spouses of veterans to be able to live at the Veterans Memorial Hospital for decades. This requires the province to certify the Veterans Memorial Hospital as a long-term care facility, which they still have not done despite the fact that there are empty beds within the hospital.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Can he tell us why this government continues to drag its feet in supporting veterans in care, and their families, who want to be reunited?

RANDY DELOREY: As the member noted, there are spaces available that are under the purview and management paid for by Veterans Affairs Canada; the eligibility for utilizing those spaces does fall to them. Certainly, the province is ready, willing, and able to work with our federal counterparts at Veterans Affairs Canada should they change the eligibility criteria for accessing those beds for which they pay for.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

TIR: OXFORD LIONS PARK: SINKHOLE STUDY - ABATEMENT PLAN

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, a year ago the area of Oxford lost a gem when the Oxford Lions Park was closed due to a sinkhole development in that property. Since that time, the community has worked with both provincial and federal governments to secure funding for the geotechnical and geophysical investigation of the Lions Park property. The results of this study are not good news for the future of the Lions Park.

My question to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal: Does his department have an abatement plan to address the evolving sinkhole problem?

HON. LLOYD HINES: I thank the member opposite for the question. The department is engaged in determining the extent of the concern that has been expressed in the area with regard to the highway next door. We are in the process of undertaking a drilling program to do testing at the site to determine just what the threat is to the sinkhole area.

TORY RUSHTON: I thank the minister for that information. The CBC has been following this issue ever since it started. The report came out in late August, and the residents are concerned about the safety of Highway No. 104. Visual inspections on that

area show recurring potholes neighbouring the Lions Park and the surrounding properties: Highway No. 104 and Route 321.

Aerial photographs from 1939 to 1962 show a possible sinkhole in that area and it is now covered by the construction of the twinned highway of the Trans-Canada Highway. I will table that report.

My question to the minister: Is his department conducting an actual test other than just drilling on this Highway No. 104 or the Exit 6 area, or is he just waiting to visually see what happens?

LLOYD HINES: I thank the member opposite for the question. Sinkholes are naturally occurring throughout the province, and geologists have been aware of them and have been mapping them for years.

Mr. Speaker, we put the safety of our travelling public as a number-one priority, and that's why we are undertaking a drilling program to determine just how extensive the situation is with regard to suspected sinkholes under the highway.

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

TIR: LITTLE NARROWS FERRY - REPLACEMENT

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Recently, we learned that the ferry in Little Narrows will be replaced with a new and modernized vessel. In the past a study was done to investigate the possibility of building a bridge to join the Little Narrows area with the peninsula and Iona. While there are advantages to each, there seems to be little information on why the department made the decision it did.

My question for the minister is: Can he please explain to this House why the department chose to build a new ferry rather than building a bridge?

HON. LLOYD HINES: In Nova Scotia our ferry system is extremely important to the travelling public (Interruptions) All of the ferries, Mr. Speaker.

In the instance of that particular one that is cited, the matter was the comparative costs associated with supplying a bridge. We've also looked at the possibility of a bridge at a very much busier ferry in the riding of the member opposite, the Englishtown ferry. That one also at this point does not justify the cost of constructing a bridge.

KEITH BAIN: Can the minister provide the House with the revenues and expenditures of the Little Narrows ferry over the past five years, to allow for a better

understanding of why this decision was made and to also allow for further discussion on this matter?

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

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I request that the House reconvene tomorrow, September 27th, at the hour of 9:00 a.m. After daily routine and Question Period, we will be dealing with Bill No. 152 and possibly Address in Reply.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for the House to rise, to meet again tomorrow, Friday, September 27th, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THE SPEAKER: The House will now move into the emergency debate, as presented by the honourable Premier earlier. Therefore, under Rule 43, we'll be debating the topic of climate change. A reminder that two hours are set aside for this debate, with no single member speaking for more than 15 minutes.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 43

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

GOV'T. (N.S.) - CLIMATE CHANGE: WORK TO BE DONE - RECOG.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the support of your Chair and all members of this House as we debate what is an important issue not only for the Province of Nova Scotia but for the global community. We have seen a UN-backed report by environmental agencies come out. We have heard from Nova Scotians from one end of Nova Scotia to the other. All of us know.

I remember one of the members referred to tomorrow, when there will be the rallying cries of our young people to ensure that those of us who have the privilege to hold elected office in this province deal with the challenges of ensuring that we leave them with

a province and a country and a globe that is sustainable, one that is healthier than it is today. It will require courage on all of our parts to ensure that we do that.

It will not only be the members of this House who will help lead the way. It will include all Nova Scotians. It will require those in the public sector and those in the private sector. It will allow us, if we're bold enough, to continue to lead the country when it comes to greenhouse gas reduction.

I want to tell you that we have already surpassed the federal government's target of 30 per cent by 2030. We're proud of that work, but we can do much more. The Minister of Environment, in the coming weeks, will set a more ambitious target for the Province of Nova Scotia to continue to work and achieve that leadership role that we are taking inside our country. I want to thank him and his department for their ongoing and continued work on the environment.

We're the only Canadian jurisdiction that has legislation specifically to protect our coastlines. I'm very proud that all of us, regardless of the constituency that we represent, get to enjoy the beauty of the coast of this province. We will be requiring the support of our municipal partners to ensure that land use is properly done along the coast, to ensure that building permits are being approved in the appropriate places in our province, and working with them to ensure that the human footprint on our coastline does as little damage as possible so that the beauty of our coast will be there for generations to come.

We are consulting with Nova Scotians on a new green economy Act that will help position our province for environmental prosperity into the future. The government believes that we need to protect the environment, but at the same time, we need to grow our economy. One cannot trump the other. We are preparing for an economy of the future, where our children and grandchildren can live and prosper.

Today the Minister of Environment introduced a ban on plastic bags, which I know other members in this House have spoken passionately about. I look forward to that debate. But, Mr. Speaker, that is only a start. Like many of the people in this House who don't live near their own home, I have to do the odd day of shopping for supper. When I arrived back from the local store with my sushi and my salad, I noticed that the least of the plastic things I had was the bag. The wrapping that both of these products show up in is made of plastic. We need the help of the private sector, and we need all Nova Scotians to recognize that the plastic bag ban is the first step in ensuring that we remove plastic from our economy.

I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that the private sector has been a strong ally in supporting a green economy and a more sustainable future for our province. Our job as government is to create an environment where they can thrive and create rules that protect the environment and look towards a more prosperous future, one with a clean environment that our children can look forward to as the private sector continues to grow inside of our province.

We can't do this alone. As I said earlier, other provinces need to step up and join us in this fight for a cleaner and more prosperous future for our citizens.

I want to acknowledge the fact that even though we as a province are leading the country today, we did not get there by ourselves or because of the governing Party today alone. I want to acknowledge the Progressive Conservative Party under the premiership of Rodney MacDonald, and then Minister Parent, who was the Minister of Environment and Labour, who brought in the first Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act. It was what helped us on this path to be able to lead the country, and I want to acknowledge their important role in ensuring that we continue to do that.

I also want to acknowledge the New Democratic Party, who's with us here in the House, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank them for their continued passion about protecting the environment. I want them to know that we are not dismissing the hard work that they as a caucus continue to do when it comes to the issue of the environment.

We may not always agree on the direction we take. We may not always agree that it's not bold enough or that we're not moving fast enough. But our government, Mr. Speaker, is leading the country with GHG reductions, in coastal protection, in waste reduction, and energy efficiency and we are doing that while we are growing an economy.

Our population is up, youth retention is up, unemployment is down, and we have produced four consecutive balanced budgets, Mr. Speaker. This is proof, quite frankly, that we can grow an economy while protecting the environment. The two can co-exist and they must co-exist.

Throughout this debate you will hear from three of our ministers: naturally, the Minister of Environment - welcome to his first debate; the Minister of Lands and Forestry; and we will also include the Minister of Energy and Mines. From him we will hear of some of the specific things that we are doing to green the economy and create the jobs of the future.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand here as the leader of this province to discuss this important global emergency and to assure Nova Scotians that their government is listening, acting, and preparing for a greener economy, and a cleaner, more prosperous future for Nova Scotians.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to tell those Nova Scotians that we will be listening to the entire debate in this House, looking for solutions that are constructive from all members of this House regardless of which side of the House they are sitting on. No one Party can lay claim to be the ones to green the economy the most or care the most about the environment.

I sincerely believe that all members of this House want to leave a better province for their children in the future. How we get there will be discussed and debated. Mr.

Speaker, I told both leaders of the Parties that I have to step out to be interviewed but I will be back in to be engaged in this conversation.

So, I want all members, not only the ones on the government side but the members on the Opposition side, to know that their constructive ideas will become an important part of ensuring that we operate in the spirit that started in 2005-06. All members of this House unanimously supported the first piece of legislation to protect our environment and grow the economy, and that will continue. (Applause)

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

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Premier for his comments here today. I sincerely agree with him that when it comes to climate changes and the issues that we are currently facing, not just here in Nova Scotia, but globally across this world, it is not just a partisan issue. This is an issue that takes all different coloured stripes and everybody here to work together to solve.

Before I start going into a number of issues I have here, I do want to recognize that this government brought forward the Coastal Protection Act and I am anticipating as the Environment Critic that there will also be coming forward amendments to the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act very soon and hopefully in this session.

I would ask the same as I did when the Coastal Protection Act came forward, that when EGSPA comes forward, it comes forward amended to the legislation and not regulations, not an appendix attached to it. I think we need to have concrete dates, goals that are set out within amended legislation, that are enforceable; where any government - whether it be the government today or the government tomorrow - will be held responsible and have their feet held to the fire to meet those goals.

I do believe that we are in changing times. The other day I was looking to see how many new auto manufacturers are currently looking at transitioning their fleet towards electric vehicles. I note that Volvo has actually stated that this year they would be transitioning all new vehicles that they manufacture to electric vehicles. I bring that up because one of the concerns I have raised here before is the fact that currently in this province we don't have the infrastructure in place.

The Premier talks with regard to green jobs and transitioning to a green economy. I think there are plenty of opportunities, one of those being electric vehicles and hybrid vehicles. But, without the proper infrastructure in place throughout this province, it really makes it unachievable to meet that goal. One of the things I'd like to see coming forward by the government is where their plan is to transition from fossil fuels and traditional vehicles to electric vehicles. I'd like to see where that's coming forward.

I'd also comment in regard to the initiative this government brought forward with regard to solar. I think if government is honestly wanting to make a change and address climate change, it is going to be a multifaceted approach; one of those being solar, the other being wind. I know from talking with constituents I represent that, although there are programs - both municipally and the program this government brought forward, and it was a significant initiative, I believe \$30,000 - it still is not enough to make it reachable for normal Nova Scotians, who have all their normal bills, to be able to take advantage of that initiative.

I would really like to see if this government is serious about that, more money invested into that program, and a higher threshold, so that more Nova Scotians can actually tap into that and look at fuelling their homes through alternate energy rather than the coal-fired electric that we have now.

I was fortunate enough to attend the David Suzuki talk the other night, Tuesday I guess it was, at Dalhousie Arts Centre. I thought it was quite interesting that it's the young people that are really pushing this; they recognize the need and the threats of climate change that we're having. Mr. Speaker, as you mentioned earlier, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, it's almost as if a climate crisis seems to be the catch phrase of 2018-19. I think what people miss is that it is a crisis.

Hundreds and hundreds of scientists who are not backed by big industry, or by oil and gas, or by anything else, are coming forward and saying that we have to recognize the concerns around climate change, and we have to take precautions and start acting now.

We're seeing significant impacts of climate change already here in this province. At some of the dams and berms across this province, particularly between us and New Brunswick, there are concerns coming out in the rising water; we are a coastal province, and climate change will have a significant impact on residents across this province.

I appreciate that the current government has called this as an Emergency Debate today. I recognize it is an emergency debate, so I hope that they are willing to, as the Premier said, not verbatim, that it's going to take some guts to put initiatives in place. I hope that this government, as with all other Parties in this House, are willing to take those initiatives and face some of those harder decisions that need to happen in order to reach zero carbon emissions.

Right now, with the federal election, we're hearing a lot about how important environment is, and reaching that zero carbon emissions by 2030 to 2050 is what they've said, but we've got one Party now saying 2030. I don't think that's out of whack. I do think that, if we were to take certain initiatives, we will reach that.

I do commend the government for bringing forward today their legislation in regard to banning plastic bags. I do recognize and hope that that is the first step. I often say to

people that I recognize that plastic bags are single use, but I certainly use them, and I'm sure members of this House do, more than a single use carrying your garbage home. I used them for my dog do and sometimes I'll put my kids' lunches in it or whatever. (Laughter) Independently of the dog do!

What I do notice is this doesn't address plastic bottles and single use water bottles, which to me is a single use product. It's not addressing plastic straws or plastic utensils and I think that there are further opportunities there, so I'm looking forward to seeing what comes forward after that initial legislation as we move forward on that, too.

What I will wrap up with saying is I think that, as a Party, the Progressive Conservatives certainly recognize - we were the Party that brought forward the initial Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act. We are looking forward to what's coming back with that.

I know that the current government, as well as members of the NDP and our Party, have all had opportunities to meet with the Ecology Action Centre. I do want to commend Ecology Action for a non-profit, volunteer group who've gone out and spent, I think it was around, \$16,000 to have that report done. The value of that report is significantly more than that, and although I think we may not all agree on what the targets are that are set out there, I think that even Ecology Action will say they want to ensure that any amendments that are done are done through the legislation.

I think that if the Premier is serious in regard to climate change, then he needs to be serious in holding himself, his government, as well as all other members of this House accountable and that can only be done by putting those goals and those dates right in the legislation.

I mentioned earlier in regard to the walk the students across the municipality as well as the province are talking about tomorrow, I didn't really realize exactly how engaged some of the youth in this province were until this week when my 10-year-old daughter came home - and some people may or may not know, my 10-year-old daughter has dyslexia and she has a really hard time reading. She has been diagnosed with that since Grade 1. She's very sports oriented, she's not as interested in academics and stuff like that as my older daughter.

She came home from school really excited earlier this week and she wanted to talk to Daddy all about climate change and hold me accountable for all the things that I do and don't do. We had a really long talk and I recognized by talking to my 10-year-old daughter just how significant children feel and what they're being taught in school. It is the youth, whether it's our youth here in this province or globally, that are highlighting this issue. I commend those youth.

Typically, to stand up here and talk during a members' statement about the rally tomorrow would not be something I would normally do, but I do think that the youth in this province and across this globe need to be recognized for their contributions. The UN, of course, has been recognizing, and there have been two or three speakers there. I want to recognize the youth here in this province as well.

[3:15 p.m.]

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will sit down. I look forward sincerely to hearing what the ministers from the three departments are going to bring forward and how they are going to push this. If this is an emergency, I want to hear what they are going to do.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, we welcome the opportunity to discuss this defining issue of our time. I want to start by addressing a few of the remarks that the Premier made.

First, I agree that we do need all-Party participation on this. I think it's an issue that does transcend politics in many ways, and yet many of the decisions that we make in this House, and many of the directions that we take in this House, are the very directions and the very decisions that are going to be benchmarks along the path that are going to tell us whether we are on the right path or not. Therefore I was somewhat dismayed when the Premier said that we have to champion the environment and we have to champion the economy.

That statement is true. However, I would suggest that that goes one of two ways. Either we balance our economic commitments and our global commitments to the future of our species, or we take a different and more transformative approach to looking at the future of our economy through the lens of the crisis that we find ourselves in.

This is what we talk about when we talk about an ambitious green jobs plan. We cannot continue the status quo of, on the one hand, polluting our environment in the name of economic growth, and on the other hand, saying that we are committed to solving the climate crisis. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, the two do not work together.

According to a recent report prepared by the Ecology Action Centre, we have the opportunity - and this was co-authored by Gardner Pinfold - to create over 15,000 jobs a year by 2030 if we take an ambitious approach to transforming our economy in order to address the climate crisis.

It isn't an either/or. We can grow our economy, but the way that economic growth happens will be fundamentally different than the way that we understand that now.

An ambitious and robust green jobs plan is an opportunity for innovation, entrepreneurship, youth retention, and immigration - all things that this government talks about all the time, and I know holds in very high value.

It's the responsibility of this government to ensure that we take this transformative action to address climate change while at the same time making a commitment to the workers most impacted by the changing economy so that it is not the workers who will pay the price of that transition.

I want to say that it won't be easy. I think it is natural in a political environment to look for an easy solution to a problem, and by "easy," a solution that ruffles the least amount of feathers.

Whatever solution we come up with, if we are really going to address the climate crisis, will ruffle feathers. We will advantage some industries over other industries. We will fundamentally change the way we think about and hopefully measure our economic progress and output. All of that will come with criticism, will come with challenges, and will come with discomfort, but it is our contention that we have no other choice.

There is a huge green industry emerging across the world. It spans from engineering to technology to education to the arts to agriculture and so much more. We already have green jobs here in Nova Scotia. We have environmental scientists, educators, artists, renewable-energy consultants, urban planners, project coordinators, builders, growers, tourism operators, and food service workers.

We have a green economy, but it's too small and we have a government that so far - hopefully today is the tipping point - hasn't seen these sectors as big opportunities for investment and growth and putting us on track to join those climate champions who are on the track towards carbon neutrality.

We have to nurture these industries, Mr. Speaker; we have to cultivate these leaders. Think of how we could be supporting the environmental leaders we have here in Nova Scotia if we put the resources and energy into making a conscious shift towards a clean economy. Think of the opportunities in the creative economy, the opportunities for young Nova Scotians who want to get involved in sustainable forestry, sustainable fishing, and local food production. Many of these things happen at a micro level, but they have macro implications.

Mr. Speaker, we need to be paying attention to the small, community-led initiatives that are currently the bright lights in this province in these efforts. Unfortunately, it seems today in many areas that we are far from this carbon-neutral future which I would argue we need to achieve. We see hazardous environmental practices all around us in this province. We are the most coal-dependent province in the country - and we're not talking

about the coal production. We're talking about the coal that we import to heat our homes and that's a problem.

The reduction that we've made there has allowed us to ambitiously meet some of the targets set forward, but it's not enough, Mr. Speaker; it's not ambitious enough. We see tire burning, we see unregulated clearcutting, we are having conversations and committees about natural resources and economic development, about uranium exploration and fracking, and these are not the conversations we need to be having.

We need to be talking about clean jobs; we need to be talking about battery storage; we need to be talking about carbon neutrality; and we need to be talking about how to transition our workforce into this new reality. When big companies and old school governments are in charge, fighting climate change can become a burden on regular people.

We can do things differently, Mr. Speaker. We can all join together, and we can set ambitious targets and we can work together to achieve them. We endorse the plan put forward by the Ecology Action Centre. Obviously more work needs to be done, but we need robust targets.

I think if we could show leadership in this Chamber about our targets, with the new EGSPA coming in there are lots of opportunities to do that. Things like a plastic bag ban is one step in that direction, but if we can really show transformative change here, I believe we can lead the province in that direction. We're the right size, it's the right moment and Nova Scotia has the opportunity, I believe, to become a leader in this effort. We could become a province that can really be a beacon to other communities around the world for how to make this transition.

I believe we have this opportunity, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad we're having this debate and I look forward to the comments of my colleagues.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today and I am extremely privileged to be the Minister of Environment today. I must say that climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time. It's a global emergency and it's happening right here and right now. Nova Scotia is experiencing droughts, floods, stronger storms, milder winters, and longer Summer heat waves. Our oceans are changing with rising sea levels and changing in acidity and salinity.

Climate change demands action, and action from all of us to avoid the worse case scenario of its impacts. It demands more resilience from our people and our communities to adapt to its effects. Mr. Speaker, in the face of this global emergency, we are taking urgent action as a government.

I would like to share on a personal note - I've been very privileged to be raised in a situation where I had the chance to experience the environment and go to places like Sporting Lake Nature Reserve and wilderness areas. As a young fellow, that's what we did. To grow up on the Bay of Fundy, where I still live, is an opportunity to see the things and experience the wonders this province has and the nature and the natural things. It gives me an opportunity and a privilege to be not only the Minister of Environment but part of a government that understands the environment, with my colleagues.

I'd like to mention the support that I have from the Premier since being appointed, and the support that I've had from my colleagues: Minister Rankin, Minister of Lands and Forestry, and the Minister of Energy and Mines. All of this has helped me to transition into my position that I have here today, and I'd be standing here today remiss not to mention also the great staff in the Department of Environment. I have been extremely privileged to have a group of young, professional, energetic people that are leading all of the action plans that we have today, and I thank them all.

I am proud to say also that Nova Scotia is a national leader in fighting climate change. We have made tremendous progress to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and that, Mr. Speaker, is thanks to all Nova Scotians and the work they've done. They are making energy efficiency upgrades to their homes and businesses. Communities are investing in wind and solar power. People are choosing public transit, active transportation, even new electric vehicles. And we are investing in our transition from coal to cleaner energy.

Mr. Speaker, that investment is paying off. Electricity from coal is down 76 per cent in 2007 to 52 per cent in 2018. Our clean energy has tripled in the last decade. By next year, 40 per cent of the electricity will be generated from renewables. All of this work is growing our green economy. There are more than 1400 jobs in the energy efficiency sector alone, Mr. Speaker. That is proof that a clean environment and a thriving economy certainly do go hand in hand.

So when we say that Nova Scotians are leading the fight against climate change, Mr. Speaker, that is what we are talking about. Because Nova Scotians have done this hard work, because we put regulations in place to drive down greenhouse gas emissions, we have met the national 2030 reduction goal 13 years early.

And we are not stopping there. We set a new goal for 2030. In fact, we have one of the most aggressive goals in the country to reduce greenhouse gas emissions even further. We will meet this goal through continued investments, energy efficiency that fights climate change, while also helping Nova Scotians save money and be more comfortable in their homes.

We will meet it through continued investments in green infrastructure, sustainable transportation and innovation. We will meet it by shifting electricity grid towards cleaner

sources in a way that makes sense for Nova Scotians, without causing pressure on their skyrocketing power rates.

We will meet the industry reducing emissions through our cap and trade program. Mr. Speaker, cap and trade covers more than 80 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions for this province, and it will shrink those emissions every year. All of these efforts combined will help bring our greenhouse gas emissions down by at least 45 to 50 per cent by 2030.

That is just an overview of our fight against climate change, Mr. Speaker. We're taking urgent action. As I said, we will continue the fight. At the same time, we are already feeling the effects of climate change right here, right now, so we will continue our fight against climate change.

We will also have to adapt to the effects that we are experiencing, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to say that we are a national leader on this front as well. In the Spring, we passed the Coastal Protection Act, which will protect coastal ecosystems and ensure new construction is safe from sea level rise and coastal erosion. Mr. Speaker, that makes Nova Scotia the only province in the nation with legislation specifically to protect our coastline.

We will be developing regulations to support this Act. We will look forward to consultation on what Nova Scotians and municipal leaders want in particular. Nova Scotia is one of the only provinces that has done a detailed province-wide assessment of the likely impacts and severity of climate change.

We also require all municipalities to create climate change action plans. These plans help municipalities evaluate risk, and vulnerability related to climate change impacts, and determine how to adapt to these changes. This helps municipalities build their capacity to tackle climate change.

[3:30 p.m.]

We're building capacity in provincial departments as well. My great staff are working with other departments in their respective sectors to assess their climate-related risk and implementation action plans. For example, the Department of Health and Wellness is looking at the level of preparedness of hospitals, community clinics, and long-term care facilities to respond to climate-change impacts. Our government is investing in dykes and aboiteaus; we're mapping flood-risk areas; we're investing in research, modelling, and data to evaluate climate-related risk.

We're also teaching our children in school about climate change. And that, right there, is the reason for all of this. I would certainly like to thank all of the students who have rallied behind this initiative and the awareness they have and applaud them for the work they do to continually push us in the right direction. (Applause)

As I said, this is a global emergency. Our children and grandchildren need us to act now. We owe it to them to be leaders. We owe it to them to fight. We owe it to them to build our resiliency to the effects of our changing climate. Government has stepped up. We are national leaders on the climate change stage, and we're taking action now, but we cannot do it alone. Addressing climate change is a shared challenge. It requires leadership from all levels of government, the private sector, and the not-for-profit organizations. It requires a meaningful effort from all Nova Scotians who are involved.

By working together, we will establish a low-carbon economy that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, creates jobs, and ensures a clean environment for future generations. Together we will build a strong and resilient community that meets the challenges and seizes the opportunities that come with a changing climate.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm so pleased that the Premier has advanced this topic today for an emergency debate. It's good to see the members of the Legislature collectively recognizing that this is the critical issue of our time. We are at a pivotal moment. There are young people today and future generations looking to elected officials, looking to adults, for leadership. I'm happy that this is coming forward today, and I would say better late than never.

This is certainly an issue that our caucus has been trying to advance on the agenda for quite some time. I think of the plastic bag ban legislation, which I was pleased to see come forward today. We also had legislation prepared that we would have submitted today. We withdrew that to support the government in theirs. But just a few short months ago, when we asked the then-Minister of Environment about the plastic bag ban - no, not necessary. It's good to see that the government is modernizing its view of what is necessary, and we're happy to support them in any initiative that recognizes government's responsibility, that government has a requirement to lead on this.

I also think of another piece of legislation that was introduced today by my colleague for Pictou West - introduced for the fourth time. That's called the Clean Air Act. It was initially introduced in 2014 by my colleague, reintroduced in 2015, reintroduced in 2017, and reintroduced today. This might be the time. It might be the fourth time's the charm, that this government acknowledges that there are good ideas in that piece of legislation. Maybe this newfound interest will result in some interest in that specific piece of legislation.

I know when that bill was first taken to second reading back in 2014, a former Liberal member for Halifax Chebucto, a one-term wonder in this House, described it as a bill that was just kind of being put forward by the member for Pictou West only because of Northern Pulp at the time. He was quite offended that bill had entered the Legislature at that time because of that. Speaking to it, the then-Minister of Environment, at that time the

member for Antigonish, essentially referred to most of the requirements of that bill as red tape.

Mr. Speaker, I hope we have advanced in our thinking in this Legislature to realize when you're coming to issues of importance to the environment; when you're coming to issues that are important to protecting our food production, to protecting our food security; to protecting our province from rising sea levels; when you're talking about issues to protect our province, to protect Nova Scotians, to protect all citizens, it's not merely red tape. It shouldn't be dismissed as red tape.

We know that the EGSPA legislation is due for renewal. I understand that the government is ready to renew the goals of EGSPA; possibly as early as this session, those goals will be renewed. I look forward to that discussion, and I thank the government for acting on that. That's a piece of legislation that was introduced in 2007. At the time it was introduced with a requirement that it be updated and modernized every five years. It was updated and modernized in 2012, under the then-NDP government, and was due again for update in 2017. Here we are in 2019, and the government has said it will turn its attention to focusing on that at this point.

Mr. Speaker, what I would say is, better late than never. I do believe that the government is sincere in speaking to this issue at this stage. We are sincere in working with them to move forward on new goals and new ways of protecting Nova Scotians from climate change.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I do want to thank the government for bringing this topic to the House as an emergency debate because it absolutely, 100 per cent, is an emergency.

I don't know if I'm allowed to say this, but the Premier was out of the room while my colleague was speaking earlier, so I want to reiterate a couple of things (Interruption) Am I not allowed to say that? Okay, I'm sorry.

I want to reiterate some of the things my colleague said because the Premier did say in his remarks that he wants to hear our thoughts. I can't believe I'm going to cry already on the first day. I find this topic extremely worrying and extremely important.

I also attended the David Suzuki/Stephen Lewis evening the other night and was moved by Julia Sampson and another young climate activist who was on the stage with them. I have also been very moved by the work and the actions of Greta Thunberg. She is an amazing person, and what she is telling us is that it is our responsibility as lawmakers to listen to the children and to act now before it is too late.

It is going to be too late. As elected governments, if we do not do things in the next year or two to actively move towards net zero carbon emissions by 2050, then we will have catastrophic climate change on this Earth. We will have mass extinction of species. We will have many, many people dying and suffering because of catastrophic climate change.

We know this. This is proven by many, many scientists. One of the things I heard the Premier say - and I am grateful for what we have done so far in Nova Scotia - was that we will green our economy and we will grow our environment, but the two can't trump each other. That's essentially what I heard the Premier say.

Those things do not need to trump each other. Those things need to work together in tandem. When we hear the term "greening the economy," what I think of is we have the economy, we have industry here on the landscape, and greening it, we paint it with a green paintbrush. But what's underneath that when the paint wears away is still global industry.

What we actually need to do is transform our economy. Transforming our economy will be the best economic growth that we have seen in many, many years in Nova Scotia. Green jobs that come from things like wind energy, solar energy, energy efficiency, and energy retrofitting will be the jobs that are so important to our economy, and because those jobs exist, if we have important or radical targets, we'll be able to meet those targets with those types of jobs.

There's a quotation from Albert Einstein which says, "No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it." I have a poster to that effect in my office. This is one of those problems that needs a new way of thinking.

We are in a climate emergency. The average global temperature for 2015 to 2019 is on track to be the warmest of any equivalent period on record. We've seen hurricanes, floods, droughts, and they're having a major impact on our province and our socio-economic development. Those impacts are only going to become more severe; our world is going to become more unpredictable if we do not act now.

We know that climate solutions need to be community led and government backed if they're to be successful, and right now failure is not an option, as I already said. The federal government - this is astounding - estimates that not taking action on climate change could cost Canada \$43 billion per year by 2050. Based on our population here in Nova Scotia, that would mean at least \$1 billion a year, but that number could actually be higher because of our specific geography and the industries that make us more susceptible to the impacts of climate change.

Right now, we have an unprecedented opportunity to transform our economy and to reduce our carbon output significantly. We can do this in three ways: reducing carbon output at the site of energy production and increasing the proportion of clean energy we rely on; improving energy efficiency in our homes and workplaces through retrofitting

buildings and using more efficient technologies; and investing in efficient transportation and infrastructure.

Reducing carbon output at the site of energy production and increasing the proportion of clean energy we rely on is the backbone of the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act. When it comes to the proportion of our energy that comes from renewable sources, the EAC - Ecology Action Centre - submits 90 per cent as the target that will help us meet our 2030 goal.

We have heard that the government has new goals in mind, but we still haven't heard what they are. We don't know what is being planned. We need clear targets and we need stronger targets. It is no longer enough to say 30 per cent below - I forget what the current is - anyway, what we need is 50 per cent below 1990 levels by 2030 and then we need zero by 2050. That's what we need; that is what the climate scientists are saying. It is clear and we need to adjust what we are doing now to meet those goals. We need to know: Is the government going to keep Nova Scotians in the dark for a few more years, or is the government going to show leadership and a clear path forward to meet those targets?

Improving energy efficiency in our homes and workplaces is a crucial part of this work. We know that energy efficiency and deep energy retrofits are the cheapest and most effective way to achieve those carbon reductions. We cannot reduce our carbon output in a meaningful way without committing to a serious transformation in our efficiency standards. As I've mentioned, we could create thousands of new jobs by prioritizing, making 100 per cent of our social housing net zero energy ready by 2030.

Net zero energy ready homes are up to 80 per cent more efficient than new homes that are being built to current code standards. While it's easier to reach these standards with new construction, of course, retrofits can also get us there. Imagine a province where everyone benefits from energy retrofits through lower heating and electricity costs?

Net zero retrofits could save Nova Scotian families thousands of dollars every year. I'm hoping this is true because I am about to insulate my entire home with the help of Efficiency Nova Scotia programs, but my quote is \$9,000 to do it. I'm really excited about the savings in my oil costs.

AN HON. MEMBER: It will be worth it.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I know. I know.

In 2016, Housing Nova Scotia earned a Bright Business Innovation award for a new passive house design that reduced the annual heating bill of the home to just \$245 and the power bill to \$585. On the coldest night of the year, the residence can be heated with the equivalent of one and a half hairdryers. These deep-energy retrofits could change the lives of many people in our province who are struggling to keep their heat and lights on. The

amount of construction, planning, and design work that is required to carry off this transformation could boost our economy in a way that we have not seen in decades.

[3:45 p.m.]

The Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change prepared by federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers of Environment called for net zero building codes across Canada by 2030. Nova Scotia is a signatory on this framework, but we haven't heard anything about where the government is on these changes. It is something that would cost us zero dollars to put these new codes in place. It would be wise for the government to make these changes as soon as possible, to give construction firms time to adjust and build their competitive advantage in a new world.

In order to make these retrofits happen, again, we need real leadership. Real leadership could establish targets to keep us on track with these retrofits. Real leadership could create a thriving new industry that employs people with a diverse range of skill sets. Real leadership could ensure that we are in a position to meet ambitious targets to prevent catastrophic climate change. Real leadership makes commitments and keeps them.

Finally, the last piece of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions involves investing in our public infrastructure. We need to have a universally-accessible system of public transportation that gets people from place to place in an efficient and comfortable manner. We can do this. This is another opportunity for the creation of thousands of jobs and a new industry in our province.

Rather than trying to run the infrastructure that connects us all on a shoestring budget, imagine what our province could do if we had sustainable, reliable, accessible public transportation that everyone wanted to use. Not only would it keep our cars off the road for more time but it would make life much easier for so many people. Whether it would mean getting to and from an appointment at the hospital more easily or visiting family and friends on the other side of the province or just going to and from work every day, affordable and accessible green public transportation is a huge part of addressing our greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Speaker, I do have deep respect for everyone in this House, but I want to say that my colleagues earlier gave themselves a standing ovation for the work they are doing - it happened after the Premier spoke. I feel like this is not the time. This is not the time for standing ovations. This is not the time to congratulate ourselves in this House. The children and the youth are going to be taking to the streets tomorrow, the people who are going to the UN and saying "how dare you?" to the lawmakers of the world - "How dare you hold our future in your hands and not do anything?"

We can't stand up and give ourselves standing ovations right now. We need to do so much more. What we've done is fine, but real leadership would be humble and fast acting so that this climate crisis can get under control.

I implore everyone in this House, everyone, to stand with the youth of Nova Scotia and the youth of the world as they are outside the Legislature tomorrow, demanding that we take action to stop catastrophic climate change.

By the time they get here tomorrow, many members of this Legislature will have gone home. We will have gone for the day, we'll be done, but I will be here with my colleagues, standing with the young people for the future they deserve. I hope everyone considers staying to greet them and to stand with them in solidarity.

I hope this government considers how to show more leadership on this file. Our children are asking for it and demanding it and they deserve it.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Lands and Forestry.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise to speak for a few minutes on this important late debate on the global emergency we have, dealing with the existential threat of climate change, and I appreciate that it was the government that brought it forward. It's not about applauding ourselves. It's about acknowledging some of the work that Nova Scotians have collectively done together over a number of years that predates our government.

As the current Minister of Lands and Forestry, as a past Minister of Environment, and as an MLA who frankly cares very much about the environment - it's one of the reasons why I put my name forward to come here in this House. At one time I was a young MLA - I still consider myself to be somewhat young six years later. I do think it is important to talk about these issues and hear ideas from Opposition members as to how we can do better. The debate really is about acknowledging that the status quo is not sufficient - how we move forward.

I think some of the initiatives that were mentioned by the Minister of Environment, which really cut across departments, are worth noting so that we can build upon that success that has been achieved. We are on pace to surpass the federal government's target of 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. We have met that target 12 years early. We should be proud of that, and we should be aiming to surpass that, which we will.

We know that we are on pace now to pass that, in the range of between 45 and 50 per cent below that. That will continue to lead the country, and that's just based on what we're doing with the cap-and-trade program, which covers 80 per cent of our emissions. It's also because of the hard cap that we have in our electricity sector, which is allowing us to transition to different cleaner sources of energy in the province.

We should be proud that we have invested in wind energy. Again, that's not just our government. A lot of the COMFIT initiatives happened prior to us, but a lot of the installations that were improved happened during our government. We now have more wind capacity, as a percentage, than every other province in the country except for PEI. We can do better, but that is one goal that we should be looking at, what other sources do we have?

We can look at the solar energy achievements, and I can recall when I filled in at a conference for solar energy in Alberta. At that time, the Ontario government changed, and literally the whole industry was watching their investments go down the tube and looking at new provinces to invest in because the new government completely gutted their programs for solar energy. Subsequently, in Alberta, the government changed.

Now, after those programs that were quite effective that drew in investment for the green economy, I understand Nova Scotia now has one of the best, if not the best, most attractive programs for solar energy. That's something to be proud of. We also have tidal initiatives happening right now. That's a way we can take advantage of our competitive advantage of being near an ocean. These are things that we can build upon. I am not saying that they're enough, but I think it's an acknowledgement of some of the work that Nova Scotians have done because it wasn't always easy.

We are also a leader in how we deal with our solid waste in the province. Three hundred kilograms per person is about the average of what we consume and what goes to landfills in the province. The national average is over 700 kilograms per person. That's more than 50 per cent lower than what the national average is in Canada going to our landfills. That's not enough because we should, at some point, start talking about no longer using landfills and talking about zero waste. We are going in that direction, I would submit, faster than any other province.

It is the same with greenhouse gas reduction. If there is going to be a province that reaches carbon-neutral by 2050, which many countries have signed on to and the governing Party is committing to in this election, I would submit that it will be Nova Scotia leading the way to get there. A lot of this is about greenhouse gas mitigation. There is also adaptation because climate change is very real, and it's here. There are the floods we have seen in Sydney and other parts of the province, the egregious floods that we have to deal with and spend government money on to help people. It's the droughts we have seen, especially on the South Shore a couple of years ago and dealing with that.

It's the more recurring extreme weather events that, ultimately, government has to spend money on. Over time, past governments haven't realized the true impacts and full cost accounting of what's happening when we are releasing carbon into the atmosphere.

It's also about looking at how we deal with efficiency programs. Members on the opposite side of the House referred to how we can do more. Of course, we can do more,

but we have a utility that was put in place, which is an independent utility that allows us to achieve more than 1 per cent efficiency per year. Other provinces such as Alberta have emulated that model, and they are now seeing the success that we have started in this province. We can do more to achieve more efficiency on the demand side, and we can grow more jobs.

I know there are thousands of jobs related to the efficiency part alone but we are, in terms of what members talk about, the fundamental change. I would submit that that fundamental change is already taking place. It may not be taking place fast enough and I would agree with that. We are going to continue to work towards moving faster and moving towards a lower carbon economy, but we have to do so with our partners, with communities and with industries.

I am proud to be able to represent a forestry industry that is undergoing significant fundamental changes. If you would ask those operators and the foresters in the woods, I think that you would get agreement that this is transformational change in the woods. This is based on an independent report that had authors that came from universities across Canada and the United States who coined the term “ecological forestry.” That is something we should achieve but it’s not going to happen overnight. We need to make sure we have input from our stakeholders and everyday Nova Scotians who have worked their whole lives, successive families in the forest, and how we work together to achieve that.

Over the last year since we’ve received that report - before we received that report last year - less than half of the prescriptions in the woods or the harvest methods, as you will, only retained more than 10 per cent of the actual trees in the woods. Now we’re almost at 90 per cent of the prescriptions, retaining at least 10 per cent and many of them are retaining 20 per cent and 30 per cent and 40 per cent. That’s a big change for industry, and we’re going to continue to work alongside industry to ensure that we are retaining the highest quality trees that are native to the Acadian forest to ensure we have carbon sequestration. That is one of the main ways that we can actually mitigate the impacts of carbon because trees are that natural way of sequestering carbon out of the atmosphere.

This emergency with climate change aligns with the emergency we face with biodiversity loss and they are all very important to acknowledge. For me, it’s a social justice issue, it’s a poverty issue, it’s a reconciliation issue. Those that have contributed the least in this world are actually experiencing the most dire impacts from the heightened carbon emissions and the impacts they are having in their countries, especially those most marginalized countries in the world.

Being a global citizen in this world, we need to do better to help our other provinces and move towards a more carbon neutral, lower carbon economy, a more green economy, a more circular economy when it comes to handling our solid wastes, when it comes to reducing our carbon footprint and all the rest.

I just wanted to touch on a few topics. I know the Minister of Energy will go into more detail on the ones he is responsible for. This is a collective effort on the side of the government. We've been putting our money where our mouth is, in terms of cleaning up historic contaminated sites - Boat Harbour being the top of mind for me, number one. That was left behind by past governments and I'm not pointing fingers. I think we all should come together and do the right thing, so we have over \$100 million set aside for that. We've recently put \$48 million in the budget to take on the remediation of two former gold mine sites in Montague and in Guysborough County. That's the start of addressing about 60 historic mines that were left behind without dealing with the environmental footprint. We have Harrietsfield where we're spending about \$15 million in that remediation project.

I think if you look long and hard at some of the resources and some of the commitments that we've made in six years I think you'll see that we care very much for the environment. We care very much for growing the economy and as clean and as green as we can make that happen over time, I think we are all for the better. I think the young people will be a huge part of that and I look forward to talking with them more.

I regularly meet with young people across the province. Just last week I met with - I want to say their names - Rowan Helmer, Ira Reinhart-Smith, and Leah Morrow from around the South Shore area. I think the Minister of Justice is their MLA and I think they are part of this uprising of young people across the province. They'll probably be here tomorrow, so I look forward to hearing from them more.

One of the things I asked was, could you be instrumental in having a debate in an emergency, acknowledging that this is a climate emergency. So when we're clapping and when we're talking with one another saying, like, let's throw ideas out there, that's what it's about. It's talking to young people, acknowledging the problem right here in this House, in the Legislature - where else? What is the best place to do it? I think it's right here.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage on a very quick introduction.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I just want to bring the attention of the House to the East Gallery, where my long-suffering constituency assistant is with us this afternoon: Terrie Little and her daughter Taylor. I introduced Taylor a little while ago before 1,000 people, as she is one of our Special Olympians. I would like to welcome her to the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise and say a few words on this topic, which I believe will be the single most important item that we will address in our generation.

I do want to echo the sentiments already spoken in the House and say how proud I am to be representing Kings North, home of Mark Parent, the former MLA who was the one who brought in the EGSPA. I want to take a little different tack on what I'm talking about, and that is maybe dealing with impacts now.

[4:00 p.m.]

We all know about Dorian. It was a storm that hit right across the whole province, a very widespread storm. Most of you maybe won't realize that in Kings North we had a very localized storm the week before that doesn't even have a name, but we saw six or possibly seven inches of rain. One farmer said we had seven inches of rain in 24 hours. I know the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal would be well aware of what we faced. In reality, we had a once-in-200-years rainfall event the week before Dorian in a very localized area of maybe 10 square miles - 10 miles by 10 miles; I realize that's 100 square miles - and other little pockets in Kings North, in Kentville, Woodville, Scots Bay - and I think we attribute that to climate change.

There's a lesson coming out of that for us in that there are many things we have to do right now to address climate change in what I would call the built environment. I had one gentleman who had his driveway washed out. You could have put a car down in the washout, it was so large - and this was a new culvert put in two years ago when the road was repaired in that area. A brand new culvert, and he said, when they put it in, I told them that culvert wasn't big enough.

The engineers said it was, that that's the size culvert we needed, but we know that he was right and, in fact, the engineers were wrong. The value of having a much larger culvert two years ago would have been a lot less expensive than putting in tons and tons of rock and a driveway now.

In fact, because of that storm approximately eight days before Dorian, I'm compiling a culvert list of where we have inadequate culverts where people experienced basement flooding, culverts washed out, all sorts of effects.

We're going to have to look at our built environment - what do we change in terms of our building code, in terms of our engineering expectations? Right now, to deal with this storm the week before Dorian, to deal with Dorian - what are the lessons we learned from Hurricane Dorian? We learned that cellphone towers need more power than a 12-hour backup. When you lose your power for a week and you want to call 911 the day after, 24 hours after the storm you have an incident - I had a constituent who had an incident 24 hours after and no cell service - a big shock. We're going to have to have new standards for cellphone towers.

We saw other effects from Dorian. In fact, I was telling my caucus the other day that one constituent had a \$1,000 roaming bill that her son incurred because he was accessing a tower from a different company. What do you do about that?

One thing we know in my area is the land of many different dikes, most of them built 100 or 200 years ago, and many of them are inadequate. When we look at what the Acadians accomplished in 1755, I'm personally in awe of what they did. They built dikes in places where I can't fathom how they did it, and they did it by hand.

One of the things that we know for certain is that the ocean level was a metre lower in 1755. We know that because we can see places where foundations that were on the water edge and are now a metre underwater, Fortress Louisbourg being one of them.

We know the oceans are rising now. We have approximately 300 miles of dikes in our province. I know the Minister of Agriculture, who has responsibility, would say that we're starting to address those, and I agree. I appreciate what is being done. I question if enough is being done and I will say that there are places where this is going to be dauntingly difficult to fix. But this is part of our built environment that we're going to have to address.

Agriculture, I believe, is part of the solution. We need to have more local food and more sustainable production. Our farmers have had enormous challenges in the last two years; we had two cold, wet Springs and last Summer we had a once-in-200-year frost event. Nobody remembers that, and I can say that, fairly certainly, once in 200 years or more because the year there was no Summer was when Krakatoa exploded in 1817 or somewhere. There was frost in every month of the Summer. Since that moment, when the Earth was blanketed with a cloud of dust, we haven't had those kinds of temperatures. Last Summer, we had frost in June that we have not seen and it severely impacted agriculture.

These are challenges right now, and I don't want to, in any way, diminish the need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. I know everyone is talking in that light, so I just want to very briefly talk about these challenges right now. I believe that the global network of transportation and global production of food is something that maybe we need to wean ourselves off a little bit.

We need to be a little bit more self-sufficient here in this province. We need to be less reliant on what is, effectively, a greenhouse gas-emitting global transportation network. It would be great if there was a little bit more local, if we could increase local food production.

We're going to need to address - and I appreciate there's a Coastal Protection Act, which is getting there. We're the second most vulnerable area in North America to sea level rise after the Louisiana area and maybe Florida, too. I wouldn't want to take that away from them. We're right in that mix with Florida and Louisiana.

There are immense challenges for us right now in the built environment; there are immense challenges for us in providing food security and maintaining agricultural production. In meeting these challenges, and all the other challenges which have been addressed in this House, I just want to make you aware of what was, you know, going back to where I started.

The week before Dorian - an absolutely stunning rainfall event to have seven inches in 24 hours - and the impact of that on homes and people in Kings North, was absolutely stunning. I know the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal probably knows we need more money there.

I'm sure he's aware of that and I know that the crews of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal have been working very hard. I will say that I deeply appreciate the efforts they've made to fix the damage from the week before Dorian. We haven't even got that all fixed yet; there are still washouts and areas that need to be repaired.

This is the kind of challenge we're dealing with right now. Not only do we have to deal with the greenhouse gas emissions, we have to look at our built environment right now and deal with the challenges, prepare and have new engineering standards and new building code standards to deal with the effects of climate change that are happening right at this moment.

I don't believe that's being addressed in this debate, but I wanted to put that out there. These challenges are real, they're here now and the impacts when it happens in your community, it's a stunning event that affects all kinds of people in ways that they never imagined possible. All of a sudden, literally, their car is floating away out of the driveway.

How did that happen? They've never seen it before, but it's an event that's life-altering and changes people's perspective of the environment around them, of their home. It's something that, as a province, the challenge is on us to make sure that the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is putting in the right sized culverts and the building code has the right sized standards and people have backflow preventers in their basement drains, and on and on it goes. But all of these challenges are very real, and I just wanted to address that.

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

GARY BURRILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me begin by saying that I find myself a little surprised to be a participant in an emergency debate on climate change initiated by the present Liberal government of Nova Scotia.

I am not, of course, surprised that we would be holding a debate on this subject because it is a subject on which people across the province have been pressing this

government for several years. My surprise rather stems from what I think we can fairly call the hollowness of the government initiating such a debate while continuing to fail to take any real, any transformative, any substantial, in this sense, action on this pressing subject.

I am reminded of the stunning speech given on Monday at the UN Climate Action Summit by Greta Thunberg where, as she addressed this kind of hollowness, concluded her thoughts with the words which have come to now define that speech: “How dare you.”

Mr. Speaker, the road forward in this crisis has been incontrovertibly set before us. Last October’s report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has made entirely clear what is required - a limit to global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius in the next 11 years.

The IPCC report has provided the world with a clear galvanization of what for some may have previously seemed to be an opaque question. And in terms of global public focus, in the words of Naomi Klein, this has made all the difference. This changes everything. As a consequence, the question before us relative to any climate change proposals or any lack of climate change proposals, the question for us is very simple: Is this proposal, is this program, is this policy, or is it not, consistent with the path of restricting our emissions to what is required to limit global warming to no more than 1.5 degrees?

If the answer is no, then whatever that policy or proposal is that’s being discussed, it represents a clear betrayal of our planet, our species, and the people. The necessary pathway has been provided. Limiting global warming to within 1.5 degrees in the next 11 years very simply means in Nova Scotia that we commit to reducing our emissions to 50 per cent below 1990 levels by 2030 beginning now, period.

This means dramatic investments in renewable energy. It means mobilizing, retrofitting, and energy efficiency programs on an unprecedented scale; it means significant investment in clean transportation.

As the entire rich discourse around the Green New Deal has been making clear internationally, we need not think of these requirements as some kind of burdensome, reckless kind of government spending, we need rather, in this present moment, to think of these as we are encouraged to think of them by a growing chorus of international economists, to think of them as crucial investments in a new economy that will provide good employment for people across the province in new sectors.

We can use this opportunity to renew and transform our economy and to do it in a way that is sustainable and is equitable and just. Here in our province we are no strangers to dramatic economic transformations, and we are no strangers to failures to complete these transformations in successful ways.

We know this from the 19th century great transition from the economy of wood, wind, and water to that of iron, steel, and steam, which we failed to make successfully throughout our province. Nowhere were the negative consequences of this felt any more clearly than where my family comes from in Yarmouth.

[4:15 p.m.]

Something similar could be said about the great mid-20th-century economic transition to an economy of modern manufacturing. Throughout our history in this province, those in power in Nova Scotia do not have a good record about grasping the opportunity of these kinds of moments to move us forward into new eras. However, this era could be different. It is true that in this moment we can see with such clarity a better way forward. We have been presented with a way forward, but along with it comes a great challenge. It requires an absolute unremitting boldness, an absolute unremitting visionary kind of leadership and what the IPCC refers to repeatedly as an intensification of present effort across the board. No other viable road forward is available to us in this moment. This is the point that is being made so loudly and clearly by the persistent and defiant actions of the climate strikers.

The climate strikers are right to point to the failure of the governing class, to its betrayal of the planet and of humanity. The planet strikers are right to point out that this moment, too, represents a failure of the market economy to rise to the requirements of this crisis. The climate strikers are right to identify the fact that capitalism, the world of the veneration of the market, does not have the capacity to bring what's required to walk us back from the edge of the present cliff.

In this way, it's true that in order to bring about international consensus on a path forward, we need clear recognition that climate justice and economic justice are, as Pope Francis has pointed out, one and the same, two sides of the same coin. We cannot move forward into a new economy, that is, without addressing the inherent inequities that have rotted the core of our current environmental and economic moment.

At the same time, the people of Nova Scotia certainly recognize that there's an urgent and direct relevance for all of these issues to our economic and geographic situation. Just yesterday, important news was released about our fishery. A UN-backed panel released a new study about the state of the ocean which sounded the alarm that the ocean is now warmer, more acidic, and less productive.

It was stated in the study that if carbon emissions are not stemmed, marine life is going to suffer, and ocean species will continue to move farther and farther north. The same report noted that sea levels are now rising more than twice as fast as they did in the previous period, and they are accelerating. I don't need to remind anyone that should these patterns continue or accelerate, for us in Nova Scotia, our very physical connectedness to the continent is threatened by the vulnerability of the Isthmus of Chignecto.

My colleague, the MLA for Kings North, has just spoken about how the situation is paralleled completely in the world of agriculture, where we face crop damage from all kinds of increasingly intensified forces, whether that be from wind, unseasonal frost, or extreme weather coming in unpredictable forms, as we experienced just recently with the hurricane.

Let me say also, Mr. Speaker, that because of the role of environmental racism and for other reasons of history, there are some in our province who stand to be disproportionately impacted by the ravages of climate change. For these reasons, those who have been excluded or marginalized from public participation in our society need to be at the centre of determining the path forward. The imagination, experience, and expertise of African Nova Scotian communities, Mi'kmaw communities, and others, are pivotal in this regard. This is at the core of what we are going to hear repeatedly tomorrow at the climate strike, what is being referred to by the phrase "environmental justice."

Absolutely, we face a climate crisis, a climate emergency. Undoubtedly, this government needs to act now to curb greenhouse gas emissions and limit global warming to below catastrophic levels. These are plain facts that everyone in our province understands.

If the government understands this also, why has the government allowed our environmental goals legislation to expire and lay idle for two years past its deadline? Why does the government believe that quietly announcing just 30 days of public consultation through an online survey is adequate to collect the input from Nova Scotians that this keystone piece of environmental legislation calls for? Why does the government believe that three little consultative questions - one of which actually proposes dropping the words "environmental goals" from the legislation altogether - constitutes a sufficient forum by which to gather the extensive knowledge, the extensive experience, the extensive passion, and the extensive expertise that is required from across the province that is needed in order to focus our collective attention in Nova Scotia to this colossal challenge?

Mr. Speaker, this is the same government which has approved an LNG plant in Goldboro that, if built, would import fracked natural gas, would emit more than 2.3 million tons of CO₂ and would be the single largest source of emissions in our province. This is the same government whose federal counterpart - I cannot help but recall - announced a climate emergency on one day and then turned around and spent billions of public dollars on a pipeline. This is the same government that has refused to adopt the strict, the tight, the serious, the - in the IPCC's words - intensified targets that are absolutely, incontrovertibly necessary if we are to be kept in line with the IPCC's threshold of 1.5 degrees.

Mr. Speaker, the time when we can tolerate this kind of thinness in operation, this kind of hollowness is, in my view, past. There isn't anything left to debate. You are now in the time for real, meaningful, material, principled action. As Greta Thunberg said on Monday in New York, we draw the line right here.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid on a quick introduction.

STEVE CRAIG: I would like to recognize, up in the West Gallery, some very kind people from Sackville. Mr. Mike MacDonald and his wife Louise MacDonald were very supportive and responsible for me being here today. If you like what you see, thank them. If you don't, criticize them. I do thank you for being here today. I very much appreciate it. It's so cool to see you from this perspective. I have always looked up to you, but this is a whole new dimension.

I would also like to introduce Ms. Karen Smith. Some of you may know her previously as being in Premier Hamm's office for many years and also lately, up until July 18th, in Government House with Their Honours. I was fortunate to ask Ms. Smith if she would be my constituency assistant, and today we celebrate our 10-week anniversary. Although Mr. MacDonald and so on introduced me to politics, it is Ms. Smith who will keep me here. Thank you very much. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Energy and Mines.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in my place on this very important debate that Nova Scotians, and really the world, are talking about. I have the unique position of being the Minister of Energy and Mines for the province, where I get to see a lot of different perspectives when it comes to our traditional energy mix and some of the new initiatives that government has brought forward over the years.

I can tell you that in my conversations with my colleagues at the energy ministers' meetings this summer, the large focus of it was adapting to climate change, what that means, and what new technologies mean to those traditional industries. This is a conversation that I'm having daily with my counterparts.

I do want to recognize the staff at the Department of Energy and Mines. The staff is always in a position where they are out engaging Nova Scotians on a daily basis to talk about the programs that matter most to them, the topics that matter most to them. I can tell you that climate change is that. The decisions we make as a department always have a lens on what it means for the future generations of this province.

As a department, we spend over half of our budget on energy efficiency and clean technology, clean energy solutions. It is a big part of what we do. As a minister, I always ask staff to do that: put that lens on any decision that you make, what does the impact mean for future generations? The purpose of what I want to talk about for the next few minutes is about initiatives that we're taking as a government - whether it's this government or governments previous - and what that has meant for the economy.

What has been a big conversation throughout this debate is green jobs and building a new economy. I can tell you that the initiatives that have been implemented, that we are implementing more recently, are creating new opportunities for entrepreneurs across Nova Scotia.

I guess I'll start on the home efficiency and some of the conversations from the NDP that have come forward. That is a benchmark for us. The work that Efficiency Nova Scotia does to support organizations around the province is amazing. We have a strong relationship with them.

To give you an idea of some of the retrofits over the years: you've seen 16,000 low income Nova Scotians access the program, so that's very important. (Applause) Over 120,000 homes in Nova Scotia have installed heat pumps, utilizing these programs through Efficiency Nova Scotia.

One of the big projects that we've announced, and I want to recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing as well - he and his staff have done a tremendous amount of work to get us to a point where, as a government, we're going to invest \$11 million to retrofit public housing across the province.

That's very important. That's going to help us be more efficient with the housing offerings that we have. It's going to help us reduce our energy consumption and it is going to allow residents to feel more comfortable in their homes. That is one big investment which will generate into jobs.

In the last number of weeks, you may have seen as well - over the last year, the Department of Energy and Mines ran a pilot project with our Mi'kmaq leaders to look at energy efficiency in communities across Nova Scotia. All 13 communities now have signed on; it is no longer a pilot project. We are going to spend upwards of \$40 million retrofitting almost 2,800 homes across communities in Nova Scotia. (Applause)

The first four years of that, we committed \$3 million to it. The first four years will represent a retrofit of 900 homes. We have a very strong relationship with our Mi'kmaq communities. It is a fantastic initiative.

These all generate into jobs. We continue to look at energy efficiency and all these are being really driven by the conversations I've had with you, the conversations you've had with our staff, and Nova Scotians coming forward with these ideas.

In the past year as well, while we're on the energy efficiency previous - and I've said this before in the House - that homes that were heated with electricity generally were the houses that qualified. We've expanded that now to homes that have other heating sources, so that has seen a great spike in residents having the ability to apply for the program.

Efficiency's very strong, but there's still lots of work to be done. What we will continue to do is take all of our advice and our feedback to ensure that we continue to strengthen the programs.

When you look at some other initiatives that are going to generate big economic impact - we have been working with the federal government over the last number of months. They want to green all of their infrastructure. How we're doing that is looking at reclaimed mine sites.

I'll use Cape Breton as an example because we made the announcement down there. We have former mine sites that we are going to use to look at various types of green energy solutions that will help them green their buildings. That's millions and millions in construction. We are very excited about that. That is going to generate into new technologies and green jobs across the province.

Another very important initiative that we're involved with to support the green economy, as well, is to look at our tidal. We're receiving interest from all over the world on the potential of the Bay of Fundy. We have four companies down there now testing various technologies. We've seen over \$60 million invested with our federal partners because they believe in what tidal holds: the potential for Nova Scotia.

That means rural jobs. That's construction. That's supply chain. These are things that, as successive governments, everybody can take credit for the tidal piece because this has been going on for a long time. There is lots of interest and I will continue, and our department will continue, to support the tidal industry.

My colleague, the Minister of Lands and Forestry, mentioned the solar program. This is an important statistic. In the last year, 500 more families have accessed solar because of the program that government provides. What that has meant in terms of companies - last year there were 13 companies that were solar installers, and this year there are 57 companies that are solar installers.

[4:30 p.m.]

We know there is a demand for this, so we are going to continue to provide that program. That is a very strong program. We have community buildings across the province that are accessing our community solar programs, so we're seeing a great uptake in that. From an active transportation piece, you would have seen an announcement in Halifax when we look at Connect2. That's a big project that our government funds. Halifax is connecting almost 30 kilometres of trail. I was in Port Hawkesbury looking at connectivity between NSCC and the town - at CBU, the same thing - giving the international students an opportunity to travel throughout town. This is about giving them active transportation options and reducing our carbon footprint.

This also results in more construction jobs where we have local companies that are building these trails, that are keeping this infrastructure maintained. These are projects that have been very beneficial not only for the green economy but for building communities. Again, another initiative that we are involved with.

There are a number of things that I could go on about at length. This is work that Nova Scotians expect their governments to complete. We're doing that. We're going to continue to build out incentives. We're looking at electrification of transportation in the municipalities; we're looking at electric vehicles and what they mean. I actually had the opportunity to drive an electric vehicle. We can do it. You can drive a long distance, and they're quite fast. These are the things I'm having conversations about daily with Nova Scotians who are saying, as we transition, what are the next steps, what are the next programs, what are the next incentives that government is going to provide?

All of that being said, there's still lots of work to be done. We deal with companies and industries that have emerging technologies on a daily basis. That's why we're seeing a big uptake in solar, a big uptake in wind, interest in electric vehicles - price points are starting to come down a bit, so people are starting to show more interest. We're going to continue to do that work.

Ultimately, what this has meant for the province in efficiency alone - we use the number of 1,400 positions, 200 companies - that will grow just based on the recent announcements we've made with our First Nations partners and our public housing. We know that entrepreneurs are coming forward. We're giving the next generation an opportunity to build their businesses here, to learn new technologies. We're going to do whatever we can to support them along the way.

I'm very proud of the work that we've all done as representatives of this House. My commitment to you as the minister of that department is that the Department of Energy and Mines is going to continue to be progressive. They're going to continue to look at new ways we can support new technologies and our green economy and look at ways that our traditional industries can support one another to green their operations as well. I'm very honoured to have the opportunity to say a few words.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Premier. This is extremely important to discuss. We should be discussing it every day. I think we absolutely need to look at this as a non-partisan issue.

We are here today to address a very serious global crisis that affects all of us. I believe that we have a single mission - one single mission - and that is to protect and hand on this planet to our next generation. We often say we need to find a balance between

environment and economy. I'm all for the economy, but I'd love to have a discussion that just talks about the environment.

We are all to blame for where we are, and together we can move forward positively. I think we need to discourage those who continuously finance the denial of climate change. There are big companies out there that are financing the denial of climate change. We need to stop that.

I was thinking earlier about our children, and I honestly believe that right now we need to be stopping and listening to our children. Do not underestimate their intelligence on this subject. It's simple chemistry when we really stop and think about it. It is simple chemistry. What we do is burn carbon-based materials and we can list all those. And basically, carbon dioxide is emitted. Kids learn this before they even go to school.

Right now, I would like to give a shout out to all the children in Nova Scotia and beyond who are out there fighting for this cause and trying to get us to fight for them. I know the schools in my area, I commend the teachers, they're constantly teaching our children about living, being very careful in how they treat the environment. We need to be better.

But earlier I was thinking, no one questions the link between smoking and cancer anymore, do they? No one denies that anymore. And it's because we had 50 years of science to prove that smoking causes cancer. There's an urgency, and we need to think of the state of human activities, and climate change is no different than smoking and cancer. And that's my analogy, but that's what we have to do. And that's why there is an urgency to get this right.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank everyone for speaking. They spoke eloquently on many different things that I was going to speak about as well, but it doesn't need to be said again. I think that even in these difficult times, for climate change, we can make a difference.

I believe that this was an important debate to have to start off this session and I will leave you with this: it's a collective endeavour and it's collective accountability. All of us. It's not a time to point fingers - who did this, who didn't do this. We've all done some good things and we've all done some bad things. It is my hope, though, that it's not too late.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, you may recall that in the last session of the Legislature, I spoke about climate change quite a few times, so it's really nice to be sitting and listening to so many other speakers and speaking about it today. I'm just going to say a couple of things. One is just jumping off the remarks of my immediate predecessor, the member for Pictou West.

There is a similarity to the connection between smoking and cancer and one is that the large fossil fuel companies, much like Big Tobacco, aggressively invested in misinformation and in lobbying that prevented action when the science was clear. Because the science was actually pretty darn clear in 1968 and then it was very clear in the 1980s and here we are in 2019. And the children who are raising their voices so strongly and with absolute integrity were not even born when the science was clear.

So, yes, that's a pretty strong link. And I think it's really important. I heard a great interview with Naomi Klein on CBC Radio this week. She talked about the importance of us figuring out how we want to be as people and as societies, as we confront this challenge. We can't pretend that this is not a huge challenge, and I have real concerns because I see how we are being now.

Earlier in today's discussions through Question Period and in Statements by Members, a number of us raised concerns about affordable housing. I know that right now in Halifax the shelters are full. I know that people who even are working are contacting my office because they cannot abide the rent increases and they don't see how they are going to be able to stay in the homes they have lived in for years. People who are living in what had traditionally been affordable rental accommodations are being served with massive rent increases. I think my colleague for Dartmouth North referenced her fear about what is going to happen when things get colder, when the weather turns, and I absolutely share those fears.

If we are tolerating this level of economic inequality, this level of social injustice in our economy now, how do we think we are going to be as a society as we confront these challenges and some people have the ability to try to buy their way into security as we confront this very difficult challenge ahead. Some people can even afford right now to pretend that we don't have to change.

I think about the woman who cleans the office that I rent, my constituency office. I had a nice chat with her at one point this Summer. She had just taken her first ever trip on a plane. It was for her son's wedding and she had had such a marvellous time. That was her first and only experience of having a week of ease at a beach and enjoying that experience that so many people have gotten used to. We're going to have to get used to something different. We're going to have to get used to really appreciating the experiences that are actually available to all of us and that don't cost the planet and don't cost our children's future.

My partner and I often would make different choices but I can usually win him over and again this Summer we took a trip that didn't involve flying anywhere. We went to Cape Breton and he wasn't sure that he was going to be that into it. He loved it, we had amazing times at the Gaelic College and we had amazing times at a music festival and we had amazing times camping and hiking, even just here in Halifax, without going far at all. I think what the climate change crisis has brought to me is, I so appreciate the time I have

with my kids. I appreciate taking the bus with them and I appreciate the little interactions that we have because really every single one of us in this Chamber is so damn lucky.

There was an article, I think it was in the Guardian, that got shared online and I happen to read this Summer. It talked about what was driving the huge migration of people from Central America. I lived in Guatemala for about five months in 1996 and then I lived there for about 18 months, between 1997 and 1999. During that time I had the opportunity, the immense privilege, to spend time in different Indigenous Mayan communities where people were living already very precarious lives, where food security was imperiled.

[4:45 p.m.]

Now, some of those people are walking, and they're walking with their children and that is the result of climate change. People there, they plant corn. They might plant five different kinds of corn, some that can withstand drought, and some that can withstand wind and some they can harvest early, and some that they can save through many months. All that gets so messed up when you can't count on the weather. Even then, in the late 1990s, people would tell me that the climate was changing, they didn't know anymore when to sow and things were not acting the same way.

Here, no matter what our situations are, certainly everyone in this House, we're so darn lucky, yet I have constituents who don't know where they're going to live next month. And some of you do too. All of us around the province, we see people who are living with such precarity and such stress, and if we're not taking care of each other now, if we're not doing a better job of taking care of each other now, what does that mean about how we as a society here in Nova Scotia, but we as a global society, are going to proceed?

I think we really want to make sure we hold on to our humanity and that we hold on to our compassion and that we strive to be generous and fair and equitable and recognize that while this is an existential crisis for all of us, some people, right now, are living with existential crisis and have been living with existential crisis.

I've read some really great stuff by climate activists who are African-American, and they made the point that slavery was an existential crisis for them - the fight for civil rights was a response to an existential crisis. Really, Indigenous people in Canada, for them, colonialism was an existential crisis - when your children are being taken away and your land is being taken away, that is an existential crisis.

We have to enter into this with humility, with gratitude for what we have, and with the commitment that, yes, we're going to confront this crisis and we must confront this crisis aggressively and with all of our energy and creativity, but we must do it in a way where we all come through the crisis together.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised that this Liberal Government has called for an emergency debate on climate change. I know that because I sit in our caucus meetings week after week, and I'll be sitting in them day after day now that the House is sitting, and we talk about climate change and how it's affecting our province.

I have conversations with my colleagues on a regular basis about climate change. I listen to it on the news - we all listen to the news; we cannot avoid it. How can any of us avoid what happened just last weekend, and the first of this week in New York at the United Nations where our youth came together from all over the world because they are concerned, and they are worried? I thank the Premier for calling this emergency debate and for giving me a voice and giving all of us the opportunity to speak about our own concerns on climate change.

I come today not just as a member of this Legislature, but as a mother and a grandmother. In my first speech in this Legislature, almost six years ago, I told the Premier if he thought the perseverance of a home and school president was concerning, he'd better worry about the perseverance of a grandmother - and I really mean that.

I listen to a lot about climate change, and I discern a lot of the information. The one thing that really concerns me is that children have fear. Children are going to bed and not sleeping because they're worried. Childhood is not a time for worry. It's a time for exploration. It's a time for wonder, not to be fearful, not to be worrying about what's going to happen to Earth. Let me worry about that - let me. I do worry. I have to say, I worry for my children. What is it going to be like for them? Will they have a healthy Earth when their time for being a grandparent comes? I am really fearful of that. I don't want the children of this world and my province and in my life to worry about climate change.

We come out today, all of us as members of this Legislature, with urgency. Tomorrow we are going to see the urgency come out in our youth, and we want to listen. All of us should be listening. They may not have a vote, but they have a voice. Those who don't have a voice, we are going to be their voice. Every one of us will be their voice - and not just tomorrow but the day after that and the day after that and the weeks, the months, and the years after that. We need to be their voices. We mothers and grandmothers, and grandfathers and fathers, aunts, uncles, everyone - we need to be the voice for our youth and our children. Let's all pledge to be their voice.

Fear, to me, does not help the situation for young people. It's like having a teacher in the classroom who children are fearful of. They cannot learn in a fearful environment. We don't want to initiate a fearful life for our children. How are they going to bloom and grow?

We can give them hope. We can give them hope by the actions we take, by the role models we are to them. We need to give hope through our legislation and through our joint efforts to make this Earth healthy again. We all need to play a part in that.

Not only do we help them with their voice, but we are going to help them with the way we model ourselves. I'll give you a couple of examples how I have. I have coffee drinkers in my house, and they love the Keurig. Now when they come for those pods, there's a recyclable plastic thing so - oh gosh, they can't throw it in the garbage. They have to compost it, rinse it out, and use it again if they want a second cup of coffee. We use reusable shopping bags.

We have done meatless Monday in my home. They don't like it. I have meat eaters. I call them dinosaurs actually, Tyrannosaurus rexes. They were willing to do it, so every Monday, we had what we called meatless Monday. It opened my children's eyes that you can eat plant-based foods. You don't have to have meat. It may be a family joke, meatless Monday, but you know what? It does work. It made them all aware of making different choices with their diets, so my non-bean-eaters are now bean-eaters.

It's really important that we model a way of change. Everything doesn't have to be huge and big and fast. We can make little changes every day in our life. That's how you teach people. You don't change everything at once and get people upset. You make small changes and build on it. Each one of us can do that - small little things.

When I started as an MLA, I was driving a big SUV. I learned because of my constituency that I couldn't keep driving that vehicle. It was just drinking away the gas, so I had to really consider going towards a smaller car. (Interruption) One minute - oh, gosh.

What we can do is give hope to our children. Tomorrow at noon in Mahone Bay - we will probably still be sitting here - but we are ringing the bells of the three churches in Mahone Bay: Trinity, St. John's, and St. James. We are ringing them for climate change, but to me they are ringing for hope: the hope that all of us are going to give the youth of this city, this province, this country, and this world.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. The time allotted for the emergency debate has expired.

The House now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.

[The House rose at 4:56 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1215**

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas G.W. Allen Nursery Ltd. specializes in the production of high quality, inspected strawberry plants and raspberry canes; and

Whereas Gilbert Allen of G.W. Allen Nursery Ltd. is an outstanding farmer, honorary lifetime Horticulture Nova Scotia member, and great contributor to the farming industry; and

Whereas Gilbert Allen was nominated by Horticulture Nova Scotia and selected as the 2019 Nova Scotia inductee into the Atlantic Agriculture Hall of Fame;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Gilbert Allen for being selected and wish him well at the induction ceremony celebrating his life-long achievements on October 17, 2019.