



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2019

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2019

Sixty-third General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, Brendan Maguire

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause being:

“We, the undersign [sic] ask and request the Government of Nova Scotia, in particular the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to maintain and follow through on chip sealing the Loch Broom Loop road beginning in 2020 and following years until completion.”

Mr. Speaker, I have affixed my signature, along with the 97 other signatures.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Cape Breton-Richmond.

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause being:

“We the Residents and friends of Port Royal, St. Mary’s and Janvrin’s Island would like to protest the state of our roads. They are very dangerous with coastal erosion, missing or damaged guard rails, no shoulder in places and are in generally poor condition. We, the undersigned, ask the Government and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to recognize and prioritize our roads and repair them before someone is hurt or killed.”

Mr. Speaker, there are 750 people who have affixed their signatures to this petition; I have affixed my name. I would ask that the House accept it on behalf of the people of my community.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

THE SPEAKER: As Speaker of the House of Assembly and pursuant to Subsection 24(1) of the Ombudsman Act and Section 28 of the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act, I am pleased to table the annual report for the Office of the Ombudsman for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019.

The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 1227

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

Whereas Treaty Day on October 1st each year marks the beginning of Mi’kmaq History Month in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the purpose of Mi'kmaq History Month is to promote public awareness about the Mi'kmaw culture and heritage for all citizens of Nova Scotia; and

Whereas this year's poster promotes "Let's Speak Mi'kmaw," and numerous events throughout the month recognize the importance of the Mi'kmaw language;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature recognize October 2019 as Mi'kmaq History Month in the Province of Nova Scotia.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

RESOLUTION NO. 1228

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

Whereas October is Learning Disabilities Awareness Month, which helps reduce the stigma for people with learning disabilities; and

Whereas this month provides an opportunity to increase awareness about the need for people to get the supports they require to reach their full potential; and

Whereas Nova Scotia now has its first inclusive education policy, which provides guidelines on education and student supports, and describes what all partners in education will be working towards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature recognize October as Learning Disabilities Month and also recognize the importance of removing barriers to success for those with learning disabilities.

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 Deputy Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 1229

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

Whereas for 33 years we have been celebrating Treaty Day to honour the holistic and historic relationship between the Crown and the Mi'kmaq; and

Whereas coming together on this day in peace and friendship is a great opportunity to reflect on our shared history and celebrate our relationship; and

Whereas 2019 is the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages, and Nova Scotia is continuing to work on the revitalization of the Mi'kmaw language in the province;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize October 1, 2019, as Treaty Day in the Province of Nova Scotia.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act.

RESOLUTION NO. 1230

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

Whereas October is Women's History Month, a time to celebrate the achievements of Nova Scotians who identify as women, and to look ahead at the work that must continue in order to achieve gender equality within our diverse communities; and

Whereas this month is an opportunity to talk about how we can continue to advance gender equality, support safety, and foster economic growth that benefits the whole province; and

Whereas this year's theme, "Make an Impact," honours women pioneers of our past, like First Nations activist and teacher Anna Mae Aquash, Canada's first woman police officer Rose Fortune, and women's rights activist Muriel Duckworth;

Therefore be it resolved the members of this House of Assembly recognize that women, girls, and gender-diverse Nova Scotians are key drivers of Nova Scotia's future and we all have a role to play in ensuring Nova Scotia is an inclusive and safe place to live for people of all gender identities.

[1:15 p.m.]

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

KELLY REGAN: I would draw the members' attention to East Gallery where I would like to introduce some special guests from the Department of Community Services.

With us today are: Pam Aucoin, Director of Income Assistance; Alaa George, Director of Solutions and Support; Tracy Embrett, Director of Service Delivery for the Central Region; Catherine Meaney, Employment Support and Income Assistance Transformation Unit Team Member; and Colleen Hooper, the Director of Financial Operations and Risk.

I would ask the members of this House to join me in giving our guests a warm welcome. (Applause.)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 1231

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

Whereas yesterday, employees from the Department of Community Services received the Premier's Award of Excellence for their work on the free annual bus pass program for income assistance clients and their families in the Halifax Regional Municipality; and

Whereas more than 10,000 people have registered for this unlimited access to public transit which ensures they can participate in society and attend appointments; and

Whereas the Award recipients, along with many other departmental staff, have shown leadership and a willingness to go the extra mile for clients by developing a program that is inclusive and provides vulnerable Nova Scotians with the support they need to thrive;

Therefore be it resolved all members of this Legislature recognize these innovative civil servants for their service to Nova Scotians and offer congratulations on their well-deserved Premier's Award of Excellence.

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 Government House Leader.

RESOLUTION NO. 1232

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

Whereas on September 30, 2019, three current members and one recently retired staff member of the Nova Scotia Legislature will receive Long Service Awards; and

Whereas Paul Read and Anne Van Iderstine will receive Long Service Awards for 25 years, Angela Cromwell for 30 years, and Colleen Denomme for 35 years; and

Whereas this group of dedicated civil servants continue to ensure successful operation through their respective roles with Legislative Television and Broadcasting Services, the Legislative Library Services, and Hansard Reporting Services;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Paul Read, Anne Van Iderstine, Angela Cromwell, and Colleen Denomme on receiving their Long Service Awards from the Province of Nova Scotia in recognition of their outstanding and dedicated service to the province.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

RANDY DELOREY: I direct my colleagues' attention to the East Gallery where we have some guests joining us today: Lana Randall and Kelly Cull with Canadian Cancer Society; and Judie Edgar, a two-time breast cancer survivor and active volunteer with

Canadian Cancer Society. I'd ask my colleagues to please give them a warm welcome of the House. (Applause.)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1233

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

Whereas one in every eight women in Nova Scotia will develop breast cancer in her lifetime, making it the most commonly diagnosed cancer; and

Whereas important services like the Nova Scotia Breast Screening Program are essential for early detection and diagnosis and help increase the chances of successful treatment for many women; and

Whereas October is Breast Cancer Awareness month and offers us all the opportunity to raise awareness, take action for breast health, and thank the many dedicated health care providers and advocates for the important work they do;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House acknowledge October as Breast Cancer Awareness month and do what they can to support this important cause.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Seniors.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, can I make an introduction, please?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

LEO GLAVINE: I'd like to draw your attention to the East Gallery where we have Bill Berryman today, who is Chair of the Group of IX Seniors' Advisory Council of Nova Scotia, a wonderful advocacy group in the province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Seniors.

RESOLUTION NO. 1234

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

Whereas October 1st is National Seniors Day and International Day of Older Persons whereby we recognize and celebrate the significant contributions that older Nova Scotians have made and continue to make to their communities; and

Whereas the 2019 theme of International Day of Older Persons is the journey to age equality resonating with the Government of Nova Scotia and Department of Seniors' SHIFT action plan focusing on reframing the discussions on aging by leading a shift in thinking and in practice that values, promotes, and supports the fact that diverse older Nova Scotians make our province a better place to live; and

Whereas we encourage all Nova Scotians to take the time - especially today - to reach out, to connect with, and thank a senior;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge National Seniors Day and International Day of Older Persons by recognizing the important impact older Nova Scotians have made and continue to make in 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.

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. CHUCK PORTER: Permission to make an introduction, Mr. Speaker?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

CHUCK PORTER: I would like to ask Andrew Paton, who is with us today in the East Gallery, to rise. Andrew is just celebrating his retirement. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 1235

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

Whereas public service is a high calling that requires a great deal of dedication, commitment, and hard work; and

Whereas Andrew Paton has been a solid leader at Municipal Affairs and Housing, mentoring new planners and others entering the department, answering questions and through his careful work, demonstrating what excellence and public safety looks like; and

Whereas Andrew recently retired from his job at Municipal Affairs and Housing after almost 42 years with the provincial government;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this Legislature join me in thanking Andrew Paton for his dedication and service on behalf of Nova Scotians and wish him the very best in his retirement.

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 the Public Service.

RESOLUTION NO. 1236

HON. TONY INCE: On behalf of Premier Stephen McNeil, MLA for Annapolis, Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas yesterday, September 30th, three individuals and three groups received the Premier's Award of Excellence, which is the most prestigious award in government; and

Whereas we are always striving to do better and to deliver the highest quality programs and services to Nova Scotian families, communities, and businesses; and

Whereas that is why it is important to take the time to recognize employees who go above and beyond to demonstrate the courage to step into new territory to achieve their goals;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate these employees and all civil servants across the province who worked tirelessly to serve the citizens of Nova Scotia.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Immigration and Acadian Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 1237

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

Attendu que partout dans le monde, les spécialistes des langues jouent un rôle majeur dans l'établissement des liens entre les nations et dans la promotion de la paix, de la compréhension, et du développement; et

Attendue que le 30 septembre a été déclaré Journée mondiale de la traduction par les Nations Unies; et

Attendue que le gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Écosse continue de s'appuyer sur le travail et le dévouement d'une équipe de traducteurs professionnels dédiés pour permettre l'accès gouvernementaux à nos communautés acadiennes et francophones;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les membres de l'Assemblée législative se joignent à moi pour remercier tous les traducteurs de la Nouvelle-Écosse et reconnaître l'importance de leur travail pour permettre au Néo-Écossais de mieux se comprendre, d'avoir accès aux services dont ils ont besoin, et de participer pleinement à la vie de notre province.

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

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

Whereas around the world, language professionals play a major role in connecting nations and fostering peace, understanding, and development; and

Whereas September 30th was declared International Translation Day by the United Nations; and

Whereas the Government of Nova Scotia continues to rely on the work and dedication of a devoted team of professional translators to make government services available to our Acadian and francophone communities;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in thanking all translators across Nova Scotia and acknowledge the importance of their work in allowing Nova Scotians to better understand each other, access the services they need, and participate in the life of 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.

The honourable Minister of the Public Service Commission.

RESOLUTION NO. 1238

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

Whereas yesterday, September 30th, more than 300 Nova Scotian government employees received a Long-Service Award for 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, and even 50 years of service to the province - an incredible achievement; and

Whereas there are more than 10,000 employees within the province committed to serving the citizens of Nova Scotia over many years; and

Whereas across the province, government employees are providing families, businesses, and communities with the programs and services they rely on day in and day out;

Therefore be it resolved that the Nova Scotia Legislature congratulate these long-service employees and all civil servants in the province who work tirelessly to serve the citizens of Nova Scotia.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 1239

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

Whereas from May 17th - 26th, Halifax played host to the 2019 Memorial Cup, which saw the top four teams from the Canadian Hockey League compete and the Rouyn-Noranda Huskies become the 101st champions of the coveted Memorial Cup; and

Whereas several celebratory events occurred, including the official arrival of the Memorial Cup on the HMCS *Sackville*, an opening ceremony and dinner, a military appreciation tour, fan fest, and a street fest that saw over 15,000 people in attendance, showcasing 17 Nova Scotian artists; and

Whereas the Halifax Mooseheads Hockey Club, key sponsors, and the 2019 Memorial Cup Host Committee did a superb job of organizing welcoming teams and over 79,000 spectators and sharing our second-to-none maritime hospitality, which led to a significant economic impact for our province;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating the Rouyn-Noranda Huskies and thanking the host committee, sponsors, and Mooseheads Hockey Club for hosting what the Canadian Hockey League has described as the best Memorial Cup of all time, once again displaying that Nova Scotia, the birthplace of hockey, is a leading destination as the host of major events.

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.

[1:30 p.m.]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 163 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 27 of the Acts of 1998. The Wilderness Areas Protection Act. (Hon. Gordon Wilson)

Bill No. 164 - Entitled an Act Respecting Funding of Sports Stadiums. (Susan Leblanc)

Bill No. 165 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 8 of the Acts of 1990. The Emergency Management Act, Respecting Emergency Management and Telecommunications. (Claudia Chender)

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

TREATY DAY: OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN - RECOG.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Treaty Day, an important day for all of Nova Scotia. It's an opportunity to sit back and reflect on the importance of the treaty relationship and to celebrate the achievements and leadership of the Mi'kmaw community. Treaty Day began in 1986 with the signing of the proclamation by then Grand Chief Donald Marshall, Sr., but we have been proud of our strong, productive, and respectful working relationship with Mi'kmaw people for much longer than that.

I hope everyone takes the opportunity to participate in one of many Treaty Day activities going on in Halifax today and to learn more about the Mi'kmaw culture.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

TREATY DAY: BUILDING A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP - RECOG.

LISA ROBERTS: Kwe'. On this Treaty Day, I am glad to stand and celebrate our relationship with the Mi'kmaq, on whose unceded and ancestral land we stand, and to recommit to the ongoing responsibility of all treaty people to build a healthy relationship of mutual respect and caring. Today is also a time to acknowledge how the treaties of peace and friendship have been broken, notably through the policy of centralization and the long period of residential schools.

Indeed, Treaty Day in Nova Scotia follows hard on Orange Shirt Day, a day set aside to remember all the children who survived residential schools in Canada and the more than 3,000 who did not. Last night on Native Twitter, I was privileged to read Mi'kmaw contemporaries of mine reflecting on their experience of being parented by residential school survivors. That history is still very present and very painful. Mesgei.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

WHITMAN, LORRAINE - PRES.: NTL. NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOC. - RECOG.

KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise on Treaty Day, and the beginning of Mi'kmaq Heritage Month, to recognize Lorraine Whitman from Glooscap First Nation in Kings County, who has dedicated her life's work to serving and advocating for First Nations and Métis women and girls.

Ms. Whitman's achievements include serving as President of the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association and 15 years as an elected band councillor. In addition to this

active political life, Ms. Whitman has been an innovative entrepreneur who developed a greenhouse business, a fair trade coffee company, and created the eagle feather holders that distinguish our courts in Nova Scotia.

Recently, Lorraine was elected President of the National Native Women's Association of Canada, where she hopes to advance the goals of unifying nation-to-nation relations and fostering economic development.

I invite all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Lorraine on her recent election and for her lifelong commitment to fostering the well-being of First Nations and Métis women and girls.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, in the West Gallery - I'd like them to stand as I name them - are Sierra, Sophie, Gracie, Ella, Julia, Lily, Brooke, Emily, Allie, and Emma. They are here today with their parents and their coaches. I introduce the first-ever 12U all female baseball provincial team. (Standing Ovation)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

WILDCATS U12 GIRLS BASEBALL CHAMPS: MAKING HIST. - CONGRATS.

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate the Wildcats 12U all girls team on their recent win, giving them the title of the inaugural baseball Nova Scotia and 12U All Girls Championship.

Coaches Joe Reade, Ian Tapper, Blaine Weatherbee, and Jason Dickie - I hope I announced them right - were so proud of these hard-working girls they didn't seem to realize what history they had made in bringing the championship banner to Oxford for a very first-ever provincial title in Oxford.

The Oxford Wildcats are made up the girls throughout Nova Scotia's areas. The team consists of Julia Sharpe, Sierra Foley, Lily Dickey, Grace Weatherbee, Sophie Mazur, Emily McLellan, Ella Tapper, Addie Fisher, Brooke Hunsley, Emma Reade, and Allie Macdonald.

I ask the House to join me in congratulating the first-ever provincial under-12 girls team.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

PRASAD, DEEPAK - CPL.: LIFE-SAVING AWARD - COMMEND

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Corporal Deepak Prasad, an RCMP officer and new resident to the Timberlea-Prospect community.

On November 11, 2018, Corporal Deepak Prasad was marching in an Antigonish Remembrance Day ceremony when an elderly man collapsed in front of him. Several firefighters, who were also in attendance, performed CPR on the gentleman while Corporal Prasad used an automated external defibrillator (AED) from a local church until EHS arrived and took over the care of this patient.

The quick response, training, and skills of Corporal Prasad were actions that saved the life of this gentleman. On Saturday, May 25, 2019, the St. John Ambulance Investiture and Awards Ceremony honoured Corporal Prasad with a life-saving award at Government House.

I ask the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in thanking Corporal Prasad for his kindness and selfless act to save another person's life, and for his courage to act when the need was there.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, have I permission for an introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I'll ask all members of the House to direct their attention to the West Gallery where two constituents from Pictou Centre are with us here today: my sister Joan from Trenton, and Marie Bowden from New Glasgow. They are visiting the Legislature for the first time, and I'd ask all members to give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

ROSS, NICOLE: OPERA ACHIEVEMENTS - CONGRATS.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, Pictou County singer Nicole Ross placed second in vocal at the National Music Festival. Nicole is a graduate of North Nova Education Centre and has entered her third year at McGill University in Montreal. Ross specializes in opera singing and competed against other vocalists to finish second.

Her next goal is to complete her undergraduate degree, pursue a master's, and obtain an apprenticeship with an opera company. According to numerous mentors and music teachers from the local community, her success is not a surprise to them. They know she is extremely talented, dedicated, and committed to being the best.

I would like all members of this Legislature to join me and wish this very exceptional singer great success as she pursues a career in music.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: We have with us in the East Gallery Doreen and Reginald Crick, who are visiting us today. I have a wonderful member's statement for this amazing 85-year-old who wrote two books recently.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

CRICK, DOREEN: COM. INVOLVEMENT - CONGRATS.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, on Seniors Day I would like to recognize a wonderful constituent of mine, Doreen Crick. Doreen moved to Canada in 1967 from the Caribbean Leeward Islands during the country's centennial birthday. She was immediately employed as a nurse at a veterans' hospital and later went on to become the unit coordinator.

Doreen is an active member of my community. She is always delightful and shows positive energy to the people around her. Not only is she a grandmother herself but she's dedicated to helping other grandmothers who are affected by the disaster of AIDS in Africa.

Doreen is an exceptional volunteer and she was able to publish two books at the age of 85. Both books, *Seawater* and *The Beautiful Caribbean Rainbow Islands*, discuss slavery and colonialism. Both books are written to educate the youth. The message of her books helps youth to learn to build stronger communities with a smile, rather than pointing fingers.

I would like to congratulate Doreen on all she has accomplished. She is truly an inspiration to many, including myself.

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

**MACARTHUR, AUBREIGH:
ANGEL HAIR FOR KIDS DONATION - CONGRATS.**

BRIAN COMER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Miss Aubreigh MacArthur of Howie Centre after she recently donated her hair to Angel Hair for Kids. She made the donation during the Caleb's Courage Superhero Walk, Run or Fly fundraiser on September 15, 2019, which took place in Petersfield Park, Westmount.

This event is so close to the young girl's heart as her young brother Caleb passed away from cancer in 2015. This event takes place to raise money to assist families in Cape Breton who are dealing with this illness. Although this was the third time this 10-year-old girl cut her hair for a wig donation, it was the first time she asked people to sponsor her, and she raised \$3,500.

I stand here to congratulate Miss Aubreigh MacArthur on her donation and raising awareness for such a great cause. I want to wish her the best and all success in future endeavours.

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

CHEEMA AQUATIC CLUB: 50th ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to stand today to congratulate Cheema Aquatic Club on their 50th anniversary. It was 1969 when the club was formed, and over the last 50 years, it has put our community on the map on the national and international paddling stage - top paddling club in Canada three years in a row, and many international and Olympic champions.

A weekend celebration was held with the first inductees to the Cheema Hall of Fame being introduced, and the unveiling of the newly-named Frank Garner Boathouse.

I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating all the past and present members of Cheema. Best wishes on your continued success. Well done, Cheema.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

SEA CADETS: NTL. SAILING REGATTA AWARDS - CONGRATS.

STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize three sea cadets from the 305 Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps Sackville on their outstanding accomplishments during the National Sea Cadet Regatta in Kingston, Ontario, earlier in September.

Chief Petty Officer Second Class Drew Briand, Chief Petty Officer Second Class Matthew Stojak, and Petty Officer First Class Caitlin Taylor sailed alongside some of the

top sailors in Canada during this weeklong event. Out of the 25 teams that participated in this year's regatta, Chiefs Briand and Stojak placed 11th overall and Petty Officer Taylor placed 16th overall.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask all members of this House to congratulate these sea cadets on their accomplishments and wish for continued success in their future adventures.

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

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction, if I may.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

ALANA PAON: I would like to introduce a wonderful woman from my community, Yvonne Doucette, who is up there wearing an orange shirt today for Orange Shirt Day yesterday. She's a social worker and child welfare specialist with Mi'kmaw Family and Children's Services of Nova Scotia. She is also a supervisor for temporary care and custody.

She is a resident of the Potlotek First Nation, and she's also one of the 12 children of Jean and former Chief Noel Doucette. Chief Doucette was a residential school survivor in Shubenacadie.

I would like to welcome her. (Applause)

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

OPEN FARM DAY: NEW ROSS PARTICIPANTS - CONGRATS.

HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize September 15th as Open Farm Day across Nova Scotia, as well as to congratulate the Bar M Ranch and Meister Field and Forest, both of New Ross, for participating in this event.

Open Farm Day is a province-wide event held each year on the third Sunday of September and offers the opportunity for local farms to open their doors to the general public. Local farmers are an important pillar of our local economy.

Today more than ever, it is important for us to understand where our food comes from and to encourage folks to buy locally produced vegetables, fruits, herbs, and meat products wherever possible. Open Farm Day gives us the chance to meet the hardworking local farmers who put this bounty on our tables and support our food security.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the members of the House of Assembly to join me in recognizing and congratulating Bar M Ranch, Meister Field and Forest, and all our local farmers who participated in Open Farm Day and who provide us with nutritious food.

[1:45 p.m.]

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

MACLEOD, ALFIE: FUTURE ENDEAVOURS - BEST WISHES

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, “friends for life” is a term that you use when someone plays a major part in your life that you’re very, very grateful for. That is true of a very good friend, Alfie MacLeod, the former colleague of many of us here in this Chamber.

For 45 years, Alfie has dedicated his time to the PC Party of Nova Scotia and the constituents he served, but friendship goes beyond politics. It goes to the times of joy and sorrow, of plenty and want. Alfie and I have experienced both together. My wife, Chrissy, and Alfie’s wife, Shirley, have been bound much like the two of us.

Alfie will be moving on as he pursues federal office. I ask all members of this Legislature to join me in wishing Alfie well in this, the next chapter of his life.

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

TREATY DAY: AGENTS OF PROGRESS - BEST WISHES

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, today, October 1st, marks our annual Treaty Day in Nova Scotia and yesterday marked Orange Shirt Day, which brings awareness to residential schools and their survivors.

Acknowledgement of Treaty Day is celebrated throughout numerous Mi’kmaq communities with traditional dancing, drumming, speeches, and luncheons and educational lessons and activities like the signing of Friendship Treaties.

Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to take part in today’s flag raising ceremony and church service for Treaty Day in Halifax and I would like to congratulate Grand Chief Norman Sylliboy of Eskasoni as he journeys forward in his new role of leading the Mi’kmaq Grand Council.

I would also like to thank Chief Noel Doucette for tabling the successful motion at the Indian Advisory Council that led the way to the closing of the Shubenacadie Residential School. This was no small feat.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**MI'KMAW NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CTR.:
SERV. TO DARTMOUTH N. - THANKS**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, over the summer the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre bought a building just down the street from my constituency office in Dartmouth.

Though the centre is still undergoing renovations, this space will go a long way to meet the needs of urban Mi'kmaq and other First Nation peoples living throughout Dartmouth. Most in this House will be familiar with the amazing work that the Friendship Centre does in the North End of Halifax and beyond - programs in employment, education, health, justice, culture, language, and more.

Over the past several years, I have enjoyed visiting the centre with my children who take part in the Kids N Culture programming at the Mi'kmaq Child Development Centre.

On this Treaty Day, the first day of Mi'kmaq History Month in this province, I would like to say *wela'lin* to the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre for all of the excellent work it has done since opening its doors in 1973. I'm thrilled that the centre is now part of our community in Dartmouth North and I look forward to supporting the work done there in any way that I can.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

**WILSON, SALLY - ARTIST:
CHEBUCTO CONNECTIONS FUNDRAISING - THANKS**

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, Sally Wilson, a local artist, is using her art to help give back to the community. Sally, originally from Ontario, moved to the community of Spryfield a few years ago.

Sally is known for her bold, abstract paintings and has held sold-out shows right across Canada. Sally now has a studio on the second floor of the Chebucto Connections building in Spryfield and has an exhibit opening on October 3rd.

She is generously donating 30 per cent of the proceeds from her show to Chebucto Connections to help them offer more programs to the community. Her show, entitled *Coming Home*, is an expression of her feelings toward her new community.

Mr. Speaker, Sally has always recognized the importance of giving back to her community and through her support of Chebucto Connections, she's able to make a real difference in the lives of people who rely on the programs and services provided there.

I would like to thank Sally for her generous contributions to such an important organization and wish her happiness in her new home.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

BATSTONE, COLLEEN: E. DART. COM. CTR. - THANKS

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Colleen Batstone, facilities manager at the East Dartmouth Community Centre.

This centre opened its doors first as a Red Cross emergency shelter during Hurricane Dorian and then later as an HRM comfort shelter. Residents in Dartmouth East and surrounding areas were provided with warm food, a place to rest and charge their phones, and even get a shower. For many it took days before their lights came on at home, and the East Dartmouth Community Centre went a long way in putting the well-being of people first.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this House thank Colleen Batstone for the effort she put into these very important initiatives.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

MI'KMAW NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CTR.: SERV. TO HFX. COM. - THANKS

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, on this Treaty Day, I would like to acknowledge and express my appreciation for the work of the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre on Gottingen Street.

The Friendship Centre regularly makes its space available for all sorts of gatherings and constantly innovates to offer more services for the largest Indigenous community in Nova Scotia, which is in the Halifax area. It offers early childhood programming, laundry facilities, housing support, support for those looking to obtain a GED, and this year, a new program with Mount Saint Vincent University which will enable people to take first year credit classes at the Friendship Centre.

I am particularly grateful for how the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre has responded to needs in the community that are by no means exclusive to Indigenous people. This is how, for example, the opioid treatment program Direction 180 and the Needle Exchange program Mainline got their start, under the auspices of the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre. Wela'lin.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

**MATEUS BISTRO AND MA BELL'S:
MEALS DURING HURRICANE DORIAN - THANKS**

SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize three local business owners who joined forces to help provide a warm meal to those without power in the days following Hurricane Dorian.

On September 10th, Matt Krizan, owner of Mateus Bistro, located in Mahone Bay, provided warm meals to those left without power from the storm. Matt and his wife, Kira, served up veggie curry and chicken penne free of charge. Meredith Bell, owner of Ma Bell's Country Condiments, a local catering company, donated compostable takeout containers to the cause. This meant those without power could take home a warm meal with no worry of doing the dishes.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you and all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking these three business owners for providing a warm meal for those left without power from Hurricane Dorian.

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

**HENDERSON, TERRY/ROSS, AUSTIN:
BROOKFIELD MEN'S CLUB - RECOG.**

LARRY HARRISON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this year I had the honour of participating in the recognition of two residents of Brookfield, both members of the Brookfield Men's Club.

Terry Henderson was presented with a citation as he retired from a 42-year position as club secretary, a position his father, who was a founder of the club, had himself held for 40 years. Another member, Austin Ross, received the Eagle award for his many years of service dedicated to improving community life.

We must never forget the selfless hours that are given to our communities by committed volunteers. Without them, many of the services we take for granted would be unavailable or too costly to enjoy.

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Monsieur le Président, je me lève aujourd'hui pour une question de règlement. Le 27 septembre, au cours de la période de question, le député d'Argyle-Barrington a indiqué que le caucus libéral n'avait pas accepté de rencontrer la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, la FANE, au sujet du rapport de la Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales. J'aimerais clarifier les faits en tablant ces documents.

Comme l'Assemblée peut le voir, le bureau du caucus libéral a contacté la FANE par courrier électronique et par téléphone pour proposer un certain nombre de dates potentielles. Nous étions prêts à rencontrer la FANE aussitôt que juillet. Je crois comprendre, Monsieur le Président, qu'une date de réunion a été fixée pour ce mois-ci.

En tant que ministre, je suis fière de mon travail, et du travail de mes collègues du caucus, avec nos partenaires acadiens. Je rencontre régulièrement la FANE et plusieurs autres organismes acadiens. Ces partenariats ont donné lieu à de nombreuses initiatives passionnantes, telles que l'achat récent d'une nouvelle école pour le CSAP à Dartmouth, le soutien au quartier culturel de Chéticamp; et un plan d'action en matière d'immigration francophone, élaboré en concertation avec la FANE.

Mon soutien, notre soutien, aux Acadiens est clair.

On September 27th during Question Period, the member for Argyle-Barrington indicated that the Liberal caucus did not agree to meet with the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, la FANE, about the Electoral Boundaries Commission Report. I'd like to clarify the record and I've just tabled some documents. As the House will see, the Liberal caucus office contacted la FANE by email and by phone to propose a number of potential dates. We, as a caucus, were prepared to meet as early as July. I understand now a meeting has been set for this month.

As minister, I am proud of my work and the work of my Liberal colleagues with Acadian partners. I meet regularly with la FANE and many other Acadian organizations. This partnership has resulted in so many exciting initiatives, like the most recent purchase of a new school for CSAP in Dartmouth, support for quartier culturel de Chéticamp, the launch of a Francophone Immigration Action Plan developed in consultation with la FANE and so many more.

In fact, our support for Acadians is clear.

THE SPEAKER: I do want to thank the member for raising that. I'll take that point of order under advisement and come back to the House. It does give me an opportunity as Speaker to remind all members that multiple languages are spoken on the floor of the House which is perfectly permissible. But this particular Speaker only understands English fluently.

I would ask and remind all members that if you are asking a question in a language other than English or you are making a members' statement, or any words that are spoken on the floor of the House other than English are repeated immediately following in English for purposes of clarity for the Speaker and all members of the House to understand, as well as it would be very useful to table the translation of what was spoken to help our staff in Hansard for that. I do appreciate that. Thank you.

The honourable member for Pictou West.

**PORTER, GLADYS/COCHRAN, MAXINE:
WOMEN IN POLITICS - RECOG.**

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the first day of Women's History Month to celebrate two of the strong Progressive Conservative women who paved the way for the political landscape we see today. I want to recognize Gladys Porter, the first woman ever elected to the Legislature. In 1960 she proudly represented the Progressive Conservative Party and the people of Kings North.

I want to recognize Maxine Cochran, who served as the Minister of Transportation, making her the first female Cabinet Minister in our province's history. I want to recognize all the strong women here in this Chamber today who work hard to help improve our province. I am so grateful for every barrier that every female politician has ever broken down to make things more accessible for political women today and in the future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

TREATY DAY: INDIGENOUS GAMES IN N.S. - WELCOME

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Mi'kmaq Treaty Day. Today is the first day also of Mi'kmaq History Month and I hope we will all take these next few weeks to recognize the Indigenous roots of our province. One exciting upcoming event celebrating this history will be the 2020 North American Indigenous Games held here in Nova Scotia. This is the first time the Indigenous Games have ever been hosted in Atlantic Canada and it will be the largest multi-sport event ever to be hosted here in Nova Scotia, with 756 Indigenous nations competing in 15 different events.

We are very proud to be hosting the canoe/kayak events on Lake Banook in Dartmouth. Before it was a competitive sport, canoe was integral to Mi'kmaq way of life, culture and heritage and the water courses of Dartmouth, including Lake Banook, have a long history of Indigenous trade routes.

I hope all of you will join me next Summer in Dartmouth on the shores of beautiful Lake Banook.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge my constituency assistant and friend Martha MacQuarrie's candidacy in the federal election for the Kings-Hants region. Martha serves as the chair for the Landmark East Foundation, a director of the Kentville Rotary Club and an executive member of the Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia. Martha has worked hard for the people of Kings North in both her

professional and volunteer roles and I expect she will continue to do so for the people of Kings-Hants as a Member of Parliament. I would like to congratulate Martha on her candidacy and wish her . . .

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

[2:00 p.m.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: N.S.-TO-MAINE FERRY - UPDATE

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, typically around this time of year we would be asking the government to update the House on the Summer tourism season. Specifically, around this time of year, we would tend to ask the government about the passenger loads on the Nova Scotia-to-Maine ferry.

I'd like to ask the Premier today: Could the Premier provide the House with an update on the number of passengers who used the Cat ferry during the 2019 sailing season?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, thanks very much for the question from the Leader of the Official Opposition. The reality is, we have followed two consecutive record tourism seasons for the Province of Nova Scotia. The honourable member knows that the numbers put out more recently - for a period of time, the numbers were down about 2 per cent.

He would also know, his railing against the Yarmouth ferry - we've seen room nights down over 30 per cent since the ferry has not been operating, which is a clear indication of the important role that that service plays. It's unfortunate that the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party continues to go against those hard-working tourism operators who rely on that service.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, the answer is zero. The Premier can hide from many things, but he can't hide from that, that he's let the tourism operators down. We learned in March that Nova Scotians paid \$8.5 million to renovate a ferry terminal in Bar Harbor. In the last couple of days, we've come to learn that Nova Scotians have paid a subsidy of \$11.4 million for this season alone.

Can the Premier tell this House how much is being paid to Bay Ferries in management fees, and if that's included in the \$11.4 million?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. We continue to appreciate the relationship we've built with Bay Ferries. They've been an operator that's continued to provide service in the Yarmouth region and also the ferry in Digby. They have a global footprint where they provide services across the globe. How fortunate are we that a world-class operator continues to want to work in this province?

We're looking forward to ensuring that that service is up and going. We continue to support the tourism operators in southwestern Nova Scotia and across, no matter how much the Progressive Conservative Party continues to rail against the growth in tourism in this province.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is a former small-businessperson, and would realize how rare it is that a company could have \$11.4 million in revenue. Imagine how many tourism operators, how many companies around this province, are fortunate to have \$11.4 million in revenue. This is a company that has delivered no service to Nova Scotians and still received \$11.4 million.

Bay Ferries set the start of the season for June 21st. They've also set the close of the season for October 15th. That's just two weeks away. We've missed 103 sailing days, and yet taxpayers have paid \$20 million. That's almost \$200,000 for each and every day that the ferry didn't sail, that no passengers were moved.

Can the Premier tell this House: Will the ferry sail at all in 2019?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Despite the negativity of the Leader of the Official Opposition, the optimism that we see in southwestern Nova Scotia around the support of that ferry - and the reality is that we believe we have the right operator and we're going to the right community. We will continue to work with them to make sure that we support the tourism season. We saw what happened (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: We saw what happened (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I think the honourable member is suggesting that we're misleading the House. Let's talk about - the honourable member stood up in the House on September 27th and suggested that there are 985 FOIPOP's in this province. He

suggested that 562 were under review. That's absolutely false. There are 1985 FOIPOP's, only 63 related to government.

If the honourable member wants to start debating facts in this House, and who's misleading the House, check the record, Mr. Speaker - I think you spoke to him about that.

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

PREM. - NORTHERN PULP: COURT DECISION - COMMENT

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a couple of questions about Northern Pulp to the Premier. Two weeks ago, it was revealed in court proceedings in connection with the company that the province had entered into an agreement with Northern Pulp to pay hundreds of thousands, and perhaps considerably more, for costs associated with the company's environmental assessment. These are the Court's own words from the decision in that case, which I'll table:

Once the province approves under the funding agreements, would there be an about-face that denies approval under the Environment Act? Likely, the contractual approval would facilitate the statutory approvals.

Will the Premier acknowledge that the independence of the environmental assessment system has been brought into question by these payments to Northern Pulp?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. No, I would not. I want to tell the honourable member what happens. He knows we are closing Boat Harbour nine years, ten months early. We know there's a liability associated with that; we were in negotiations about that liability. The payment he is referring to is associated with that.

The reality of it is, what we did say to the company is that if they are not here operating, they are not going to use just the excuse of Boat Harbour being closed, and we would then have a very different discussion if they leave before that.

Mr. Speaker, the entire conversation was about our liability associated with Boat Harbour.

GARY BURRILL: In these same court-filed documents it was also revealed that it was a contractual stipulation of the province's payments to the company that Northern Pulp would keep these payments secret. The funding agreement, in fact - and I've just also tabled the same documents that this comes from, Mr. Speaker - says: Except as required by law, regulatory or judicial authority, Northern Pulp shall keep private and confidential and not make public or divulge this agreement.

Will the Premier then explain why his government insisted that its payments to the company be kept secret from the people of the province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I've said many times there's a liability associated with closing Boat Harbour early. The government would have a responsibility to deal with that liability. We knew that in 2015; we know that today.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to work with the company and the community about what the actual true cost of that liability will be, and we will continue to make sure that we meet all of the obligations associated with our role as government to that project.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, today on Treaty Day, we reflect solemnly on the 52 years through which the people of Pictou Landing have had to endure an endless stream of pollutive effluent running through their backyard. We reflect also with hope that it is only 121 days until Boat Harbour, by law, is closed.

Will the Premier take the occasion of this final Treaty Day before the Boat Harbour deadline, to unequivocally reaffirm that not one litre of Abercrombie effluent will flow into Boat Harbour after January 31, 2020?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member for the question. He would know the legislation put before this House, that there is a process ongoing around environmental assessment for the mill to meet. To my understanding there has been no application or approval; we're still moving towards January 31, 2020.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

TIR - YARMOUTH FERRY: MGMT. FEES - CLARIFY

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. The PC caucus learned from a FOIPOP application on the ferry file that under certain circumstances the operator has the opportunity to earn an additional management fee. This would be on top of the management fee they are earning for not moving the boat at all this summer, I guess.

My question for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is: Can he tell this House what might possibly trigger an additional management fee to the operator?

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. The PC Party's apparent opposition to this service grows with every sitting of the House. In April 2010, the tourism economy of this province was destabilized when the money for that service was removed by the government of the day. Further, it was additional

destabilized when the ill-fated Nova Star service was put in place by the government of the day

We are committed to stabilizing this service. We know that it is very important for the people of Nova Scotia and of southwestern Nova Scotia, and we are committed to having it sail.

TIM HOUSTON: Apparently the commitment was that it didn't need to sail at all in 2019. That's not supporting the tourism industry. This entire government has let the tourism industry down.

I didn't hear an answer on what the trigger might be. It's entirely possible, because I have watched the minister's management of this file, that he just doesn't know. He should know.

There's \$11.4 million in an operating subsidy for a ferry that isn't operating and probably won't operate at all this year. That's just the subsidy as it stands today, without any additional management fee on top of that, and now we know the operator is somehow entitled to earn an additional management fee. This is the type of mismanagement that happens when the government takes their eyes off a file.

Can the minister at least tell this House if the operator is eligible for any additional management fee this year and if they have or will receive that additional fee?

THE PREMIER: Again, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition has called into question the integrity of a minister. I want to remind him again - he did this last week. There were 1,985 FOIPOP's and only 63 that went back related to government, not the 562 that he said.

I want you to check the record again, Mr. Speaker. Who in this House has been told they misled the House and had to apologize? It has not been the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. It has been the Leader of the Official Opposition. Just put it on the record.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

PREM.: STADIUM PROPOSAL - COMMENT

SUSAN LEBLANC: My question is for the Premier. Last week, Halifax Council released a proposal for a sports stadium in Shannon Park, submitted by Schooner Sports and Entertainment. One of the funding assumptions included in the report is payments from the government of Nova Scotia in the range of \$3 million to \$4 million per year for 30 years, or up to \$120 million. Is this a cost the Premier is prepared to pay?

THE PREMIER: She is correct, Mr. Speaker. There has been a proposal put before HRM Council. They're reviewing that. We as a government have also received that. I haven't seen the proposal myself.

What I have been on the record as saying is that there will be no general revenue going into that sports stadium. I did say that if there are other revenue sources - and I believe the report indicates there are a couple of other potential possibilities - we would look at those in the totality of the economic footprint of what it might do.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has said many times that he could create new revenue streams to support building a stadium. If there is new money to be found, the people of Dartmouth North need affordable housing, not a stadium.

Between 2014 and 2017, rents in the HRM rose by 19 per cent, outpacing any increase in incomes. The proposal provided to Halifax Council points out that a stadium could in fact make housing in that area more expensive.

Will the Premier agree that it would be better to spend \$120 million to help the one in five households in HRM that are struggling to pay the rent than on a stadium?

THE PREMIER: We continue year after year to spend money on affordable housing. We will continue to do so to make that investment. She would know we continue to see employment opportunities, job creation for citizens across the province. Our unemployment rate is at an all-time low. More young people are coming back into this province.

The honourable member is right in her position that we need to continue to invest in affordable housing. We need to continue to invest in health care. But we also need to drive the economy of this province and work with the private sector. When we see an economic opportunity come to this province, it is the responsibility of the government, if they're being asked to partner with that, to do an assessment of that and look at the overall economic footprint.

The New Democratic Party is opposed to growing the footprint of the economic future of this province. We saw what happened, Mr. Speaker, when they were in power. The economy got ignored. More people left. What we're seeing now is unemployment going down and more people coming. We're on the right track, and we'll look at all economic opportunities.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

[2:15 p.m.]

TIR - BAY FERRIES: CREW - STATUS

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal or the Premier, whichever one wants to give the same talking points.

The Minister of Business has said that they have the best possible option for operating this ferry on the planet - the best operator on the planet. If I were a shareholder I'd probably agree - \$11.4 million and not one single customer. The ferry was slated to begin on June 21st, later postponed to July 7th, then again to July 15th, and ultimately postponed maybe indefinitely.

The government has said as recently as September 12th though that they're still hoping for at least one crossing. My question for the minister is: How has Bay Ferries managed its crew, have they been kept on standby or have they been laid off?

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, the costs associated with maintaining the service are baked into the arrangements that we have with the company in terms of how the service operates. It has been made public at Public Accounts; all the expenditures associated with this service are made available to the public through that process.

TIM HOUSTON: Obviously, there are a lot of costs baked into this. The boat hasn't moved once and it's \$11.4 million; we have to go to court to figure out exactly how much is baked into that cake. I believe the ferry has made possibly one empty run to Bar Harbor, but we have previously learned that the crew of the Cat is, by law, an entirely American crew.

The ferry has been in Yarmouth for virtually the entire "not" sailing season. With an American-based crew and a ship in Canada, one is left to wonder where these crew members are staying the entire time. I'd like to ask the minister: Can the minister clarify for this House whether the crew has been staying in Yarmouth or whether Bay Ferries has been flying them back and forth?

THE PREMIER: In the preamble of the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, he said you had to go to court to find the information. The reality is that every penny that has been spent on the Yarmouth to Bar Harbor ferry has been documented for the public to see. That is misleading the House, once again.

What he's talking about, let's be clear, is that the Progressive Conservative Party is taking a private company to court to destabilize their competitive place in the global marketplace, that's what he's talking about. Every dime that has been spent on that service

has been made public in Public Accounts to the people of Nova Scotia, not as the Leader just described.

THE SPEAKER: On a new question, the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

TIR - YARMOUTH FERRY: SAILING SEASON - RESPONSIBILITY

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, at some point the government's going to have to look in the mirror on this particular file and take some accountability and accept some responsibility for an entire sailing season missed, at the cost of \$20 million.

Documents disclosed in a FOIPOP indicate that someone - may have been the operator, may have been the government, and because it was redacted, we couldn't tell - asked for an extension of the option to return to Portland. Despite having been in contact with Bar Harbor from as early as June 2018, Bay Ferries was still asking Portland as late as January 2019 if they could go back. Obviously, it was clear in January that the ball was being dropped in Bar Harbor, and they knew that since June before.

My question for the minister is: Clearly things have not progressed between June 2018 and January 2019, so why did he ever believe that there was any chance for the boat to sail this season?

THE PREMIER: The Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party is making a big assumption. At the beginning of his question, he said he didn't know and then he related that comment to Bay Ferries. The answer to the question is that he doesn't know; he's making a big stretch. Let's be accurate if he's going to ask questions in the House of Assembly.

TIM HOUSTON: A little bit of accuracy in the answers would go a long way. Somebody redacted it; somebody knew in June and in January and in November between that there was a big problem with Bar Harbor.

This government likes to push that failure on everybody but themselves; certainly not the best possible operator on the planet, they can't be responsible for anything. First it was the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol; then it was Donald Trump's shutdown; then it was Portland, because they wouldn't let them back in. There has been lots of blame being pointed all around.

The reality is that the 2019 season was in jeopardy as early as June 2018 and the extension requests to Portland are evidence of that. My question for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is: Can you tell this House who is actually responsible for an entire missed sailing season?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, for accuracy, that ferry was never returning to Portland. The reality is there were changes when it came to border security, border security on both borders, the one in the southern tip of the U.S. and the northern border, related to us. It impacted Portland. They did not want that ferry service into Portland, they were clear about that.

We've entered into a relationship with Bar Harbor, but let's be accurate. Let's make sure that when the honourable member stands up that he at least tries to put the facts on the table.

THE SPEAKER: On a new question, the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

TIR - YARMOUTH FERRY: PROJECT OVERSIGHT - PLANS/ANALYSES

TIM HOUSTON: Pretty rich, Mr. Speaker, pretty rich. It is becoming increasingly difficult to get any kind of an answer from this government on the ferry file. The minister and the Premier seem only interested in parroting the talking points that they think will get them out of a jam at that particular moment. There is little indication of any meaningful oversight on this file. I can't see that anyone is overseeing this file.

My question for the minister is: When Bay Ferries Limited came to him on June 7th and said they were cancelling reservations up to July 7th, did the minister ask for a detailed project plan or any information that would give him comfort that the season would, in fact, start on July 7th?

HON. LLOYD HINES: I'm sure that my learned colleague on the other side, with his training, would understand that of course intensive financial analyses are being done constantly around this file. All aspects of the service are being analyzed.

The only thing that has been constant throughout this debate over the last number of years has been the opposition to this service and to the people of southwest Nova Scotia by the Party opposite.

TIM HOUSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, despite the intense analysis that was, of course, being done by this government, just two weeks later the plan went off the rails yet again. The operator came back and said - the government agreed, or whatever the case may be - that it wasn't going to be July 7th. It was then being pushed to July 18th.

My question for the minister is: Despite the obvious intensive analysis that was done just two weeks before, when the operator came back yet again and said there's yet another delay, did the minister ask for any information that would give him comfort that this time it might actually sail on July 18th, as he was being instructed? Was there any analysis at that time?

LLOYD HINES: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: On a new question, the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

TIR - YARMOUTH FERRY: BAR HARBOR TERMINAL - WORK STATUS

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, that's sad, because a week later, yet again the sailing season was postponed, this time indefinitely - three times in a row. This government said, despite their intense analysis, it continued to be delayed.

It's not good enough - \$20 million of taxpayer money, it is not good enough. If the minister would have asked the correct questions way back in early July when the first postponement was coming, tourism operators might have had a chance as they looked at their season, whether to staff up. They might have had some insight as to where this was going.

My question for the minister is: When was the last time the minister actually went to Bar Harbor to see how much work is left on the Bar Harbor terminal building?

HON. LLOYD HINES: We have officials at Bar Harbor continuously. We have a third-party consultant who has been hired throughout the whole process to monitor the project as it is moved forward. We have complete faith in Bay Ferries and their ability to manage that file and to create the sustainable service that is going to serve Nova Scotia for decades into the future.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. It's becoming increasingly agitating to listen to the responses from this government on this file. On one hand, there's a \$1.75 million announcement on the eve of a by-election, and four Cabinet Ministers show up. On the other hand, we have \$20 million of taxpayer money, and nobody is going down to check on it. The minister is looking at video. An \$11.4 million subsidy for the season with nothing to show for it, not one passenger, not one room night sold, not one Nova Scotian job - it's an utter failure to manage this file.

I would like to ask the Premier: Does the Premier think his minister has done an adequate job in safeguarding \$20 million of public money?

THE PREMEIR: Mr. Speaker, if the honourable member asks a question, he should listen to the answer. The Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal has just said we have officials down there. The deputy minister is down there. Other members of our TIR staff have been down there multiple times to look at this project as we continue to see this project go forward.

I understand that the question might have been written to him before he started to ask it, but the reality is that he should listen to the answer that is provided.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

MUN. AFFS. - HOUSING MARKET: RENTALS (SHORT-TERM) - REGULATE

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. In my office, I have heard from people who have faced rent increases large enough to force them to move, only to learn afterwards that the landlord has turned their old home into a more profitable Airbnb. I hear from people looking for housing who are considering exorbitantly priced basement apartments in neighbourhoods where they have never before considered living because Airbnbs have eaten into the residential rental stock. In conversations with municipal leaders across the province, I've heard that tourism workers are having a hard time finding a place to live. It's clear to me that we have waited too long to regulate.

Mr. Speaker, when will this government regulate short-term rentals and return some much-needed fairness to the housing market in Nova Scotia?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, this government believes that every Nova Scotian deserves a safe and affordable place to call home. As the member and all members of this House may be aware, we just signed off on the National Housing Strategy in August. That is worth more than \$400 million in the next decade to this province. We will continue to invest in a variety of ways to meet the housing needs of all Nova Scotians.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, none of those units through that national housing agreement are going to make a difference for families looking for housing now in our communities. Nova Scotians are in a housing crisis. Across the province, short-term rentals are one factor that has reduced the rental housing stock available for residents, for families, for our constituents. We need strong regulations to curb this impact on our communities so that Nova Scotians are still able to find a place to live that they can afford.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell Nova Scotians how the impending regulations will bring properties back into the long-term rental market?

CHUCK PORTER: The National Housing Strategy will indeed have a large impact on where we are going into the future. There's more than \$400 million being invested this year, in the action plan alone, \$88 million being invested between the two levels of government with an additional \$70 million being invested by the province alone. This will help more than 5,500 households in Nova Scotia.

Last year, more than 500 new rent supplements were assigned to individuals. We'll be talking about more of those in the coming years, and we'll be doing all we can to assist those right across this province looking for housing.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

TIR - YARMOUTH/SHELBURNE COUNTIES: BUS. OPERATORS - IMPACTS

COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, during the recent by-election in Argyle-Barrington, the Liberal candidate was adamant in stating that only this government could protect tourism in the Yarmouth and Acadian Shores area. We learned last week that they might need to work a little bit harder in protecting tourism providers.

In July, licensed room nights sold in the area were down 29 per cent over July 2018 compared to an overall provincial decline of 1 per cent. Year-to-date room nights in the area to the end of July 2019 were down 22 per cent compared to the provincial decline of 2 per cent.

My question for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is: Why are business operators in Yarmouth County and Shelburne County being left to shoulder the fallout of this government's mismanagement?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Obviously, the impact of the Yarmouth to Bar Harbor to Portland ferry has had a significant effect on the operators down in the South Shore, and quite frankly, all regions of Nova Scotia, including Cape Breton.

[2:30 p.m.]

This is why, from day one - from the beginning - we fought for the ferry before we were in government. We fought to correct what happened with the *Nova Star* and the mess that that made. We do have the best operator. We've worked tirelessly to get the best agreement and the best possible situation.

What has happened is certainly regrettable, Mr. Speaker. We want the ferry to be running. Jump with us, get in line, and let's make sure that ferry has a great season in 2020.

COLTON LEBLANC: In July, the *Yarmouth County Vanguard* ran an article with the headline "Ferry delay impacting Yarmouth tourism stakeholders heavily." In it, the owner of the Lakelawn B&B and Motel in Yarmouth stated that 80 per cent of his business had been cancelled through early July. The owner of the Best Western in Yarmouth called the impact of the lost ferry "devastating." The owner of MacKinnon-Cann Inn said the situation was "depressing" and that the inn was forced to refund multiple cancelled reservations.

I will table all of this for the government side - the self-appointed sole protectors of tourism in Yarmouth.

My question again is: Can these operators expect some support or is the ferry the only business that isn't allowed to lose money?

GEOFF MACLELLAN: I thank the member for the question. Without question, without a second of hesitation, I'm very proud of our economic record for rebuilding the economy of Nova Scotia here.

I know that this is a serious question from the member, and it is for all members of this Legislature. We know that tourism is an economic pillar for this province. That's why we've invested more than any government and are leading the federation in the work for direct flights.

That's why we invest directly in tourism icons. That's why we've supported Tourism Nova Scotia through robust marketing. That's why we'll continue to support a strong Yarmouth ferry service, because when that service goes, it impacts all tourism operators in Nova Scotia positively.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

H&W - VAPING DEVICES: CONSULT. - CONCLUSIONS

KARLA MACFARLANE: Last Fall, we asked this government if a new nicotine-vaping product sweeping the United States was available here in Nova Scotia. The Minister of Justice indicated he wasn't sure, but that he would work with the Minister of Health and Wellness to review the issue and determine the availability of such products in Nova Scotia. I'll table that.

As concerns have grown in recent months over the long-term effects of vaping, I'd like to follow up and ask the Minister of Health and Wellness: What conclusions about nicotine-vaping devices were drawn from the sit-down meeting between him and his colleague?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for the question. Of course, both the department and all members in the Legislature have concerns with both smoking rates and the rise of vaping or e-cigarette use, in particular as it relates to our youth population.

We certainly know of concerns being raised about youth rates of smoking. We've seen this. The Chief Medical Officer of Health continues to evaluate and monitor to provide advice and recommendations about any future changes with respect to these products.

KARLA MACFARLANE: I thank the minister for his answer, although I don't think they actually met, which concerns me. As the minister would know, Health Canada issued an advisory on the weekend that warned Canadians on vaping products to monitor their symptoms for pulmonary illness.

This comes in the wake of increased media reports on severe pulmonary illness and even death related to vaping in the United States. This month, vaping-related hospitalizations were confirmed in Ontario, B.C., and Quebec, with other cases under review. I'll table that document. Yet when we raised this issue a year ago, there was little concern or awareness.

Does the minister now agree that this province is absolutely not immune to the growing vaping-related health problems we're seeing in other jurisdictions?

RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member opposite for bringing this topic to the floor - a topic of interest and concern not just for us on the floor of the Legislature but, I believe, for Nova Scotians more broadly.

Of course, the health concerns and these reports about respiratory illnesses that are occurring and being reported and investigated both throughout the United States and, more recently, a few cases here in Canada - I can assure the member that we do take this very seriously, collectively as a government. I can table this document. My colleague, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, is also engaging with public health nationally in terms of where their positioning is on regulation, changes in regulation. Through the Department of Public Health office they've engaged both their national partners but also engaging front-line health care professionals, providing advice and recommendation on how to monitor as well as report, so we can get an appreciation and understanding of what, if any, health impacts and respiratory illnesses are being derived in our province. That work is ongoing.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

EECD: VAPING PROD. - DISCOURAGE

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

The Lung Association of Nova Scotia reports that 37 per cent of our youth in Grades 7 through 12 have tried an e-cigarette at least once. That's a rate 61 per cent higher than the same rate among all Canadian students in the same grade range - and I'll table that.

A review of the Twitter account for the department returns not a single instance of the terms "vape", "vaping" or "e-cigarette". The extent of advocacy on the matter from the

largest Regional Education Centre in the province seems to be a two-page handout sheet distributed to parents - and I'll table that as well.

My question is this: Does the minister feel that a handout sheet is a sufficient tool to discourage students from trying vaping products?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, as the member would know, vaping is not allowed on school property. It is punishable, including consequences up to suspension. We inform our students through our healthy curriculum on the dangers of vaping and we update that curriculum to make sure all the information is accurate.

This year we did reach out to parents as well to enhance the effort we're doing to inform our students of the dangers of vaping, so that students can not just have a conversation about this important situation in school but also at home with their parents.

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, the minister claims that the curriculum is helping students make healthy decisions about vaping, but a conversation with any of our principals will tell you that this is an ongoing problem at our schools and that clearly there's a disconnect. The outcomes that we have about vaping are clearly not helping some of our youth make healthy choices.

Medical professionals continuously warn us that we do not know the long-term effects of vaping. That's part of what's so concerning about these high rates of experimentation with the devices among youth. We know pneumonia-like symptoms have been reported among heavy vape users and manufacturers can freely advertise fun flavours that attract young customers.

When we previously asked the minister about this question, the question was brushed aside. My question now is: Will the minister admit that the department's response at this point is not sufficient in the face of a growing danger to young Nova Scotians?

ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, this question has never been brushed aside; this is a critical question for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, for the Department of Health and Wellness and, indeed, the entire government. We want our citizens, our students, to know the dangers of vaping. That's why in Education and Early Childhood Development we ensure that it's in our curriculum, we train our teachers on this very issue, and we're also bringing in parents to have a conversation here.

The best thing we can do in our education system is empower our students to make decisions for themselves. We can't control their decisions, but we have to be able to educate them so they can make the best decisions for their lives and their bodies.

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

H&W - COBEQUID HEALTH CTR.: PHYSIO. SHORTAGE - ACTION

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, the physiotherapy department at the Cobequid Community Health Centre currently has the largest wait-list in the province, numbering 771. This physiotherapy department has a catchment area that serves the area of Mount Uniacke, Stewiacke, Clayton Park, Rockingham and, of course, Sackville. It receives between 125 and 150 new referrals a month and has only four physiotherapists on staff to handle this new wait-list.

It's my understanding that in comparison, the Veterans Memorial building in Halifax sees less referral volume but has twice the physiotherapists on staff to handle their volume. My question to the minister: Will the minister commit to either hiring or reassigning additional physiotherapists to Cobequid to better address the growing wait-list?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's question. I think it's important to recognize the investments we've made as a government towards improving access to care, in particular as it relates to both pre and post-rehabilitation for those with joint issues and requiring surgery.

The orthopaedic strategy and the investments we've made there have seen an expansion of clinic supports and investments to ensure that people are prepared, have better outcomes based upon those services, and require less time in those rehabilitative services after their surgeries.

We continue to invest, looking at evaluating the entire system of delivering this type of care for all Nova Scotians in need.

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that new referrals received by Cobequid physiotherapy department are all assigned a category, depending on the patient's needs: urgent is within seven days; P1 is within one to two weeks; P2 could be between two and four weeks and generally it would probably be about four to eight weeks.

However, we are told by a constituent who was provided the classification of a P2, due to her chronic pain, it has now been over two years, not two to four weeks. The Cobequid Community Health Centre has informed them that it could be yet another two years until they get in.

Why is it that the department can't adhere to its own classification policy instead of making people wait for months and years?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's concern particularly being brought forward on behalf of a constituent. A few things to address in the question. First and foremost, it's not the department's policy or rating structure; it's part of the Nova

Scotia Health Authority. That's the operational arm that delivers the health care services in our communities across the province.

The Health Authority works to ensure that the health care services in our hospitals and in our communities throughout the province are being delivered.

What I would encourage the member, if he has a specific constituent with those concerns, that he raise it with the local site, he can certainly reach out to the Health Authority patient advocates who are available to help navigate the system and provide clarity. If that doesn't provide the appropriate resolution he can certainly bring up the conversation with me as well.

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

ENVIRON. - COASTAL INFRASTRUCTURE: DEPT. ROLE - DEFINE

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, last week we saw an emergency debate on climate change in this House and also in April 2019 we saw the Royal Assent of the Coastal Protection Act. The Act is supposed to be for preventing the development and activity in certain locations adjacent to the coast.

What I am really concerned about, Mr. Speaker, is the actual development that already exists there, in particular public infrastructure in the way of roads and bridges.

I would like to ask the Minister of Environment: What role does his department play, and does he play, in putting together a plan to make certain that our coastal infrastructure, that is publicly owned, is protected in the years to come?

HON. GORDON WILSON: I thank the member opposite for my questions here today. We first really want to recognize the fact that Nova Scotians certainly are leaders in climate change in the work that we are doing not only to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, but also, this work she has mentioned in coastal protection, is an extremely important part of mitigating those effects that are coming.

Yes, it is an emergency, we recognize that. I'm very proud of the work that we are doing collectively with the Department of Municipal Affairs in building the regulations around what that Act actually will touch on. In the future, as we roll those regulations out we'll certainly be able to provide that information. From what we hear from Nova Scotians as to what's important to them, and again, that's certainly an important part that we have in protecting Nova Scotia, which is in fact itself an island.

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to redirect my supplementary to the Minister of TIR. I already have an emergency, I can assure you, in my constituency and I am sure that I am not the only one who has. Any time we have a storm, like the hurricane we just

had, we have breakwaters that should be protecting our roadways - which are provincially owned - they are obviously a federal responsibility but at the end of the day if they are not kept in good working order it affects the coastal roadways. We have several situations in my constituency where roads are actually at risk of washing away with a storm surge.

Can I ask the minister please, what plan does he have in place in order to protect our transportation infrastructure as climate change obviously is becoming more and more of an emergency situation?

LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the question, so thank you to the member opposite for the question. It gives me an opportunity to publicly thank all the 2,200 employees of TIR who worked diligently providing relief during Dorian. I've received emails from across the province thanking the department for the selfless work that was done during the hurricane. I really want to thank our staff for doing that.

In terms of protecting our coastal resources and highways, that is something that we do constantly and also as the member might know, municipalities are responsible for having EMO plans for protecting their coastal areas.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

FIN. & TREASURY BRD.: FED. VAPING REGS. - REVENUE IMPACT

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. I refer to the letter that the Minister of Health and Wellness just tabled with respect to vaping. Does this suggest that the government is in fact concerned with the revenue impact of the future sale of cannabis vaping products, given the federal government in October of this year will be regulating that marketplace?

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, that couldn't be further from the truth. We've said here in this House that our main concern is the safety of youth and children and we continue to be driven by that. The request to the federal Minister of Health was for guidelines because through NSLC, we will be the retailer when other products come online and we wanted to raise the concern that is there both globally and locally with the health hazards of vaping. That was the intent of the question, and it was direction from the minister.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Well, Mr. Speaker, the first thing I would say is, if this government is concerned about the health impacts, why didn't the letter come from the Minister of Health and Wellness? The other point would be that if we look at the letter, there's no specific reference made to health - there is some concern about consumption of cannabis through vaping.

Mr. Speaker, it appears that the government is more interested in wanting to know if they can buy something so then retailers can resell it.

KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, there are three departments that work together closely on this side of the House with respect to cannabis and cannabis products: Justice, Health and Wellness, and Finance and Treasury Board. The federal Minister of Health and Health Canada set the guidelines for what products will be approved but, as the retailer in this province and as the person responsible for NSLC, it's important that I know what products will be approved for retail.

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

TIR - MOOSE RIVER ROAD: REPAIR WORK - UPDATE

LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. The Moose River Road in my constituency has been a hazardous road for a good many years to drive on. With the mine going in Moose River, of course this road was slated for repairs in 2018 and to be completed in 2019.

I know I have checked many times this Summer on the progress of the road, and I haven't seen any change from last year to this year. I've tried to ask why, and one of the reasons suggested was that the tender went in late.

If that's the case, could the minister explain to me that, so that I can then explain to my constituents what happened?

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member drawing attention to us tendering the longest continuous piece of paving that we have tendered this year in the province at 17 kilometers, all of which is in the member's constituency. You can rest assured that the contract has been rewarded and I believe the work started yesterday.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 152.

Bill No. 152 - Plastic Bags Reduction Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 152, the Plastic Bags Reduction Act, be now read a second time.

It's very appropriate that we are having this conversation now, just days after Friday's remarkable strike for climate action. Around the world, people are talking about climate action. They're talking about our environment and the need to protect it. They're telling us that this is a global emergency, and they're demanding action. Mr. Speaker, we agree.

Nova Scotians are leaders in reducing waste. We send 423 kilograms per capita to landfills per year. That is just about half the national average. Nova Scotians work hard to recycle. We have a successful recycling program for beverages and containers, and electronics. We recycle paint at enviro depots and compact fluorescent bulbs. This bill, Mr. Speaker, helps us move forward another step. It will ban single-use plastic checkout bags at retail outlets across the province, and it allows us to look at other single-use items in the future.

This will change the way we shop every day and the way we think when we go to the grocery store. It will reduce the amount of plastic in our landfills. It will also reduce litter in our waterways and our environment. There will be exceptions for dry-cleaning bags, for bulk items, and for food safety. We know businesses need time to prepare for it. If passed, this Act will give them one year.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is one of the actions we are taking to protect the environment. It will allow us to continue the very important conversations Nova Scotians are already having about more to protect the earth, wasting less, and moving forward.

I look forward to hearing the comments from my colleagues.

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

BRAD JOHNS: Our caucus is very glad to see that the government is bringing forward legislation to look at banning single-use plastic bags. In fact, I remember last sitting, our Leader actually asked the minister at the time if it was something that government was looking at and at that time was told no, they weren't. We certainly are glad to see that they have had a change of mind and that they have come back now bringing this legislation forward.

Ironically, we actually had a piece of legislation drafted as well that we were going to table on the floor the exact same day. However, the government brought theirs forward and ours became somewhat moot, so we withdrew that.

Mr. Speaker, although I do like this, I have some general comments I want to make. I do want to recognize and thank the government for listening to what municipalities across this province and myself, as well, have echoed time and again, which is trying to create uniformity across the province - this bill does that.

Instead of having a mishmash quilt of bylaws that each municipality has across the province on how to deal with single-use plastic bags, now at least all municipalities will be on an equal playing field - all businesses across this province. I think that this is certainly the best way to go for the consumer, the municipalities, and the province as a whole.

Where I do have some concerns is the long-term look. I know that at one point in time the minister had mentioned that this bill relied heavily on legislation that was passed in July in P.E.I., I think. When we looked at drafting the bill we were going to bring forward, we also relied on the P.E.I. bill and legislation in drafting that. I note that there's a number of differences between P.E.I. and what we were hoping to bring forward and what this current bill brings forward, so I did want to talk about a few of those.

One is that although this does unify municipalities across the province, in the long-term goal of unifying the Atlantic Provinces this will set Nova Scotia separately from P.E.I. I know there was discussion by a number of different people in different provinces and with the business associations - the hope was that there would be uniformity within the Atlantic Provinces, so regardless of where you went, there would be uniformity there too.

I do criticize that it isn't more in line with P.E.I.'s legislation. And to be more direct on that, one of the issues I have is that the P.E.I. legislation, although it does allow alternates to single-source plastic bags such as paper, does require residents or consumers to actually pay a small fee for those paper costs or for that paper bag. I think the justification for that is that businesses are not just handing out paper bags in lieu and are trying to actually encourage people to use recyclable cloth or recyclable plastic bags instead of single use or paper.

It has been shown in numerous studies, particularly done in Ottawa, that paper actually fills up a landfill quite a bit faster than plastic does. I would suggest as we move forward in this - there is a very interesting website called allaboutbags.ca. It does break down a lot of the legislations and explains why paper is not necessarily the way to go either. It takes four times as much water to create a paper bag as it does to create a plastic bag.

What the P.E.I. legislation did was put in a small fee on the paper bags, so it still provided the consumer who may have forgotten their recyclable bag an opportunity to have

a bag, but at the same time, it restricted businesses just giving out numerous paper bags in lieu of plastic.

I don't think that as a province what we want to do is shift people from plastic to paper. I remember back I guess in the 1970s and 1980s, we went from paper to plastic, so we don't want to shift people back to paper. What we want to do is encourage and provide incentives to people to move towards recyclable, reusable bags - whether those be cloth or plastic. That's the second concern I really had with this legislation: the un-uniformity against the Atlantic Provinces and no charges for those paper bags.

Having said that, I do appreciate this coming forward. I am sure we will have numerous people coming to Law Amendments Committee to talk about it, and I look forward to what they say. I am very optimistic when I hear the minister saying that he views this legislation as a first step in looking at banning and a way to deal with single-use plastics. Unfortunately, it doesn't address straws or Tim Hortons or other types of cup lids. It doesn't address water bottles, which certainly are single use, and a number of other items as well.

Hopefully this will be the first step and within the next months or years, we will see a bill or amendments coming back here that will address some of those single-use plastics as well.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll sit down. Once again, I certainly look forward to seeing and listening to what the public has to say in regards to this at Law Amendments Committee.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker. I'll just say a few brief things at this juncture on second reading to say that we welcome this legislation. Indeed, we were calling for something, and in fact brought forward something quite similar ourselves earlier.

I want to take this opportunity to highlight leadership coming from various quarters around the province. I think of the Freshmart in Ingonish where I shopped this summer when I was in Cape Breton, where they not only do not use grocery bags but they actually have someone who will help you carry out your groceries in a bin to the trunk of your car or put it in the back of your truck or what have you. There are no grocery bags there.

[3:00 p.m.]

I think of the municipal leaders across Nova Scotia who have been calling for a province-wide or even a region-wide approach recognizing that, in fact, that has also been called for by the Retail Council of Canada and that the Retail Council of Canada was welcoming and actually asking the province to take this step. Sometimes in this business I

lose track of the timing of things, but I know that it was certainly very evident in the last session, which was last winter.

We welcome this and we, as often is the case, wish that that work had happened a little bit sooner, but we'll certainly work with the government now. I'll say that at the level of my own constituency, I chose to work with the Prescott Group, which is a social enterprise in Halifax Needham that works with people with intellectual disabilities. They actually made for me some 900 beautiful canvas bags that can carry a ton of stuff and you can throw them in the wash and you can fold them up and throw them in your backpack or in your purse.

I've enjoyed and been glad to give those out to residents. At the same time, I feel like in my household - maybe I'll blame the kids - every time they do anything, if they run a race, if they get school supplies, if they participate in a camp, they come home with another bag.

I think we actually have to be looking at it on a broader level of how we can really just try to reduce the amount of weight that we're putting on the planet's resources and try to organize ourselves to live well without always needing another bag, whether it be plastic or whether it be one that is being pushed at us through some sort of swag prize package or what have you.

I'll also note that grocery stores need to take some more responsibility. I choose where I shop, to some extent, based on packaging because I get so frustrated in certain grocery stores where you can find beautiful fresh vegetables wrapped in shrink-wrap plastic on Styrofoam trays.

It's all great to reduce the amount of plastic at the checkout, but there's a whole lot of other places where all of our institutions, including retailers, need to innovate and ensure that we are addressing the whole of the problem, which is not just the grocery bags at the checkout counter.

With those few words, I'll take my seat and will look forward to hearing from residents of Nova Scotia, and hopefully some municipalities as well, at Law Amendments Committee.

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

BARBARA ADAMS: I just wanted to make a few comments. One of the things that the Minister of Environment has said is that Nova Scotians are already leaders in protecting the environment, and I agree in many ways, but I want to give a tiny bit of a history lesson.

About 25 years ago, give or take a year, we had Camp Hill Hospital and we had such severe environmental issues with that hospital that over 600 employees were poisoned, many of whom never recovered their health and never went back to work.

It was the people of Nova Scotia who fought to get the Nova Scotia Environmental Health Centre built in Fall River, Nova Scotia. I forget the exact day that it opened, but when it first opened it had a four-year wait to get in and then as time went on, it got better.

Almost immediately after the Environmental Health Centre was opened - the budget, I think, was around \$1.1 or \$1.2 million - the very next year, the budget was starting to be cut. Over the years, as we became better at promoting scent-free products and scent-free workplaces, there was a fear in the community that the Environmental Health Centre would eventually be shut down. People said that can't possibly be true because we're all committed to the environment.

Well, I was part of the staff at the Nova Scotia Environmental Health Centre when we amalgamated with the Nova Scotia Health Authority. Again, the fears that the Nova Scotia Environmental Health Centre was going to be shut down at some point or lose its funding continued to grow. What has happened under this government is the Nova Scotia Environmental Health Centre, which was the only environmental health centre in the Maritimes that I'm aware of, which saw patients come here from across the country, changed its name from the Nova Scotia Environmental Health Centre to the Integrated Chronic Care Service.

That might not seem like a big deal to some, but to those who have been poisoned by the environment, it's a very big deal because it took the focus off those who have already been made sick by the environment. Although we can't ask questions today, I'm having a little trouble finding out how much funding there is for the Integrated Chronic Care Service and how much of that funding is actually going towards those who have environmental-induced illness.

This particular bill, Bill No. 152, the Plastic Bags Reduction Act - for anybody who has been made sick by the environment, they will see this as a good thing because you have to produce these bags and then you have to dispose of them.

One of the things this bill does not do, though, is specify how well the enforcement is going to go. For a neighbour of mine, Ernie Arsenault, who owns Smitty's in Dartmouth and who has his home right across the street from my constituency office, every day he's out picking up Tim Hortons cups and other single-use plastics. It's a large part of the garbage that he picks up on a daily basis.

Littering is already regulated, and the people in my constituency have taken it upon themselves to go around our beaches and boardwalks and roadways to pick up litter because we can't get garbage bins on our public beaches and walkways that would give

somebody a place to put something. Now we're taking away a plastic bag, which I fully support, but the enforcement of this is not really outlined here, and we didn't hear it mentioned. I'm assuming it's going to fall upon the municipality to do that. Is there increased funding from the province to the municipalities to now enforce another bill? Once it's passed, somebody has to enforce the regulations.

The other concern I have, because we weren't given very many details, is what the regulations will actually be. For those who are unaware of how things work in the House, you can bring in a bill without bringing in the regulations, which really means that an awful lot can be decided behind the scenes without any debate here in the Legislature.

One of the words that's always used in these Acts is "the Governor in Council may make regulations with respect to" - and then there's a list of (a) to (l) as to what they might do. It would have been nice to have some regulations that we could debate here because there's going to be a cost associated with those regulations.

The last thing I want to point out - and it's purely from a physiotherapy perspective that I do this - is in the olden days, we were all buying green boxes to put food in to bring home from the grocery store. The reason we're not using those so much now is because we have an aging population and those boxes are heavy. There are a lot of people who take the bus to and from the grocery store. So the green boxes were a great idea and people were buying them - I had many - and then they didn't seem to work.

We also then brought in the large plastic bags that the grocery stores produced, but they are very heavy if you're a senior or if you have mobility issues. We also brought in cloth bags, and if you ever read the research on cloth bags, what's left over from the food can contaminate those bags, and that's a challenge. We didn't talk about that.

When we talk about how we're not going to do something, we have to talk about what we are going to do instead. That's what people want to know. If you're taking this away as an option, what's the best option moving forward? I didn't hear anything about that in the introduction.

I'm hoping these are just some things that you might consider discussing. I'm assuming some of them will come up during Law Amendments Committee. I look forward to hearing the remarks when they do.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

TIM HALMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few comments on Bill No. 152, the Plastic Bags Reduction Act.

For some of us in this Chamber who were present at the Climate Strike on Friday, that was arguably the largest protest I've been a part of since 1995 when I was part of the

Unity Rally in Montreal where there were 500,000 people participating in that rally. As a matter of fact, I've been told in terms of the estimates in Montreal they were close to 500,000 people at that protest as well. Everyone in this Chamber knows the environment and climate change is a top priority to Nova Scotians and Canadians.

It's extremely important to young Nova Scotians. For many years at my high school in Dartmouth East, I taught the Global Geography 12 class, and many students often referred to that class as the climate change class. For our young Nova Scotians, this is their key issue as it is for many Nova Scotians, and this bill, often it has been said that it's a good first step. I absolutely agree, and I think what you'll find with this bill is a lot of consensus throughout the province of us moving forward in banning plastic bags.

What struck me at the protest on Friday was just the level of care people have for the environment, the level of urgency that exists for governments and elected officials to take action on climate change. Certainly, I think with Bill No. 152, we are seeing that first step. So, certainly, just to echo the comments from my colleague from Sackville-Beaver Bank, one of the great strengths of this bill is that you're going to have uniformity across the municipalities. I think businesses in our province, they want to see this to be successful - and having that uniformity will only assist with that.

This definitely is a good first step. This is an issue I believe you're going to find a large consensus with Nova Scotians because it is an issue people care so deeply about. I recall the Minister of Environment talking about growing up in southwestern Nova Scotia, and just how important it is for a young person to have that pristine environment to be able to interact with. It's so critical for the development of our youth.

Just as my other colleagues in this House have indicated, I know we all look forward to Nova Scotians coming to Law Amendments Committee and having their say on Bill No. 152, a really good first step for environmental policy here in Nova Scotia.

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

The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd certainly like to thank the members for Halifax Needham, Sackville-Beaver Bank, Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage, and Dartmouth East for their comments. I'll just offer a few things myself.

Firstly, it is equally important, I heard from many, that consistency across jurisdictions is met. We'll say that we've engaged with the retail sector, and certainly that's what we've heard from them. I'd like to assure them that what we have in our bill does certainly reflect consistency. There is some discussion, I guess we could say, around the fees. We did have that discussion ourselves also and we made a conscious decision to allow

those fees to be borne by the retailer which would give them the ability to keep that consistency, continuity, that they have across the regions.

I'd also like to offer up the understanding for everybody in the House that P.E.I. is currently reviewing those parts of their legislation as we speak, and one area that they are looking at is the fee structure. So, whether they adopt what we have or not, I'm not sure, but we just wanted to build on what they had there and keep that continuity.

Also, it is certainly important - I've heard the word "enforcement" and concerns about that. All the enforcement work for this is going to be borne within our department, within the staff that we have here. I think one of the most important things that we have to move forward with enforcement is education and that's another benefit, I think, of this bill that we need to always keep our eye on.

This has raised the conversation around plastics in our environment. It has raised the effects that plastic has on things like marine life. Leatherback turtles, for example, actually die from plastic bags. We have concerns with litter that we have heard on the sides of the roads and plastic there. Those things are key, and we always need to keep our eye on the concerns about plastic in our landfills. We need to do better there.

[3:15 p.m.]

In moving forward with this, I'm encouraged to hear the comments from my colleagues. I look forward to hearing what is brought forward at Law Amendments Committee. With that, I would move closing of the debate on second reading of Bill No. 152.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 152. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 160.

Bill No. 160 - Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 160, an Act to Amend Chapter 25 of the Acts of 1996, the Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act.

The Nova Scotia fishing industry continues to grow and is one of the province's most important exports. Indeed, when you combine the employment of the fisheries and aquaculture industry of Nova Scotia, we employ over 18,000 people, along with many more supporting jobs from other industries.

Over the past four years, we have been Canada's number one exporter of seafood. We export in excess of \$2 billion a year, and the thanks goes to the hard-working industry that has made that happen. Our goal is to have the best quality seafood in the world and to continue to grow the value of our exports and build a secure economic future for rural and coastal communities in Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia seafood products are known all over the world for their quality, and we want to make sure that our regulations support the industry's success. This bill supports the first stage of designing a revised regulatory framework for licensing fish buying and processing in Nova Scotia and modernizing that industry to align with international standards. The industry is faced with many challenges: automation, new international standards, new food safety requirements, traceability, and the list goes on and on.

The second part of this bill deals with the process of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board. The loan board has been modernized at the request of the industry to ensure that we have faster turnaround time, better standards, and easier access to loans for the board, while at the same time ensuring that the industry and the people in the industry are provided with a good source of income based on loans they get and a great opportunity for young people to get into the industry.

The first part of this thing will designate signing authority to officials within the department to speed the processing of activities instead of having to go through the long process that is in place today. Also, it will remove the requirement for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture to assign changes in the regulations to the Governor in Council, giving it more oversight.

The second part will be the ability for the Governor in Council to outline the fees and services regulations. There will be no change in fees or proposed amounts in the process. These are meant to streamline the operation of the loan boards and integrate them with the Farm Loan Board so the two loan boards, even though they work independently, will be able to have the same standards in both industries.

Earlier this year, we talked about some changes in the amount that can be loaned to the loan board without having to go to the Executive Council. That was in line with the Farm Loan Board and many other changes. We are putting new automation in place when

it comes to computer programs, so people will be able to go online very shortly to check on their loans. This is something new to the department, and it has been asked for by both the farm and fish loan boards.

As we move forward on this, we're going to continue consultation with the fishing industry and the buying industry through the advisory board I set up - it's the only one like it ever in the province, of processors and buyers and with individuals - as we move forward in this important work.

With that, I'll take my seat.

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

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand in my place this afternoon to speak to Bill No. 160.

At first glance, it appeared this bill was just a housekeeping Act, but with further investigation and consultation, we as a caucus have two concerns about this piece of legislation before us. One would be the purpose of updating; and the other, regulation with no full consultation. This piece of legislation is looking to change the administrative function of what many people in fisheries and agriculture would consider two dysfunctional loan organizations into a Crown-lending agency.

The lack of detail and consideration given to stakeholders and new participants trying to enter these two industries is bothersome. We're already receiving complaints about the amount of time it takes to process loans. Then there are others who feel they're being mistreated or misunderstood by a system that lacks an insight into their specific operations. This piece of legislation will bring little comfort to new entrants in the Yarmouth area who have recently been turned down by this organization. After last year, the minister's and the MLA for Yarmouth's suggestion that things will get easier for new participants has not been the case.

I'll table their statements and read from it as follows: "Fishing and aquaculture are the backbone of the province, providing good paying jobs and economic benefits for those living in our coastal communities," the minister said on behalf of the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. He goes on to say: "The board has helped members of the industries buy new licences, finance or build new boats and buy new equipment, and we want it to continue to offer support for many years to come."

We agree that fishing and aquaculture may have opportunities in this province, but this government has not been vigilant in working with all participants, current and future. The minister's statement rings hollow in the ears of the people on the waters and in the fields of Nova Scotia.

The other concern for us is regarding the definition of processing. Processing has had a long history of small businesses - mom and pop operations - in this province. Small businesses have supported small communities for generations. They're small operations with big impacts on the residents of their small communities. Changing the definition or leaving it to regulation gives us concern. How will ownership of processing change in the future? Will there be outside pressures from other jurisdictions and foreign interests that have no concerns with local communities and its people?

We look forward to the Committee on Law Amendments and the minister's response to industry as this bill proceeds through the Chamber.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak briefly to this bill, the amendments to the Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act.

I don't need to restate things that have already been said. We all know the fishing industry is crucially important to Nova Scotia's economy and particularly to so many parts of rural Nova Scotia. Halifax is not the centre of the universe, and we want vibrant communities and vibrant industries distributed across all of Nova Scotia. The fishery really can't be overstated for its importance in doing exactly that: representing \$2 billion annually in economic activity. Of course, it also adds significantly to our culture and to tourism. There are many interconnections with other industries.

In some parts of the province, in recent years the thriving fishery has meant that young people are able to return or to stay and to make a good living in our coastal communities. Obviously buying and processing are crucial components of the industry, and it's important that they are supported and also regulated effectively.

We are welcoming, but also interested to hear from Nova Scotians who may come to Law Amendments Committee about the amendments to the Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act. We understand the wish to make the processes and the legislation governing the Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board uniform, to make that work with the Farm Loan Board, as they are functioning in parallel fashion within two different departments, and with two different industries that are effectively supported by the same government department, with many of the same processes being undertaken. To the extent that they can be made to work together in a uniform fashion and in a fashion that's fair, we welcome that.

A strong framework for buying and processing fish is important because of the role it plays as a connection to markets for our fish and for fishers but also because it's an important source of employment in coastal communities. Fish processing is the number one industry where fishers report income outside of fishing, and it serves as a significant employer for people in Nova Scotia's coastal communities.

Indeed, the buying, processing, and fishing sectors are closely intertwined, and fishers should also be consulted around any changes. Consultations with buyers, processors, and workers in the industry will also be important for any significant updates to the regulatory framework, and this is particularly true if there are impacts on the workers who rely on the processors for employment.

Work in processing plants is frequently low wage and relies heavily on temporary foreign workers. It's seasonal and it's demanding, and those workers require adequate protection. We know that labour shortages are an ongoing challenge for fish processing plants. The industry estimates that it needs over 600 additional workers a year in Atlantic Canada to make up for vacancies, turnover, and retirement.

That problem needs to be taken into account in any regulatory changes to buying and processing in order to foster the sustainability of the industry and protect rural workers and build thriving rural communities. We urge the department to be proactive and vigilant to make sure that there are no undue effects for already vulnerable workers in this sector.

I would also urge the department to engage innovative policy options for solving labour shortages in harvesting and processing. For example, the recent Labour Market Information Study commissioned by the Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters recommends fisher-processor collaboration to produce and market higher-value products.

All in all, I look forward to seeing a consultative and collaborative review that results in a strong framework to support this vitally important industry. I will also look forward to hearing from fishers and coastal communities at Law Amendments Committee.

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

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just a couple of quick comments.

I appreciate the comments from both Opposition Parties. This is a very important topic for all of us. I just want to note that we've made more loans to the fishing industry in the last year than we've probably made in history, and the loans are getting bigger and bigger as the licences get worth more and more. It's very positive.

On the licensing side, also there are some really awfully outdated rules. For instance, if you had a fish plant on a county line and you wanted to move it across the other county line, you weren't allowed to do it. It just didn't make any sense. So, we are going to address those sorts of things.

[3:30 p.m.]

Also, if you had a son or daughter or nephew, or whoever it might be in succession planning, to whom you wanted to transfer your licence, it was virtually impossible under the old rules. That sure isn't going to go very far when it comes to encouraging young people to stay in Nova Scotia to take over these businesses and run them. It then would lead to much more investment from outside the country, which sometimes is not that healthy.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move second reading of Bill No. 160.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 160. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, that concludes government's business for today. Sorry to disappoint everyone. I move that the House do now rise, to meet again tomorrow, Wednesday, October 2nd, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Of course, with tomorrow being Opposition Day, I would now ask the House Leader for the Official Opposition to call business for tomorrow.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, after the daily routine and Question Period we will be calling the order of business, Private Members' Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill No. 143, the Emergency Aid at School Act, as well as Bill No. 155, the Healthcare Ombudsman Act. We'll also be calling Notice of Motion, Resolution No. 853 for debate, the operative clause being "that the government acknowledge that the Nova Scotia health care system is in crisis." We look forward to that business tomorrow.

I move that we do now rise, to meet again tomorrow between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now rise, to meet again tomorrow, October 2nd, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned.

[The House rose at 3:33 p.m.]

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS**Given on October 1, 2019****(Pursuant to Rule 30)****QUESTION NO. 1**

By: Claudia Chender

To: Hon. Karen Casey (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development)

In September, the government announced that menstrual products would be made available in all public schools in the province. At that time, the minister said the government wanted to make sure availability is consistent across the province. He also said it's up to the different to schools to decide how and where these products will be made available. There was no funding attached to this announcement.

- (1) Is the minister confident that the cost of providing menstrual products in schools can be covered within existing toiletry budgets?
- (2) If schools require additional funding to cover the cost of providing menstrual products, what is the process for them to request it?
- (3) Will schools be required to provide menstrual products in all bathrooms so that they are accessible to all menstruating people?

QUESTION NO. 2

By: Susan Leblanc (Dartmouth North)

To: The Premier (Minister Responsible for Youth)

At the last meeting of the Standing Committee on Community Services, members heard conflicting accounts on the state of child welfare in Nova Scotia. Children and youth in Nova Scotia need an independent child and youth advocate working to make their voices heard by decision makers.

- (1) Will the Premier commit to funding for an independent child and youth advocate office with a legislated mandate to conduct systemic policy review and advocacy, in addition to taking on reviews of specific cases in the 2020-21 provincial budget?

QUESTION NO. 3

By: Susan Leblanc (Dartmouth North)

To: Hon. Derek Mombourquette (Minister of Energy and Mines)

In August last year, thousands of litres of fuel were spilled into the Halifax Harbour at Nova Scotia Power's Tufts Cove. The UARB has allowed ratepayers to be on the hook for \$3.4 million to replace pipes at the facility after the spill. We know the spill was caused by a corroded pipe, but Nova Scotia Power has refused to release any analysis that they have done to uncover the root cause of this very concerning spill or the full cost of the spill's clean-up.

- (1) Does the minister agree that the public should be entitled to know the reason why thousands of litres of fuel were spilled into Halifax Harbour?
- (2) Does the minister agree that the public should be entitled to know how much was spent by Nova Scotia Power on the clean-up in Halifax Harbour?
- (3) When will information about the root cause of the spill and the cost of the clean-up be made public?

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1240**

By: Kim Masland (Queens-Shelburne)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities, author Eda J. LeShan wrote; and

Whereas on June 1, 2019, Jill and Chad Cole welcomed their daughter Fallon Althea Cole into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jill and Chad on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 1241

By: Kim Masland (Queens-Shelburne)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities, author Eda J. LeShan wrote; and

Whereas on July 6, 2019, Becca Mooers and Thomas Corkum welcomed their son Levi Anthony Alexander Corkum into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Becca and Thomas on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.