



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2019

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 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 Hants East.

HON. MARGARET MILLER: On behalf of the honourable Speaker, I beg leave to present a petition. It comes from the Greenough Drive, Porters Lake area. The operative clause reads as follows:

“Therefore, your petitioners call upon the Province of Nova Scotia and the Halifax Regional Municipality to take action to stop the development on PID#00609537, commonly known as and used as a pedestrian pathway between the Porter’s Lake Provincial Park and the Kinap playground and public park. It is the desire that this property in question be acquired for the purpose of parkland.”

Mr. Speaker, there are 393 signatures on this petition, and I have affixed my own.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

Before we move on to the next item, I would like to take this opportunity to draw people's attention to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today some representation from that neighbourhood, in my constituency of Porters Lake. I'd ask Cathy and Gary MacKenzie to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

I apologize if there are more folks here from Porters Lake that I don't know - please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. I didn't get a list of names.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

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

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I beg leave to table the 2018 annual report of the committee.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. You have a Government Notice of Motion.

With the unanimous consent of the House, we'll revert to Statements by Ministers.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

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

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

TONY INCE: Joining us in the East Gallery today we have with us members from the community, and I'd like you all to stand when I call your name: Carolann Wright-Parks, Sobaz Benjamin, Sylvia Parris-Drummond, John Wedderburn, Vanessa Fells, Bernadette Hamilton-Reid, Angela Simmonds, Alisha Brown-Fagan, Natasha Jackson, Francene Comeau, Amelia Jarvis, Lewis MacKinnon, Bill Greenlaw, and Tracey Thomas.

Ladies and gentlemen these are the folks that helped move the Count Us In action plan forward. (Applause)

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

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia has been home to people of African descent for over 400 years. This history of African Nova Scotians is unique, celebrated, and proud. However, it is marked with systemic barriers carried on through many centuries. Many African Nova Scotians know first-hand the hurt caused by racism, discrimination, and inequity.

Our government is about change and about working together to correct many challenges facing African Nova Scotians. Since coming into office in 2013, we have taken a number of steps to build a more inclusive and equitable province for all African Nova Scotians and all Nova Scotians. One of which I'm particularly proud is working with the landowners from five African Nova Scotian communities to receive clear title to their land.

On May 8, 2018, Premier Stephen McNeil and I proclaimed the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent in Nova Scotia. We were the first province in Canada to proclaim this decade, and what followed was a drafting of an action plan.

On September 19, 2019, Nova Scotia launched Count Us In: Nova Scotia's Action Plan in Response to the International Decade for People of African Descent, 2015-2024. We were joined by the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Kate Gilmore, and other United Nations representatives for the launch. I was also very proud and pleased to see members from this House at that launch that day as well. Thank you all for coming and showing your support.

Nova Scotia is the only jurisdiction in North America with an action plan dedicated to the International Decade for People of African Descent. I'm truly proud of this. Count Us In is a guiding document that will provide government with specific actions to help address the many challenges facing African Nova Scotians.

It reflects work under way and creates opportunities in new and existing ways. Leadership to champion the action plan will involve a team of deputy ministers and an interdepartmental working group who will collaborate with community and community

organizations and stakeholders to advance the work. We will monitor the progress of the actions on a regular basis.

[1:15 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, Count Us In corresponds with three pillars of the Decade for People of African Descent. Those pillars are: recognition, justice, and development.

The first pillar, recognition, is about recognizing and celebrating the important contributions of people of African descent; the second pillar, justice, is about drawing on the lessons learned from the past to guide us towards advancing justice in all segments of society, such as access to justice, social justice, and equity in human rights; and the final pillar, development, is about creating healthier and more prosperous communities.

Mr. Speaker, for this action plan to be successful we need every Nova Scotian to join and add their support to this journey towards a future where we can all celebrate all our histories. We all need to work together to eliminate systemic racism, discrimination, and injustices still found in our society. Good work is happening on the ground already by many different organizations and we are confident that the action plan will propel more and deeper action in the future.

An African proverb by South African cleric and theologian, Desmond Tutu, says this: “All of our humanity is dependent upon recognizing the humanity in others.”

I believe Count Us In is the next step in that journey of recognition, Mr. Speaker. (Standing Ovation)

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

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to begin by thanking the Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs for his statement today and for providing the PC caucus with advance notice of his remarks. I'd also like to take an opportunity to recognize those members of the community who are attending in the gallery today for the minister's statement.

As a Progressive Conservative Critic for African Nova Scotian Affairs, I am pleased to have the opportunity to offer a response to the minister's statement today. I wish to congratulate the Premier, the minister, and the government not only for taking the lead across this country by being the first province to recognize and proclaim the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent 2015 to 2024, but for also making the Count Us In action plan a priority for African Nova Scotians across this province.

It was a pleasure to be able to join the Leader of the Official Opposition and many of my colleagues during the September 19th unveiling of the Count Us In: Nova Scotia's Action Plan in Response to the International Decade for People of African Descent.

Unfortunately, as witnessed through the report by Dr. Scot Wortley, and by the recent discussions in this House around the topic of street checks, systemic racism, discrimination, and injustices are still found in Nova Scotia today and this action plan with its three pillars of recognition, justice, and development is a good step towards helping to address the issues that face people of African descent daily.

Our Party acknowledges that systemic racism is not a partisan issue, but one that African Nova Scotians face every day. Therefore we are committed to working with all Parties and members of this House in doing whatever we can to help address and eliminate systemic racism in Nova Scotia.

I personally look forward to engaging with Minister Ince to assist in pushing the objectives of this plan forward and thereby improving the lives of African Nova Scotians.

Finally, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, I'd like to extend a sincere thank you to all those stakeholders from across the province, provincial staff, and all those who were involved in making this action plan a reality. Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I did not also take an opportunity to thank the Executive Director of African Nova Scotian Affairs, Mr. Wayn Hamilton, for his assistance in this plan as well.

In closing, I would like to, once again, thank the minister for his remarks today and offer thanks on this significant plan for African Nova Scotians.

THE SPEAKER: Just before we move on, I'd like to remind all members of the House that we do not use the proper names of our members on the floor of the House when we are speaking.

The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for his statement on Count Us In: Nova Scotia's Action Plan in Response to the International Decade for People of African Descent.

I also want to thank all of the people who had a hand in creating the action plan, many of whom are here with us today. It is truly impressive that Nova Scotia is the only jurisdiction to have an action plan in North America.

As the New Democratic Party spokesperson for African Nova Scotian Affairs, as a Nova Scotian, and as a person who strives daily to be an effective ally to African Nova Scotians, I am in awe of the hard work that many people in this province are doing to mark the International Decade for People of African Descent, to shine a light on the progress the province has made to date and the long journey that still remains before us.

Particularly I want to acknowledge the DPAD coalition of organizations and individuals working towards justice and equity for people of African descent. Our caucus was thrilled to meet with members of the coalition so that we can better understand and support its very important work.

I look forward to continuing the work with other members of this House to confront and address issues of systemic anti-Black racism in our society. I will continue to push to address the legacy of racism in the province, including calling for a ban on street checks, to address the many instances of environmental racism across the province, and to address issues related to all three of the action plan pillars: recognition, justice, and development.

Our caucus is glad to recommit today to this work and we look forward to contributing to the work of implementing the Count Us In Action Plan.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

GORDON WILSON: I would like to bring attention to the East Gallery. Gathered here today we have folks representing my climate change action team - and I'd like to ask them to rise as I bring their names forward - Jason Hollett; John Cooper; Andrew Webber; Ebenezer Asamany; Sachi Gibson - no, Sachi's not here, sorry; Brittany White; Michelle Miller; and we have two staff - I am missing one person and I'm very sorry there - we have Angela Birch from our Policy Division - no?; Diane Zwicker, Department of Justice, our solicitor; and we have Adele Poirier from Communications Nova Scotia.

I'd like to bring the welcome of the House and the attention that these folks were involved under our previous minister, doing a lot of hard work to bring forward our cap-and-trade program, which resulted in the reduction of around 650,000 metric tonnes of greenhouse gas from our environment every year. I really want to thank you for the hard work that you have done here today. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

RESOLUTION NO. 1248

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

Whereas when the federal government required all provinces to put a price on carbon, my staff responded with a made-in-Nova Scotia approach; and

Whereas they established our cap-and-trade program in a very short period of time, ensuring it will reduce greenhouse gas emissions while keeping costs low for Nova Scotians; and

Whereas this team of talented professionals were recognized for this with a Premier's Award of Excellence, the highest award we can give a Nova Scotia public servant;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House recognize the hard work and tireless dedication of this team to protecting our environment for future generations.

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. 1249

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 is known as Canadian Library Month, which is an important opportunity to raise awareness of the valuable role libraries play in Canadian lives; and

Whereas libraries are the most popular cultural institution, offering a special place for community members of all backgrounds and ethnicities to gather for a love of reading and lifelong learning; and

Whereas there are 78 libraries located across Nova Scotia that provide an excellent array of programs and services for people of all ages;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing the month of October as Canadian Library Month and in acknowledging the important contributions libraries continue to make in our communities.

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 Labour and Advanced Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 1250

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

Whereas October is Canada's Healthy Workplace Month, a time to increase awareness of the need for a comprehensive approach to workplace health; and

Whereas the Province of Nova Scotia introduced the Workplace Health and Safety Promotion Policy for civil servants on April 1, 2019, which recognizes our health, including both our physical and psychological well-being; and

Whereas this month provides us with the opportunity to recognize our continued support and commitment to promoting strong, supportive, and healthy workplaces;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House join me in celebrating Canada's Healthy Workplace Month because our individual health and well-being are crucial to the health and well-being of our families and our workplace and to the productivity 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 Justice.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

HON. MARK FUREY: I'd like to draw my colleagues' attention to the Speaker's Gallery today, where we're joined by the ever-passionate Mr. Gerry Post, who recently announced his retirement from public service. As the Executive Director of the Accessibility Directorate, Gerry has been instrumental in advancing our province's work on accessibility through his many community partnerships and his unrivaled ability to rally change.

Joining Gerry in the adjacent gallery today, supporting their colleague, are his team from the Accessibility Directorate.

In the Speaker's Gallery - I don't know if it was a surprise to Gerry - he's joined today by family members. His brother and sister-in-law Koos and Hetty Post are visiting from Holland - and I would ask that they rise - as well as his sister and brother-in-law Eugenie and John Thompson, who are here from California.

I would ask that all members join me in giving them a warm welcome to the House.
(Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 1251

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

Whereas Gerry Post, the first Executive Director of the Accessibility Directorate, has demonstrated invaluable leadership in helping to develop Nova Scotia's first Accessibility Act, and in engaging and collaborating with community to implement meaningful and long-lasting change; and

Whereas Mr. Post has been a visionary in moving Nova Scotia forward in our goal to be an accessible province by 2030; and

Whereas Mr. Post recently announced his retirement and will leave behind a legacy of service dedicated to ensuring every Nova Scotian has the opportunity to participate fully in society;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature acknowledge Gerry Post for his conviction, courage, passion, and determination in leading Nova Scotia forward to be a more equitable and inclusive province.

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

[1:30 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried. (Standing Ovation)

The honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 1252

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

Whereas the Beechville Baptist Church celebrates its 175th anniversary this year;
and

Whereas in 1844 Reverend Richard Preston, a refugee from the United States, established the permanent meeting house which became the Beechville Baptist Church;
and

Whereas the Beechville Baptist Church welcomes all individuals to deepen their spiritual relationship and guides those who need to find their way back to God;

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

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 169 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 156 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Expropriation Act. (Hon. Mark Furey)

Bill No. 170 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 371 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Public Highways Act. (Hon. Lloyd Hines)

Bill No. 171 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 12 of the Acts of 2011. The Public Procurement Act, Respecting Transparency in Public-private Partnerships. (Susan Leblanc)

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

The honourable member for Pictou West.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

KARLA MACFARLANE: If I could bring the members' attention to the West Gallery, there are two individuals that I would ask to stand when I read their names.

First, I would like to introduce Bernadette MacDonald, a member with NS End Demand: Nova Scotians for the Prevention of Prostitution and Human Trafficking. I would ask her to stand. As well, I would like to introduce Jennifer Holleman, the mother of a victim of sexualized human trafficking. Please stand, Jennifer. I would like to acknowledge Jennifer's daughter, Maddison, who was a victim of human trafficking and was a very talented, kind young woman.

If we could all give a round of applause and welcome them to the House. (Applause)

Bill No. 172 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 21 of the Acts of 1990. The Public Prosecutions Act, Respecting a Human Trafficking Prosecution Team. (Karla MacFarlane)

Bill No. 173 - Entitled an Act to Amend Schedule A of Chapter 1 of the Acts of 2018. The Education Act, and Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1995-96. The Education (CSAP) Act. (Karla MacFarlane)

Bill No. 174 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 14 of the Acts of 1989. The Victims' Rights and Services Act. (Karla MacFarlane)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

BROOKS, JADE: HUMAN TRAFFICKING, PUBL. EDUCATION - COMMEND

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the courage of Jade Brooks, who took the stage at the deCoste Performing Arts Centre to share her experience in domestic human trafficking as a young woman.

Jade Brooks was first introduced to the sex trade at the age of 17, a time when she found herself very vulnerable and unsure of herself. Her insight into her experiences advises other young women of the dangers of sex trafficking and just how normalized it has become in our culture.

I applaud and admire Jade for her passion for educating the public on such a commonly overlooked topic. As difficult as returning to her memories from the sex trade has proven to be, she continues to share her story in hopes of saving others from the horrors of human sex trafficking.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MACLEOD, ALEXANDER: O. HENRY PRIZE - CONGRATS.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I rise today to congratulate a great Dartmouth citizen, Alexander MacLeod. Mr. MacLeod was awarded the prestigious O. Henry Prize earlier this year for his outstanding short story, *Lagomorph*. His thoughtful and heartbreaking tale earned him the international prize, which recognizes excellence in short fiction. Alexander is one of only 20 winners awarded this year, three of whom were Canadian.

Alexander is well-known in the Canadian literary scene for his insightful writing and his dedication to the short story form. He was shortlisted for the 2010 Scotiabank Giller Prize, the 2011 Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award, and the Commonwealth Book Prize.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Alexander on winning this prestigious award and thanking him for his service to the arts in Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

REGGIE'S ANGELS: LEUKEMIA FUNDRAISING - THANKS

HON. IAN RANKIN: I'd like to recognize a special group affectionately known as Reggie's Angels, from Terence Bay. In loving memory of her brother, Reggie Slaunwhite, who lost his life to leukemia at the age of 37, Catherine Little formed a group to help raise funds for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

Leukemia is a blood cancer that occurs when the bone marrow produces too many abnormal white blood cells. The white blood cells reproduce at an abnormal rate, destroying the red blood cells which are needed to carry oxygen throughout the body. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, over 100,000 Canadians are living with leukemia or are in remission of this illness.

Catherine Little, Lisa Hartlen, Abigail Blackburn, and Deanna Neilson - a.k.a. Reggie's Angels - organized community events such as barbecues, bingo games, and 50/50 tickets, raising \$5,000 for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

I ask the members of the House to join me in thanking Catherine, Lisa, Abigail, and Deanna for their fundraising efforts to help find a cure for cancer.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

FERGUSON, BRIAN - PHYSICIAN: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Today I rise to recognize Dr. Brian Ferguson on his retirement of his family practice after 38 years.

Dr. Ferguson has long been an outspoken advocate for local health care; also, our Level 2 emergency department and our regional hospital; and Seniors' Pharmacare. He has long advocated for families and patients when they needed it most. He has been named Rural Physician of the Year by Doctors Nova Scotia. He has served in many community capacities, such as the Amherst Fire Department's annual John Michels Sr. Ladder Sit for muscular dystrophy and as team doctor for the Amherst Ramblers hockey team.

I wish to thank Dr. Ferguson for his years of service and wish him a healthy retirement.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

ADDICTIONS SERV. RECOVERY GRPS. - GOVT. SUPPORT NEEDED

LISA ROBERTS: As I have said previously in this Chamber, I count myself very lucky to serve a community which is served by many non-profit organizations. With my modest constituency office resources, I do my best to support those non-profits, be it with advertising, funds, or advocacy to government departments.

In April 2018, I asked the government about concerns raised by a constituent that a publicly provided addictions recovery discussion group had decreased in frequency and might be cancelled. Indeed, last October, that constituent informed me that Addiction Services had discontinued its support groups. A local non-profit, Veith House, has stepped up to fill this gap left by government and is hosting a regular recovery group, but there are no additional public resources.

I would like the government to note that in balancing its books, it is often putting great strain on the community without providing the required support.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

NEW LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY: SUPPORTING SENIORS - RECOG.

SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, we know many seniors prefer to stay in their homes as long as possible. To support this initiative, our government has increased its investments from \$212 million in 2013 to \$283 million today. However, when the option of staying in their home is no longer a possibility, the next transition is often moving to a long-term care facility.

As it is Seniors Week, I'm excited to mention that such a facility is to be built in Mahone Bay. The March 2019-20 budget included additional beds for a new long-term care facility to be located in the town. This facility will benefit residents of Mahone Bay and surrounding areas, employees of the nursing home, and friends and families of those who become residents there.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing the positive work that is being done to support our seniors.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

CADET DAY: POSITIVE IMPACT - THANKS

MURRAY RYAN: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to acknowledge that Saturday, October 5th is Cadet Day in Nova Scotia. The cadet program has offered a tremendous opportunity for our youth to engage in fun and challenging activities, while learning life and work skills that they will use in their adult lives.

Every year we see our young cadets making an impact and giving back to their communities. Whether it is standing vigil at a cenotaph or helping with community cleanups, the cadet program is always on guard, teaching our Canadian youth the value of citizenship and community service.

I ask all members of this House to join me in expressing my gratitude for our cadets and the positive impact they have had in our province.

[1:45 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

TAMMY MARTIN: Public-private partnerships, or P3s, have been shown time and time again to be a much more expensive way of building infrastructure. Nowhere is this more clear than in hospital construction.

In Ontario in 2014, the Auditor General found the P3 health care projects and other P3 infrastructure projects had cost the people of Ontario \$8 billion more than if the government had used traditional public procurement processes - \$6.5 billion of this cost came from the higher financing costs in the private sector as compared to the public sector. P3 projects simply . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member that Members' Statements are not to be used for debating bills that are before the House.

The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

ON-SIDE PERFORMANCE CTR.: FITNESS SUPPORT - THANKS

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a successful husband and wife team who are operating a very successful business in my riding. Their company and gym, OnSide Performance Centre, offers its clients many unique fitness and nutrition programs. Their programs help many local businesses and sports teams become as efficient as possible.

Jenny and Nathan Jeffrey have combined their knowledge, education and skills to help people enjoy fitness and show them it doesn't have to be hard if you are following the

right plan. Both Nathan and Jenny value giving back to the community; both of them play rugby and coach teams in Clayton Park West.

Would this House of Assembly join me in thanking this dynamic couple and wish them further success?

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

DICKEY, BROOKE - AUTHOR: POETRY INSTIT. AWARD - CONGRATS.

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Brooke Dickie, a Grade 6 student at South Queens Middle School in Liverpool, who is now officially a published author. While in Grade 5 last year at Dr. John C. Wickwire Academy, Brooke wrote a story entitled *Warm Hearts in a Cold World*. For this story, Brooke was awarded the Poetry Institute of Canada's Young Writers Certificate of Achievement and her work was selected to be published in the Institute's 2019 Annual Anthology of Creative Writing, *High-Flying Kites*.

I am so pleased to congratulate Brooke on this impressive accomplishment and I have a feeling that we will be hearing a lot more from her in the future. Well done, Brooke.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

INTL. DAY OF OLDER PERSONS: PAVING THE WAY FWD. - RECOG.

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, today I stand to celebrate and recognize International Day of Older Persons. It was my pleasure to stand with Mayor Mike Savage to raise the flag while he made the proclamation. We owe much respect and gratitude to those older persons who have helped pave the road forward. Even though all but one in our own caucus is a recognized older person, we in the NDP would like to thank and celebrate everyone in this Chamber and everywhere on International Day of Older Persons.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

KINSMAN, WILFRED: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, one of the great pleasures of being an MLA is the opportunity to recognize the small-business people who provide us with essential services, and what could be more essential than feeding the wood stove throughout Kings County?

Wilfred Kinsman of Cambridge has been operating a successful firewood and woodlot management business for over 25 years. During his busiest seasons, Wilfred has five employees processing 2,000 cords of wood, six days a week, for over 800 customers

from Wolfville to Aylesford to the Bay of Fundy. At one time, his operation also produced longer, straighter boards for decking on offshore lobster boats.

Recently Wilfred advised his customers that he will soon be laying down his chainsaw and wood splitter for the last time, as he looks forward to a well-deserved retirement. I invite all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in recognizing Wilfred Kinsman's many years in the firewood business and the successful stewardship of his woodlot.

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

DART. & DIST. PIPE BAND: N. AMER. PIPING CHAMPS - CONGRATS.

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Dartmouth & District Pipe Band for bringing home the North American Pipe Band Championship title for Grade Four bands at the Glengarry Highland Games this year. The band last won a title back in 2000.

This group, which includes constituents from Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage, decided that this year they had to come up with a plan that would give them no option but a win. Lots of hard practice, dedicated commitment, and passion have brought the band to where they are today. The competition saw many East Coast bands placing on the podium, from Cape Breton and Halifax to Summerside and Fredericton.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in congratulating the Dartmouth & District Pipe Band for their win, hard work, and dedication.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

TRAINYARD GENERAL STORE: MORE THAN GIFTS - COMMEND

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Kimberley Dares and Jason MacDonald, co-owners of the Trainyard General Store. To the casual passerby, the Trainyard looks like a lovely giftshop filled with wares from local artisans, crafters and food purveyors. But there is more to this shop than just beautiful gifts.

From hosting community classes, to teaching crafting, to donating to community groups, Jason and Kimberley use their business as a platform to connect with and give back to the community.

For their recent third-year anniversary, instead of a birthday party they held a gratitude party. They collected baby shower gifts from the public to give to participants who completed the Dartmouth Family Centre's Prenatal Program, and they had people write love letters to health care workers.

Please join me in thanking this duo for their unique approach to local business and for sharing their generous community spirit.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

PEEWEE GATEWAYS: ATL. BASEBALL CHAMPS - CONGRATS.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the Chris Scott Construction Peewee AAA Gateways won gold at the Baseball Canada 13U National Atlantic Championships after an exciting 3 to 2 win over Prince Edward Island.

Congratulations to players Sam Hope, Cameron Barns, Blake Newell, Liam Surette, Miguel Surette, Mason Legere, Brady Saulnier, Caleum Hines, Jared Pitman, Drew Jeffery, Ben Lyons, Liam Hingley and Luc Legere; and coaches Scott Jeffery, Curtis Falls and Eric Legere.

This is an amazing accomplishment and they've all made their communities proud.

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

ORRELL, EDDIE: FUTURE ENDEAVOURS - BEST WISHES

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased and proud to stand in my place to speak of a friend and former colleague of this Legislature, Eddie Orrell. For eight years, Eddie served with passion and commitment to the constituents of Northside-Westmount and the people of this wonderful province.

As a fellow Cape Bretoner, we were concerned with issues that affect the daily lives of those who we have served and still continue to serve. Depending on the day and who was speaking, people would refer to Eddie, Alfie MacLeod and me as either the 'Three Amigos' or the 'Three Stooges'.

Eddie has decided to commit his time to serving people at a different level as he runs as the federal Conservative candidate for Sydney-Victoria. I ask all members of this House to join me in wishing Eddie well as he moves forward on this, the next step of his journey.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

15U BULLDOGS: N.S. BASEBALL CHAMPS - CONGRATS.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, the 15U Bridgewater Bulldogs won the 2019 Tier 2A Baseball Provincial Championship September 1st. The host team won the title in a nail-biting final with an incredible six runs in the 7th inning against Great Village. Head

coach Davin Naugler said it was a pretty special moment that he will remember for a very long time.

The Bulldogs also had to win the semi-final against the New Waterford team the same day. Pitcher Cameron Langille threw a no-hitter to help the team move on to the championship game, his first ever in his young career.

Team members are Zach Brewer, Seth Smith, Andrew Hatt, Charlie Whitty, Cameron Langille, Cohen Westlake, Colin Snyder, Logan Haltom, Elias Dagley, Cole Joudrey, Evan Spencer; Assistant Coaches Jeff Langille, Reg Brewer, Neil Snyder and Barry Spencer; and head coach Davin Naugler.

Congratulations to the Bridgewater 15U Bulldogs for capturing a championship with heart, determination and perseverance.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

MURPHY, RAINIE/ROY, JAY AARON: YOUTH EXPO - COMMEND

STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jay Aaron Roy and Rainie Murphy of Lower Sackville for their work in launching Sackville's first annual Youth Expo which took place on June 29th this year.

Jay and Rainie recognized the need to bring together the youth of our community, to share information on what programs and services are available to them.

Sackville's first annual Youth Expo took place at a local all-affirming church and provided a welcoming, inclusive, and informative atmosphere.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me to applaud the efforts of Jay and Rainie in showing their compassion for the young members of our community and wish them best of luck as they plan next year's Youth Expo.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

DAVISON, BARBARA: 50 YRS. OF PROMOTING LITERACY - THANKS

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank a Bedford volunteer for her 50 years of volunteering in our community.

Barbara Davison has a tremendous amount of enthusiasm for teaching, and especially teaching English as Second Language at the Bedford Public Library. She is patient and respectful of all learning styles and she willingly shares her wealth of

knowledge and experience. She goes out of her way to be helpful in everything she does. Barbara was active in efforts to integrate Syrian newcomers into the community and led efforts to include them in conversation groups.

She has been honoured with a Teachers of English as a Second Language Award of Merit as well as a Teacher of the Year Award. She has also volunteered with the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association and served as the organization's treasurer and president. Barbara is also a member of the Junior League.

I'd like to thank Barbara Davison for giving the gift of literacy to so many over the years, and I'd like to commend her for her support of our public library.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

JOLLYMORE, JOSEPHINE: PARKINSON NTL. HERO - THANKS

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, a New Glasgow woman has been recognized for her outstanding volunteering with Parkinson Canada. Josephine Jollymore has dedicated numerous years helping people with Parkinson's disease. Parkinson Canada announced that Jollymore was the 2019 winner of the Parkinson SuperWalk National Hero Contest.

Josephine has been leading the charge with the local chapter since 2003, despite losing her husband to Parkinson's in 2005. Under Jollymore's guidance, the Pictou County group has grown and flourished. Her reputation in Pictou County and volunteerism is well known.

I would like all members of this Legislature to join me and offer our thanks and gratitude to Josephine Jollymore for her unselfish dedication and commitment to individuals suffering with Parkinson's disease.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

LEBLANC, BARB & ANDY: 59th ANNIV. - RECOG.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, on this Day of Older Persons, I would like to acknowledge my two favourite older people: my parents Barb and Andy Leblanc.

On September 24th, Barb and Andy celebrated their 59th wedding anniversary. Though both are from northern Ontario, they met in Calgary and found their way to Nova Scotia - home for me - in 1974, settling in Prospect Bay.

They are the most loving and supportive parents of five children and doting grandparents to 10, but they are also symbolic parents to many in their community, especially at their church, St. Joseph's, whom they serve with deep faith and commitment.

In their eighties - sorry for saying that out loud. They are active community members, and they kind of refuse to slow down. They are truly an inspiration to me and my siblings, and I love them very much.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

**MORRIS, SAFFRON - PHOTOGRAPHER:
SKILLS CAN. SILVER - CONGRATS.**

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, Saffron Morris, a 17-year-old grade 12 student at Tatamagouche Regional Academy, participated in the Skills Canada photography competition for the last two years. Last year she placed first in the provincial Skills Canada competition and came home from the nationals in fourth place.

The competitors had to complete seven tasks, which require a range of skills such as the use of colour and space, creativity, editing, visual, and emotional impact. They also had to choose a personal project and were judged on three photos they took that related to their theme. Saffron Morris was very effective at demonstrating her photographic skills because this year she came home from the Skills Canada competition with a silver medal.

Our congratulations to Saffron for her well-deserved win. We are sure we will hear her name and more as she continues to develop her photographic skills.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**LEBLANC, MATTHEW:
HURRICANE DORIAN, TREE CLEARING - THANKS**

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize yet another community volunteer who stepped up in the wake of Hurricane Dorian.

Dartmouth East saw many trees down, both in the streets and on residential properties, and some families didn't have the means to move trees - some due to a lack of ability or lack of equipment.

Dartmouth East resident Matthew Leblanc was one individual who went around the community and helped clear trees out of the kindness of his heart. Many seniors expressed to me their appreciation for the hard work Matthew put in on their properties. Matthew is an amazing young man who cares deeply about his fellow residents.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend Matthew Leblanc for his sense of community and ask all members of this House to thank him for his hard work clearing trees following Hurricane Dorian.

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

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, I am standing today, again, trying to get out a Point of Privilege please, and I know I have to do that before this session is over - may I do that, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, as member of this House, again, I want to reiterate that I am extremely concerned that I'm being denied resources for which all members of this House are entitled.

[2:00 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, it is my duty to bring to the attention of this House that on June 12, 2018, in a public session - not in a private session, Mr. Speaker, and I'll table the Hansard minutes from that session - the House of Assembly Management Commission . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member, as I did yesterday - everyone will recall that the honourable member raised this point of privilege yesterday, to which I replied and reiterated that the Rules of this House state that any matter dealing with the administration of the Speaker's Office is to be dealt with privately.

I will reiterate my invitation to the member to meet privately to discuss the matter. We can take it from there.

We'll now move on to Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

GOVT. (N.S.): CANNABIS ROLLOUT - FIRST-PHASE RPT.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, in a few months, Nova Scotians will see the legalized cannabis market expanded. Edibles, including gummies and baked goods infused with cannabis, will be on the market by the end of the year.

In July, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board said that before the government decides whether to make any changes to the existing retail of cannabis by the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation, they're awaiting a report on the first phase and recommendations on what should change or be done differently. The minister stated that that report would be received over the Summer, within a matter of weeks from July 4th.

My question for the Premier is: Has the government received the report on the first phase of the cannabis rollout, and if so, can they table it for this House?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, the honourable member is correct. We're waiting for a report.

As we've determined in the first phase of the rollout of the edibles - we will continue to do that through the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation, as our original rollout took place. We're very proud of the fact that we're doing that as we continue to put product out into the marketplace to ensure that we're able to control the distribution of it and to make sure that we fully understand the impact it will have, and determine at that point whether or not we'll look at other retail options.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I suspect that that's an important report for the government to look at what is working and what's not working. It's important to understand how things are going. I would hope that the government would be anxiously pushing for that report.

Last Spring, the RCMP raided an illegal cannabis retailer in Timberlea, seizing dry cannabis and other related products. Those other related products included gummy edibles produced to resemble Lego blocks. This was a very high-potency product, and it could easily be mistaken for a candy geared toward children.

Health Canada regulations stipulate that legal edibles must not be appealing to youth, but these regulations leave significant room for interpretation. I'd like to ask the Premier: Can the government explain how they will establish the threshold for what is appealing to youth and what is not appealing to youth?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the Deputy Premier to respond.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, to the member's point, we have said consistently that the protection of youth and our young people is the number one priority when we are retailing cannabis products. That does not change with our approach to edibles, oils, and extracts.

We have asked Health Canada to identify those products that they will be approving for retail in our province. As the letter that was tabled last week shows, we have made that request. When we know what products are approved by Health Canada, we will be making the decision about which of those products we offer through the NSLC.

TIM HOUSTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's an important clarification - which products, of course, but also the threshold for what's appealing and what's not is very important. That'll presumably be around packaging and marketing, so there's a lot that's involved there. It's happening very fast.

Doctors have voiced significant concerns in recent years, especially since recreational pot became legal just last October. Doctors are concerned about the dangers of children accidentally ingesting cannabis edibles, particularly those resembling candy. Atlantic Canada's largest children's hospital issued a warning about the risks of edible weed after a flood of cannabis-related calls to the poison centre. The calls are already coming in, and they're not on the market. It's really important. It's a concern of all Nova Scotians.

I would like to ask the Premier: Since edibles are much more discreet and are much more likely to be accidentally ingested, what are the steps the government will take to ensure that youth don't have access to them?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the issue that the honourable member is highlighting is exactly why the work went in when cannabis was first made legal and why we're continuing to make sure the distribution market is held on to very tightly. We want to be able to control early on the distribution of the product that is coming forward. As we said, we will continue then to look at it, as we fully understand what's happening in the marketplace to ensure that we protect our citizens, particularly our young citizens, when it comes to this particular product.

We've gone across the globe. We've seen communities that actually allowed the distribution to open up. It became very hard to control. All of the things the honourable member is describing were situations in those communities. I hope I would have the support of the Opposition Parties to ensure that we control the distribution of this product as we all begin to look at the legalization.

First and foremost, it will be what is in the best interests in securing that we protect our children. The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has reached out to Health Canada, which has the responsibility to ensure what these products are. We want to make sure they have fully done the due diligence around that product. Let me be clear, just because Health Canada has authorized something does not mean that we will be selling that product in our facilities if we believe it does not meet the standard of protecting our children.

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

GOVT. (N.S.) - HOSP. INFRASTRUCTURE: P3 - PUB. INTEREST

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, when the dust settled a couple of years ago on the Liberal P3 school debacle, all told, it was found that the province had paid nearly \$1 billion for the whole business, which was more than twice as much as had been originally estimated, even factoring in inflation. Now the government plans to go the same route with our crucial hospital infrastructure and to lock us into 30-year private deals that stand to cost

the province billions of dollars. Our own experience in Nova Scotia provides a mountain of evidence that P3s are not in the public interest.

I want to ask the Premier why he's so reluctant to learn from his Party's own mistakes.

THE PREMIER: We're very proud of the fact that we continue to make major investments to health care infrastructure across this province. I have said all along we have gone out to a third party to do an assessment of P3s against the public builds that were happening under all successive governments. They have done a report. We have gone out to some of that health care infrastructure that we believe would be best served by a P3 model. We're now waiting for those contracts to be signed. What I have said is we would certainly make all of that information available at the time of signing, but I think the honourable member would know it's important that we make sure we protect the information as we negotiate the best deal for the taxpayers of Nova Scotia.

This is a philosophical difference between the honourable member's Party and me. The fact of the matter is I believe the private sector can take a role when it comes to some of the major infrastructure that we're building in this province, and we're looking forward to continuing to see what proposals they bring.

GARY BURRILL: Yet, Mr. Speaker, surely transparency is something on which we ought not to have philosophical differences. The Premier and his government have blocked the public from knowing anything about how much hospital P3s are actually going to cost and what kind of concessions are being made by the government on the public's behalf. They have refused to release any of the RFPs for the P3 projects currently on the table. They have refused to release the Deloitte report. That's very important because that is what supposedly, purportedly, contains the government's rationale for moving on this project on a P3 basis.

I want to ask the Premier: If the government actually has hard evidence that P3 hospitals are in the public interest, why won't they respect the principle of transparency enough to lay that out before the people of the province?

THE PREMIER: Because we're in negotiations, Mr. Speaker, with the very partners he's referring to. It would be inappropriate for us to show all the evidence and reasons that we believe this would be in the best interest of Nova Scotians, where we have seen issues and flaws with the way we do building currently. We will negotiate that. All of the information the honourable member is referring to will be laid out there once that contract is signed, and he and all Nova Scotians can look at that. As every decision we make, we will be held accountable for the decisions we make. I look forward to being able to roll that information out.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, this does not add up. On the other coast in B.C., the RFPs are immediately publicly available to anybody who wants to see them. We stand by the principle that what's good enough for the people out West is good for the people of Nova Scotia.

I want to say additionally that when the operations and the maintenance of something like a hospital are handed over to P3 developers, the results can be very negative. A recent study from the journal *Social Science & Medicine*, which I'm happy to table, found that in 126 British hospital trusts, outsourcing cleaning services was associated with a greater incidence of antibiotic-resistant staph infections, worse patient perceptions of cleanliness, and fewer cleaning staff per bed.

Will the Premier explain why the health and the safety of patients and people working in hospitals in Nova Scotia is something that his government is apparently willing to compromise on and sacrifice for the sake of this P3 deal?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the premise and the thesis around his question are completely inaccurate. There is no way that I believe anybody in this House, regardless of where they sit, would put patients' health at risk. It's just completely false and unacceptable.

They can argue about whether there's value for money. They signed on, as a Party, to the P3 project up the road. Are they against the Cobequid Pass, which has been saving lives? Are they against the P3 project that's going to happen in Antigonish to save lives? He's suggesting we should take leadership from western Canada? In western Canada they're in favour of uranium mining and fracking. Is the honourable member now in favour of those too?

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

GOV'T. (N.S.): BRIDGE PROTEST - CONTINUITY PLAN

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, the protest group Extinction Rebellion has publicly stated plans to protest on the Macdonald bridge coinciding with rush hour on Monday morning. As we learned during the Big Lift, losing the use of one of our bridges can quickly back up traffic, and that can have an impact on emergency vehicles and their ability to respond.

My question for the Premier is: Has the province spoken with HRM to establish a continuity plan for emergency responders during the planned protest?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the Bridge Commission would be dealing directly with those law enforcement agencies that would be impacted and associated with that to ensure that the motoring public has alternative options to come into

work, and as well, that those emergency vehicles he's referring to would be able to be made available for our communities.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, this is infrastructure that's run by the province through the Crown corporation, so hopefully the province is preparing for the event. This is a different group than we saw in last week's climate march. There is a very high probability that this protest could have a very real, very significant disruption and impact on traffic.

I would like to ask the Premier: What has the Premier done to ensure the public will have use of the Macdonald bridge on Monday?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, by any reasonable stretch of the imagination, I think law enforcement agencies, those that are charged with ensuring our streets are safe, are the appropriate organizations to be dealing with any disruption or any planned disruption inside this province.

I believe Nova Scotians would not want me to interfere with the delivery of justice or the pursuit of keeping communities safe. They would want me to rely on those hard-working law enforcement agencies across this province who are doing that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

TIR: P3 TWINNING PROJ. (ANTIG.) - PUB. BUILD

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Based on an analysis of the Cobequid Pass, the P3 highway twinning project from Sutherlands River to Antigonish will cost at least \$300 million - 67 per cent more than it would cost if it were done as a public build.

I'd like to ask the minister: If safety is this government's main concern, why not go with a public build so we can twin an additional 20 kilometres of highway?

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I'd actually like to congratulate the third Party, all five members, for completing the largest P3 project in the history of Nova Scotia - that being the Nova Centre. I guess the position we're hearing here today is a beacon to changing perspectives.

SUSAN LEBLANC: This Liberal government has insisted that P3 projects are inherently faster, but they've provided no evidence to support that claim. Last month at a meeting of the Public Accounts Committee, department officials told us that when seeking federal assistance to twin the Sutherlands River to Antigonish stretch of highway, the province proposed a P3 model, not even giving the option of a public build.

Can the minister tell us why, when we spent \$232 million on private profits with the P3 Cobequid Pass, the minister would seek federal funding for this project as a P3 rather than as a public build?

[2:15 p.m.]

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. She is speaking about a piece of highway that not all of us in this House travel, but many do. Many people on that stretch of highway have had their families completely destroyed.

This is about public safety, The fact of the matter is that the national government has provided \$90 million to this project. It is about getting this project built faster, more on time, and it's about saving the lives of those people who have the responsibility - or had the use of that particular highway, Mr. Speaker.

When I hear volunteer fire chiefs begging governments to do something to save the lives because they cannot afford to have their members go out and have to deal with their neighbours lying on payment, Mr. Speaker, it is completely not going to be a political issue for this Party and it won't be as long as I am the Premier.

We are paving that stretch of highway, Mr. Speaker, with the support of the federal government and the support of the private sector.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

STATUS OF WOMEN: HUMAN TRAFFICKING - RAISING AWARENESS

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act.

In recent years, public safety awareness campaigns have been launched about important topics like the legalization of cannabis and the dangers of drinking and driving. These campaigns tackle important and dangerous topics and are meant to reach a large audience.

Crime Stoppers launched a human trafficking awareness campaign with ads in bathroom stalls. However, since trafficking is still such a taboo subject, business owners are resistant to put up these ads.

Is government working with Crime Stoppers to develop their awareness campaign, or is this government working on a campaign of their own?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I'd like to thank the honourable member for bringing up a very important issue. We want to make sure that our young people in particular - although it is not just young people who are sexually trafficked - are protected. That's why we've taken a number of steps, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that people are well informed about how to deal with sexual trafficking.

Chief among these is in fact the website that was developed a couple of years ago, <https://breakthesilencens.ca/>, which helps people understand how to deal with someone who has been sexually assaulted.

What the honourable member does not know is there is actually a module in development right now that will help deal with the issue of sexual trafficking. We also have some partnerships with a number of different organizations which would include the YWCA, which has a number of projects under way including, but not limited to, a quick reference book which does outline for people - I will happily table this - which also does deal with signs to watch out for, as well as terms used in it.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Obviously there's much more work to be done but I appreciate the minister's comments.

Over the summer the London Abused Women's Centre in Ontario launched an international, award-winning, digital advertising campaign targeting sex purchasers and sex trafficked women and girls. This campaign reached over 10 million people in 16 weeks - and I will table that, Mr. Speaker.

London joins Halifax among Canadian cities with the highest rates of trafficking. Imagine that, we're number two, folks, in Canada - and I have tabled that as well. The campaign can serve as a great example of a jurisdiction working to recognize and combat trafficking as a serious threat.

In light of the success of the campaign in London, has the Nova Scotia government considered taking a similar approach to raising awareness?

KELLY REGAN: Thank you for the question. We also have an initiative under way to make sure that we have appropriate training. By the end of this Fall, we will have trained around 500 people including social workers, foster parents - people who work with young people who are in the care of the minister - so they understand, first of all, what the signs of sexual trafficking are, and also what we can do when someone is being trafficked or is at risk of being trafficked.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we have also created special placements for young people who we know are at risk of sexual trafficking or are being sexually trafficked.

THE SPEAKER: I'd just like to remind everybody that I am going to add one minute to the end of Question Period for the delay.

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

**STATUS OF WOMEN - AVALON CENTRE:
STAFF BURNOUT - PREVENT**

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I'll continue on with the Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act.

There's so much more that needs to be done. I appreciate everything that is being done to this date, but earlier this year Avalon Sexual Assault Centre had to stop taking names for its counselling waiting list. The wait-list had gotten too long and overworked, burnt-out staff were struggling to reduce the list.

Avalon provides a service that no one else provides in this province. The work they do is important, it's necessary, and it is mentally exhausting. Hearing about the trauma other people have experienced can be incredibly taxing and can risk traumatizing them second-hand.

My question for the minister is: In light of what happened with overworked staff at Avalon, what resources are being made available to prevent burnout among those providing services to human trafficking survivors in this province?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. My understanding is that Avalon is primarily funded through the Department of Health and Wellness.

I have not been approached on this particular issue, but I'm absolutely happy to sit down with the honourable member if she has concerns about the supports that are available to the folks who are providing this very important service to the women and the men and the young people of Nova Scotia.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Definitely, human trafficking has no gender. We know it's mostly females, but the services that are available to victims of trafficking are so limited here in Nova Scotia that advocates often take things into their own hands.

At their own expense, they can provide housing, food, transportation to help those who have escaped from trafficking to ensure that they are safe and clean and healthy. These advocates are so incredibly kind; I've met many of them. They're selfless people who face personal costs, both mental and financial, to provide a safe place for those victims.

Considering the glaring lack of services available to survivors of trafficking, what has the government done to assist these advocates with the financial strain from caring for victims in their own homes?

KELLY REGAN: I would like to commend the people who are stepping up to assist people who have been victims of sexual trafficking. (Applause.) I would like to thank the honourable member for the question. She may not be aware that we are actually working with the YWCA on a variety of initiatives including, but not limited to, community-based outreach programs for the victims of sexual trafficking, as well as support programs for parents, families, or caregivers of young people who are at risk of sexual trafficking or who have been sexually trafficked. I did just want to share that with the honourable member.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

COM. SERV. - HUMAN TRAFFICKING: DEPT. POSITION - CLARIFY

STEVE CRAIG: My questions, too, are to the minister. It's my pleasure to stand here for the first time to ask questions of the minister. (Applause.)

Although the minister has mentioned some ways already that the department is helping, I'd like to make a point that the opening statement of the 2018-19 Business Plan for the Department of Community Services states that the department is committed to helping victims of sexual violence, including human trafficking, and I'll table that.

As many victims of human trafficking interact with the department, as they try to get back on their feet, it is important that the department have a clear stance on the issue of trafficking.

The statistics are clear, as well, despite decades of work by the activists and the advocates. A lot of work has been done. My question then for the Minister of Community Services is: In what specific ways has the department helped victims of human trafficking?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I'd like to thank the honourable member for the question. As I just previously outlined, we have a number of initiatives under way.

We are working with the YWCA on outreach programs, support programs for the parents or caregivers of young people who have been sexually trafficked or who are at risk of being sexually trafficked. We have created specific placements for young people who have been sexually trafficked.

Mr. Speaker, we have created with the YWCA the book that I just mentioned. In addition to that, we also have training for our social workers, for foster parents, for any of our workers in our childcaring facilities to make sure they understand what the symptoms and signs of sexual trafficking are, and the things to watch out for.

STEVE CRAIG: I thank the minister. The Outcome Management Framework that was developed by the department is meant to be an evidence-based tool to measure the department's performance. Given that addressing human trafficking is an important goal included in the minister's address in the business plan, my assumption is that the Outcome Management Framework has been used to assess the work done in addressing human trafficking.

The outcomes for clients that are laid out by the department in the Outcome Management Framework are admirable and directly in line with the goals that advocates and survivors have indicated are important to them.

Has the Community Services Outcome Management Framework provided valuable information and further intelligence for best practices for helping victims of human trafficking?

KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Before the honourable member entered this House, we actually had a sexual violence prevention program that was under way called Breaking the Silence.

Quite a lot of work was done at that time and we focussed on what was needed for victims of sexual violence - what supports they could get online, for example. So, that's why we had a module on that.

We are also working on a module on supporting African Nova Scotian victims of sexual violence, as well as on a module on supporting victims of sexual trafficking.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**JUSTICE - HUMAN TRAFFICKING:
FED. YWCA INVESTMENT - MEASURE**

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

Stakeholders who we have worked with have said that one of the biggest gaps in our system is lack of services for human trafficking survivors. In order to de-program a victim from the brainwashing they've experienced and truly rehabilitate them, support and services like housing and protection are necessary.

A recent investment by the federal government into the YWCA is earmarked for these types of services, but it's unclear how the money is actually being spent. No one knows where it's going.

My question for the Minister of Justice is: What is the four-year plan for the investment from the federal government to combat human trafficking?

HON. MARK FUREY: I thank my colleague for the question. As my colleague has alluded to, there are number of initiatives within Community Services relative to response to victims and survivors of human trafficking, but to my colleague's question, the four-year funding of \$4.7 million - we are into the first year of that funding and there are a number of community programs that have submitted applications for financial support to advance initiatives within their communities.

Last year in the budget we increased the provincial human trafficking unit by two additional officers from Halifax Regional Police most familiar with the issue of human trafficking.

In the previous budget we added two additional sexual assault prosecutors from 2017 to the Public Prosecution Service and we have created the cyberbullying unit that talks about online luring. These are all connected elements and necessary to respond to human trafficking.

KARLA MACFARLANE: At the end of the day, we are not putting money where the money should be going and that's having more stings. Let's just end the johns; get rid of them, and then that would end the trafficking.

Taking on the task of rehabilitating victims of human trafficking is honourable. Researching the problem, finding the root causes, and trying to end it is noble. Government investment into solving this problem is so crucial to saving these young youth.

For something as important as this, it's critical to ensure every dollar spent is bettering the lives of victims. So, I need to know what metric is actually being used to measure whether or not the programming that the government has invested in through the YWCA is successful.

MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to recognize because I don't want anyone to leave this legislature and think that this government is it committed and focussed on the issue of human trafficking.

We have expended considerable time and energy on this subject. We've engaged our federal colleagues and we've secured federal funding. There are a number of applications now from community groups who advance what they believe to be reasonable steps to help mitigate the matter of human trafficking. This is a collective issue, Mr. Speaker. It is about front end prevention; it is about addressing those committing the crimes and it is about support of those through the court process and after the court process. And we will continue that commitment.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

JUSTICE: HUMAN TRAFFICKING - ACTION

KARLA MACFARLANE: My question is for the Minister of Justice. Human trafficking is obviously not a new problem, we all recognize that. For decades, young Nova Scotians have been bought and sold - taken from one end of the country to the other - forced to work in the sex trade. Outside of a few “john” stings and a police task force in the 1990s, little has been done to stop it here in Nova Scotia. While federal funding in the Spring was welcome, and that Ottawa recognized the issue, a new four-person RCMP task force and a single investment in one organization hardly addresses the magnitude of this problem.

So, my question for the Minister of Justice is: What actual concrete action, other than the federal investment, has this province, this government, taken to end human trafficking?

[2:30 p.m.]

HON. MARK FUREY: I want to correct my colleague. The resources submitted to the provincial unit are not solely the RCMP; it is an integrated unit of two RCMP officers and two Halifax Regional Police officers. The police, the law enforcement community, recognizes this as a serious problem. One of the individuals in charge of that team is internationally known for his work and efforts in mitigating and advancing investigations around human trafficking. We have sourced additional money from the federal government, and we will continue to look at options and opportunities to address and mitigate this problem.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Again, we're not arresting the johns; we're not putting enough of the investment into arresting the johns - more stings. Human trafficking is a problem, as we know, in Ontario too. In fact, we share the top spot for the highest number of cases. I mentioned that earlier.

However, the Ontario government has actually taken action - there is a handbook of services for survivors, online courses, safe houses, legal assistance, and so much more available - availability for help.

Nova Scotia remains a source of a province to send human traffickers outside of the province. And we have a responsibility Mr. Speaker, to end the supply of Nova Scotians going out to other provinces.

So, my question to the minister is: As trafficking numbers continue to rise in Nova Scotia, does the government intend to follow the Ontario government in taking action to end this crime?

MARK FUREY: My colleague would have some of the answers to that question. I hosted my colleague, as well as advocates, on the issue of human trafficking about a

month ago. I committed to my colleague then that I would elevate this discussion to the Justice FPT meeting with my federal colleagues. I committed to my colleague in 2020, when I host the Human Rights FPT here in Halifax, that human trafficking will be on the agenda.

This is not only a Nova Scotian problem. She's absolutely correct; we have to end demand. But that is going to take a period of time. It's going to take a focused effort. Not only on our resources here in Nova Scotia, but also our colleagues and resources across the country. Because these individuals, as we know, primarily are leaving the province.

There is an intelligence element to this Mr. Speaker, that we are not able to discuss in this Legislature. But I want to give my colleague confidence, and Nova Scotians confidence, that this is an important issue to this government, and we will continue to address it in progressive steps.

THE SPEAKER: Order please, I think you're done by my track here.

The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

LAE - WORKPLACE BULLYING: OH&S - PROTECTION

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. People facing bullying or psychological harassment from colleagues at work currently have no recourse in Nova Scotia. According to our laws, employers are under no obligation to ensure a psychologically safe environment.

I'd like to ask the minister: Is the minister concerned that Nova Scotia is the only jurisdiction in Canada that does not protect workers from bullying and psychological harassment under the Occupational Health and Safety Act?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: I'd like to thank the member for the question. Mr. Speaker, in our Act we actually do have provisions for workers if they feel that they're unsafe, and bullying would be one of those examples. They can refuse work. They can go to their superiors.

I am always more than happy to expand protection for workers, as our government has done many times. If the honourable member has any suggestions in terms of how we can protect our workers and help their well-being, I am more than happy to work with the member and get that done.

TAMMY MARTIN: Thank you very much, and there will be more to that to follow.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians need to know that if they are being bullied at work, they have somewhere to turn. Changing the OH&S Act to include bullying and

psychological harassment as a workplace injury would provide workers with some recourse and a path forward when they're put in this terrible position. No one should feel unsafe at work.

Will the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education commit to amending the OH&S Act to protect workers from bullying and psychological harassment?

LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, since our government came into power, we have made changes to occupational health and safety. The safety of our workers is the utmost priority for our government. I am more than happy to look at anything that can help our workers' safety. I am more than happy to work with the member in terms of bullying in the workplace. There is no room for bullying in any workplace, in our schools, or in our society, and I am more than happy to see how we can work together.

I have had meetings with individuals who have brought up the same issue. We've talked about ways that it could go forward within the Department of Labour and Advanced Education within our mandate. There are other options available that we have to help guide individuals through that as well.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

JUSTICE - HUMAN TRAFFICKING: LAW ENFORCE. - CONSULT

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Advocates say that the only way to end trafficking is to put an end to the demand for sex work. Our strong laws in Canada support this.

It is illegal to buy sex, but legal to sell it. However, the current approach to ending trafficking more often than not involves targeting the workers and encouraging them to leave. The focus remains on the independent workers and victims rather than the ones doing the exploiting.

Our laws were designed to protect sex workers. My question to the minister is: Has the government worked with law enforcement to discuss best practice in this type of case?

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, we work very closely with our law enforcement community on multiple arrays of matters that are a concern to public safety, and human trafficking happens to be one of them.

Just two weeks ago, I spoke at the Nova Scotia Chiefs of Police Conference, and I highlighted the provincial priorities that we have in the area of policing. We talked about sexual assault, we talked about domestic violence, we talked about maintenance enforcement, and we talked about human trafficking. The operational strategies of our law

enforcement community cover all aspects of the human trafficking discussion, including a focus on johns.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we have to do more, and we can't wait. This is an emergency. We're seeing victims being taken every day.

The laws in Canada are strong and have been amended to ensure that victims are not treated as criminals. What we've heard from various police forces is that there is a lack of clarity as to what changes have been made to the laws around sex work and trafficking. There is no consistency to what is and what isn't allowed. It's confusing, which makes things very difficult for our law enforcements to enforce.

Trafficking is a problem from one end of the province to another, and consensus is key in combatting it. My question for the minister is: What work is being done to ensure that all police forces remain up to date with laws and enforce them properly right across this province, not just in the HRM area?

MARK FUREY: I couldn't agree more with my colleague that more has to be done around the area of human trafficking. That's why we have a focused effort on this particular area. Mr. Speaker, she is also correct in that this is not restricted to HRM. Many of our rural communities are impacted by these particular efforts of those who are violating our young people.

There are a number of steps being taken. The RCMP-integrated HRP human trafficking team is not only an investigative body, they are conducting presentations around the province, working with municipal police services from one end of the province to the other. The province and our department are working with the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking on a national research project. The government is participating in the federal-provincial-territorial trafficking in persons working group, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of initiatives on this subject, and we'll continue to work with the same collective effort that my colleague has.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

MUN. AFFS. - SACK.-COBEQUID: HOMELESSNESS - ADDRESS

STEVE CRAIG: On September 18th, a release from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced an expansion of affordable housing options and that every Nova Scotian deserves a safe, suitable, and affordable place to call home. Although the announcement mentions those at risk of becoming homeless, it doesn't mention those who are already homeless. Homelessness is a pressing concern for the people of Sackville-Cobequid. Mr. Speaker, the volunteer-run Sackville Warming Centre is once again preparing to aid the homeless in this upcoming Winter season. This group is stepping up

to fill the gap for those in Sackville-Cobequid who have fallen outside the scope of current government programs.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister confirm that those facing existing chronic housing challenges that come with homelessness in Sackville-Cobequid will be taken into consideration with this new plan?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: I appreciate the question from the honourable member. I want to start by saying he is correct - we do believe that every Nova Scotian deserves a safe and affordable place to call home.

We know the great work that folks in his community and other communities right across this province - throughout the HRM, and in all our municipalities - are doing with regard to work around the homeless. We have programs as well out there. The rapid re-housing program has been a success in the recent years. We are doing that, and we also have support workers out there to continue to work.

We see these homeless folks and all those in need of affordable housing as a priority, especially with this new investment that we are making.

STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, Sackville Manor is a 40-unit affordable housing building located on Old Beaver Bank Road. After numerous break-ins, property damage, and mischief, safety is a major concern to the Sackville residents. As a result of these incidents, the Sackville RCMP completed a crime prevention through environmental design audit of the Sackville Manor. This audit recommends basic repairs to fencing, proper lighting, proper signage, and more. If the recommendations from this audit are fulfilled, it will play a major role in addressing the security and safety concerns of those residents. If we are going to have an affordable housing strategy, it also needs to include proactivity, taking safety into account to protect the residents.

Will the minister commit to addressing this safety issue directly, by implementing the RCMP safety recommendations at Sackville Manor?

CHUCK PORTER: It is certainly a concern around Sackville Manor and all residents right across this province. The health and well-being of all Nova Scotians is this government's first priority, Mr. Speaker. Part of the action plan that we have just signed that he spoke to a few minutes ago invests many millions of dollars, as you are aware. Part of that, in the first three years, will be a significant focus on preserving, stabilizing, and making secure the current housing stock that we have. You may ask, why is that important? Seventeen thousand Nova Scotians will be able to remain in a place they call home.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

EECD - SPRINGHILL: NEW SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION - TIMELINE

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, prior to my election in 2018, the government announced a number of new schools. Among those new schools, I welcomed the great announcement of the elementary school for Springhill. Residents of that area have been asking me questions - where and when they can expect construction. They worry that the announcement may not come to completion on a timeline that maybe was suggested of 2021 in September.

My question is for the minister: When can the residents of Springhill expect to see a shovel in the ground and the long-awaited elementary school come to fruition?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I'm very proud to be part of a government that is investing so heavily in the infrastructure of our education system in areas such as Springhill, Wedgeport, Eastern Shore, and many other communities across the province, in schools that required updating and communities that need new schools.

In the particular case of Springhill, we are still undergoing the technical evaluation. As the member can understand, there have been some challenges because of the undermining in the community as a result of the old mine. That work is still ongoing. We do have a couple of sites now that may be viable, and the engineers will be providing us with feedback on that as soon as they have completed their structural analysis.

[2:45 p.m.]

TORY RUSHTON: I thank the minister for his information and his meetings previous to this session.

Last year the government tested the site next to the Dr. Carson & Marion Murray Community Centre on Main Street. There were some discussions that there may be issues around that property, and I'll table that. Now the residents are wondering if another location will be selected.

Will the minister put the speculation to rest and hold consultation and let the community and myself know how, when, and what we need to do as a community to help this project go forward?

ZACH CHURCHILL: Of course, as I've kept in contact with the member thus far. There are, I believe, two further sites right now that are undergoing technical evaluation by our engineers. As soon as that technical evaluation is completed, then we go to the community to seek feedback.

I'll remind the member that we've changed this process to try to mitigate against construction delays and to have a tighter, more streamlined technical focus as a site

selection process. The community will remain part of that, but we want to make sure that the groundwork is done on the engineering front before we go to the community and inform them what potential sites are viable.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

EECD - WEDGEPORT SCH.: DESIGN/SITE SELECT. - UPDATE

COLTON LEBLANC: Monsieur le Président, un groupe concerné de parents de la communauté de Wedgeport a travaillé depuis mai 2017 pour promouvoir une nouvelle école élémentaire francophone dans leur communauté.

Mr. Speaker, a group of concerned parents from the Wedgeport area have been working very hard since early 2017 to advocate for a new elementary school in their community.

In March 2018, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development announced a new elementary school for the community. Since then, little development on this project has occurred. Site selection or school design has not yet been decided, but the minister has told parents that the school will open for 2021. That's 23 months away.

Can the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development provide an update to the House on the new Wedgeport school's design and site selection?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I've been in constant contact with the SAC and the parents committee that has been advocating for this new school. I've toured Wedgeport myself, and it was upon touring that school that I knew a new site was particularly needed. I'm very proud to be part of the government that didn't neglect that school but actually invested money to put a new site there, despite the fact that members of the Opposition voted against the budget for these new schools.

The technical evaluation for that site selection process is almost complete in Wedgeport. I believe that there will be one or multiple sites that have been identified very close to the previous school that will be presented to the community for feedback.

COLTON LEBLANC: I thank the minister for his answer, and I hope that parents and the community are consulted throughout this ongoing process.

Parents have worked very hard on this project and have had very little feedback from this government. They want to protect their culture and their language and to provide quality education and services to their community. After securing funding, they completed a feasibility study, which I will table, in support of having a community centre constructed with the school. Parents have been told that the application now sits on the minister's desk.

They have spent numerous hours to submit an important funding request and deserve to know the status of the application. Can the minister update this House on the status of the community centre application, and will the minister confirm that the school will still open on time to receive students for September 2021?

ZACH CHURCHILL: I personally have been in fairly regular contact with members of that community and the parents, so it's not fair to say that they have not received feedback from the government when, in fact, the minister is meeting with them and communicating with them regularly.

In terms of the community centre, that is going to be funded by the federal government, so that process might take a little longer; however, we can accommodate the further build of the community centre on that school within the design of the school itself. That will not, and should not, prevent us from hitting our target timeline on the build for the new school in Wedgeport.

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

FISH. & AQUACULTURE - CDN. SEAFOOD SHOW: N.S. ABSENCE - REASON

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Last week, the first edition of the Canadian Seafood Show took place in Montreal. The show billed itself as an opportunity for Canadian buyers to meet with suppliers from visiting countries and discover new products and new flavours, and I'll table that. The government of P.E.I. sent a delegation to make connections and explore new trade opportunities, and they even sponsored a networking event featuring P.E.I. seafood products, but it appears that Nova Scotia's aquaculture representatives did not attend.

My question for the minister is: Why was there no Nova Scotia delegation at the Canadian Seafood Show?

HON. KEITH COLWELL: It's important that we are in all markets in the country and the world, and that we identify the areas that are best suited for our industry to fill the markets. We will be looking at those markets, and will continue to look at them - and not necessarily go to every show that everyone else goes to - and make sure that we get the best opportunity for businesses in Nova Scotia.

Since I have become minister of the department, we have grown our exports in Nova Scotia from \$924 million to almost \$2.3 billion.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, 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. 166.

Bill No. 166 - Denturists Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I move that Bill No. 166, the Denturists Act, be now read a second time.

I am pleased to stand today to talk briefly about this legislation, the Denturists Act. Denturists play an important role in access to dental services here in Nova Scotia for Nova Scotians. We want denturists to be able to provide the services that they have been trained for and for Nova Scotians to continue to receive the dental services that they need. That's why we're making amendments to the Denturists Act.

The current Act prohibits denturists from placing removable dentures over implants. This is a practice that all three accredited Canadian schools of denturism train their students to perform as part of their curriculum. It is also a practice that is conducted in other provinces across Canada.

The amended Act will enable denturists in Nova Scotia to place removable dentures over implants while working as part of an implant team. Denturists across Canada have had their scope of practice expand over the years. These amendments that we have proposed here in this bill will bring our denture services in line with other provinces in Canada and allow denturists in Nova Scotia to fulfill the work that they are trained to do.

I look forward to comments from my colleagues.

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

BARBARA ADAMS: I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill No. 166, an Act to Amend Chapter 25 of the Acts of 2000, the Denturists Act. The PC Party is in support of these amendments, so I'll keep my remarks brief.

One of the things that we like about this amendment is that the dentists and the denturists were all consulted, so there was agreement in place before it was brought to this House. That is how we would like to see all bills brought to the House, so we applaud this government for doing that.

We also want to thank the dentists and the denturists for co-operating when it comes to sharing the scope of practice. There are a lot of things in health care where we are doing something in practice, but it's not in policy or in an Act. It's always important that we do that.

I would like to encourage this government to consider doing the same thing for the other allied health professionals: the pharmacists, who have the ability to prescribe certain medications but don't have the funding to cover the costs of them doing so; the physiotherapists, who could be ordering certain tests that would allow them to facilitate their treatments; and all of the other allied health professionals, who could have an expanded scope of practice to augment what physicians and other allied health professionals are doing in this province, provided there's proper consultation.

Mr. Speaker, we applaud the government. We will be voting in favour of this bill. We appreciate the diligence of this government in collaborating with the stakeholders involved ahead of the bill being introduced.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, we're happy to see that with these changes in the legislation, the scope of practice of denturists will be expanded in Nova Scotia. Access to dentures needs to be increased, and this sounds like a good step in the right direction.

While we look forward to seeing the impacts of these changes, however, we can't forget about the wider problem of access to oral health care. One in three working people in Canada have no dental insurance. When they need to see a dentist, they pay out of pocket. If they don't have the money, in many cases, they simply go without the care that they need. As a result of people not getting the care they need, people live with severe pain, they miss work, they suffer in silence and can't live up to their potential.

Access to oral health care is an issue for children, for adults, and for seniors. We need to ensure that our health care system doesn't stop at the neck; it should cover us from tip to toe.

Mr. Speaker, in Nova Scotia we could start to ensure that everyone gets oral health care by implementing a public health dental hygiene program in our public schools and the passing of Bill No. 141 this session.

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

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their thoughtful comments and their indication of support for this legislation. I can assure them that in my own discussions with representatives of the Denturist Licensing Board of Nova Scotia, this has been a long time coming; they do look forward to seeing this bill pass. I am sure they will equally appreciate it passing as it moves through with all-Party support.

With that, I close second reading on Bill No. 166.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 166. 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. 163.

Bill No. 163 - Wilderness Areas Protection Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 163, amendments to the Wilderness Areas Protection Act, be now read a second time. I'm pleased to say a few words about the amendments to the Wilderness Areas Protection Act.

Wilderness areas protect nature. They also offer us a chance to hike, camp, fish, hunt, and enjoy unique Nova Scotian experiences. We generally restrict use by vehicles in these areas, and for good reasons: we want to ensure wildlife and biodiversity in these areas are protected. That's the guiding principle we have in mind whenever we talk about wilderness areas.

That said, there are some instances where vehicles can be allowed without harming what we're protecting. Working with community organizations we sometimes develop management agreements for vehicle uses in wilderness areas. For example, we've worked with the ATV Association of Nova Scotia and the Snowmobilers Association of Nova Scotia to manage 120 kilometres of trails in these areas. We focus on existing sections of trail that connect other sections of trail, and only members of these associations are allowed to use these vehicles on them.

With this careful approach, people can get to a favourite fishing spot or enjoy a ride in our wild spaces without harming them. We have found this approach to be very effective in ensuring responsible use and promoting stewardship by trail users.

Let me be clear, we have no intention of opening up our wilderness areas for widespread vehicle use. That would defeat their purpose. This is an important background for members to know when considering our amendments to the Wilderness Areas Protection Act. As minister, I already have the authority under this legislation to develop management agreements for limited vehicle use in our newer wilderness areas. I do not have the authority to do that in 30 or so wilderness areas designated before 1998. These amendments will allow me to do this on just two trails: the Grand Lake-Ross Lake connector trail in Ogden Round Lake Wilderness Area, and the Dominique Meadow Brook-Fountain Lake Connector Trail in Portapique River Wilderness Area. That's it, just these two trails. They are the last two trail connectors to complete the system around the province.

If these amendments pass, we will approach the ATV associations and the snowmobiler association about possible management agreements. We will also ensure that these trails are safe for use and managed in a way that ensures the environment is well protected.

Mr. Speaker, there are some other amendments you'll see in this bill as well. The legislation already gives me, as minister, authority to issue

[3:00 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, there are some other amendments you'll see in this bill as well. The legislation already gives me, as minister, authority to issue licences for vehicle use, so that people can access their private land if it's completely surrounded by a wilderness area; I don't have the authority to do this if the property is only partially surrounded. We're fixing the legislation to give me the authority in these circumstances. That's not to say that I'll be issuing licences - I won't. It's not an uncommon circumstance, but I'm sure my colleagues can appreciate that there are situations where a landowner would have no other reasonable way to access their property except going through a wilderness area.

Mr. Speaker, another thing we're fixing is the legislation that pertains to parking lots. I realize the idea of parking lots and wilderness areas may not seem likely that they seem to be together; however, there is an issue we need to address. We will ensure these trails are also safe and used in a managed way that will ensure the environment is well protected. The legislation does not allow a parking lot to be within the boundary of a wilderness area. So, we will have cases where people do not have safe places to park when they're accessing these remote areas for outdoor recreation. So, we are fixing that so that we can put parking lots where its appropriate to do so. This helps with the safety and encourages responsible use in popular and beautiful spots.

Finally, there are some administrative amendments to ensure that we are managing wilderness areas consistently and effectively, efficiently, to protect them and ensure people can enjoy them. Our government is committed to biodiversity and to preserving our most beautiful and ecologically important areas for Nova Scotia. When we make these decisions about wilderness areas, that is first and foremost in our minds. These amendments will allow people to use these areas more safely and responsibly, while preserving them for generations.

Mr. Speaker, I move to close debate on second reading of Bill No. 163 and look forward to comment from my colleagues.

THE SPEAKER: Order please, we'll save the motion for when we come back to you.

GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I think I need unanimous support for that, but maybe I was asking that. Anyway, I look forward to the comments from my colleagues.

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

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the minister for allowing us an opportunity. You know, I read through this and I do want to make a comment up front in regard to the staff individual who did the presentation, the briefing on this, Peter Labor, who I think is the Director of Protected Areas - it was a very in-depth and concise media brief and I certainly thank him for that.

When we went through a number of these, Mr. Speaker, there were absolutely very few concerns that our caucus had - almost zero. Most of them we see as "makes sense" amendments, particularly in regard to the parking and access to landlocked areas.

I left the meeting anticipating I would get a flurry of calls from a variety of groups. I did hear from the director of ATVANS and listened to the comments that were brought forward there and then as I was walking in - I didn't hear anything else from anyone until about five minutes before walking into the House today, when I got a call from a gentleman who raised a number of issues, not so much in regard to Clause 3, the particular parcels of land that are being added in here that the trails will be on, the additional trails, it was more in regard to how some of the Act is laid out and his concerns in regard with approving - he was a representative from the Lays Lake Outdoor Association. I'm assuming the minister has probably spoken with that group. This gentleman raised a number of very valid concerns in regard to who is able to access some of these trails and who actually pays for them.

The fees that ATV owners currently pay to register a vehicle in this province of \$55 - \$40 I guess goes into a reserve that is then divided between these community groups to help maintain and look after some of these trails. The concern that was raised to me was

the fact that it's only members of three or four organizations - even though all ATV owners across the province, when they register their vehicles, pay the same fee, \$40 goes into a fund that is divided among them all, it's only three or four organizations that can access the funding that's generated, and only three or four that are allowed to travel on these wilderness areas.

One of the main concerns that was raised is with regard to anglers and hunters. There is an association in this province that exists under legislation that was established in 1930 - the Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters. They are actually the official spokesperson for hunters, fishers and trappers across the province. This gentleman was raising some concerns that although some of those members do not want to be a member of the official association such as ATVANS or the Snowmobilers Association, they still pay fees through the Department of Environment. For hunting and fishing they still are paying the same fee as everybody else across the province with regard to registering their ATV vehicles but they're limited on the access - they're not allowed to access roads similar to the two that we're bringing forward.

I do bring that up because I do think that there should be an opportunity. I don't know if the minister has reviewed that or not. I know there were some concerns around insurance and some of these other associations, like ATVANS and the Snowmobilers Association, have insurance that allows them to access these wilderness properties. I would point out that under legislation and laws, I believe anybody that owns an all-terrain vehicle in Nova Scotia has to have insurance as well.

There were some questions with regard to travelling in wilderness areas. I know that for some of the more organized groups it's \$5 million liability in order to get on to those wilderness areas. I wasn't quite sure if it's \$5 million total or \$5 million up to five incidents. I don't know if the minister at some point in time can clarify that with me. I know that under the laws of the province any ATV owner has to have \$1 million liability as well as PLPD and, in most cases, those ATV owners can get up to \$2 million for only an additional \$10.

Other than what I just brought up, we don't have any real issues with this legislation or the proposed amendments that are coming forward. We'll wait to see what happens in the Committee on Law Amendments. I'm sure there will be a number of representatives from the anglers and hunters and trappers across the province who are intending to attend the Committee on Law Amendments to raise some of these issues. Hopefully, there might be an opportunity to address them at that time and when it comes back from committee.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

LISA ROBERTS: It's my pleasure to stand and speak briefly to this legislation. Certainly, changes that allow us to make wilderness areas safer and access to those areas safer through the establishment of parking areas makes good sense and so does clarifying

governance and enforcement for the Act. In general, we find that these amendments are, broadly speaking, practical and as close to housekeeping as you can get when you're talking about the wilderness as opposed to your house. We have no concerns.

I would say that I look forward to when we will hear the government talk about some more ambition related to the wilderness areas. It's quite hopeful to me that this bill is following right on the heels of an announcement of protection of some new wilderness areas. It has been a long time coming, certainly since I was elected, that actual designation of those areas has been expected at any moment, and so it is nice to see some activity.

We know that around the world, as we all confront the reality of climate change, protected areas and biodiversity are seen as very important and also as an area where we need to be much more ambitious. Having not been ambitious, I would suggest, in this government's first term, I look forward to seeing more ambition. In the meantime, we'll see if anybody raises any concerns or any substantive discussion related to these modest amendments at the Law Amendments Committee.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

JOHN LOHR: I, too, would like to take a few moments to say a few words about the bill. I do want to raise maybe a slightly different issue than my colleagues have raised. I'll speak directly to that rather than all parts of the bill.

What I notice in Clause 5(2) of the bill is that we see two areas that are becoming permitted to be motorized areas. I find it interesting that this bill presents these two areas as, this is just the way it is. I am quite certain that the minister would tell me that very careful deliberation went into the selection of these two areas. I am sure that the Department of Environment took into account many factors in deciding how these two particular areas would be chosen as having this permitted. I realize that the matter of off-road vehicle traffic, in particular throughout wilderness areas in Nova Scotia and all across the province, is a contentious matter - no doubt about that.

There are groups that want greater access for sure, and there are groups that want lower access. I would like to suggest to the minister that the process that was used to make the decision might have been a better thing to have in the bill rather than the outcome. There will be other communities that will possibly want motorized traffic, or there may be areas where it's permitted now, and those communities might want that stopped.

What was the process? What was the community engagement? What were the steps required? What we have here in the bill is the outcome of a careful, I'm sure, decision-making process on the part of the minister, but what other communities around the province need to know is what the process is and how this decision was made. What was the basis of this decision? In many cases, do we change what we are dealing with right now? I know there are areas of the province where people would say, we want less motorized traffic.

There are also places where there are groups that would say, hey, we want this trail opened up for us too. I think that a far better service to the public and to the province would be a more careful description of the actual process, the requirements, and what the basis of the decision was, rather than just simply dropping into the bill.

These are just two areas where this is done. I think that maybe the process would have been better described in the legislation, and the outcome of the process may be in the regulations. Presumably this is going to be a decision that - this type of thing - in the future other groups are going to want to open this discussion from one point of view or another. I would just like to express that concern about your bill.

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

GARY BURRILL: I am happy to say a couple of words about these amendments. I suppose that I would be like an awful lot of other people in the province in that, although I live and work in the city, and so do all of my children, my family's connection to the wilderness part of the province is, for us, very meaningful and rich.

My grandfather Clayton Prosser came from inland Yarmouth County on the edge of Digby County, a part of the province known as Kempt. He was a timber cruiser and a land surveyor who was very proud to have been a part of the original survey team that established the point known as Tri-County Rock, deep in the centre of the Tobeatic Wildlife Management Area, where the three southwestern counties of the province converge. His grandfather, Albert Ring, was a guide in that country at the headwaters of the Tusknet River that are known as the Barrio, where he never saw cash money from one year to another but what came to him from guiding what at that time were called American sports.

[3:15 p.m.]

Growing up, travelling with, and listening to my grandfather and my father, Fred Burrill, who were very familiar with all that country, I acquired a sense that the Tobeatic was a place of particular specialness and of a heightened significance, and similarly, the Barrio, with its defining, interconnected series of lakes and rivers - one lake of which I will have you know is referred to on the map as Burrill's Deadwater - the Barrio, with its connection of interlocking lakes and rivers over a long stretch between Digby and Yarmouth County is a place where, with all its memories and all its associations, in my own family is regarded as pretty close to sacred.

I suspect that something similar to this is true for an awful lot of families in an awful lot of different parts of the province. I know that in Upper Musquodoboit, where I spent the biggest part of my adult life, people whose families belong in that country often speak in a parallel way about the Liscomb Game Sanctuary, which they refer to there as just "The Sanctuary," or which they sometimes refer to as "Out the Ten," referring to the

10-mile lake and the 10-mile stream that are between the Liscomb Game Sanctuary and Pleasant Valley and the Musquodoboit Valley.

Wilderness areas are not something “other” in Nova Scotia. Wilderness areas are deeply of a piece with who we actually are, as they are also wilderness areas too plainly indispensable to the essential biodiversity of our province. This is one of the reasons it is such an encouraging and important thing that land protection in the last number of years has moved to a more central place on the screen of the consciousness of the province and why it is a positive and encouraging thing that the province continues to move towards that 13 per cent protection goal.

This bill deals with a number of details pursuant to that protection, related to a range of considerations, some of which my colleagues have spoken to, from land use to enforcement, to parking, to designation. These all appear to be improvements and to be welcome.

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

The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. GORDON WILSON: I thank the members across for their comments: the members for Sackville-Beaver Bank, Halifax Needham, Kings North, and Halifax Chebucto. To start with, I really do appreciate and also would like to recognize the hard work of the staff, Peter Labor. It's not the first time I've heard comments on probably one of the better bill briefings that we've had, and I really do want to thank them for putting together a tremendous package for me.

The Lays Lake Outdoor Association with trail fees and insurance, I would like to assure the member that I certainly would like to understand and know more about that. I believe my colleagues from Lands and Forestry also, where the Off-highway Vehicles Act resides, will be interested in hearing those things and seeing what their issues are.

When we're talking about protected areas, I really need to stand here and thank my previous ministers who were here before me. It's important to know that I came into this position, and a lot of hard work was done by those previous ministers, especially the one who was there before me just recently. I'd like to thank them for everything they've done.

As far as the process goes, maybe I can clarify a couple of things. As far as the original 31 sites that were put in Schedule A in the 1998 piece of legislation, there was no authority for the minister to designate trails at this point in time. That's what this is doing. Any wilderness area that has been proclaimed since then, the minister does have that ability, under certain conditions, to designate trails.

Some of the key factors are that they need to be connectors; we need to have an existing trail association that's there, ready to take over the management of it; and it does not in any way degrade the ecological significance.

There are conditions now where I can as minister, but previously there weren't. These trails weren't just picked through a process. These were two remaining trails from the original 31, and the community has been behind this for years. This is an example, with Ogden Lake and Portapique, where it was more to clean up what we felt was something that had been on the books for a long time.

I do also appreciate the comments from our member for Halifax Chebucto. I will tell him that I have had the privilege to be at Tri-County Rock. I have had the privilege of travelling throughout many of our wilderness areas.

One of the things that struck me the most just recently at our announcement that we had towards the designation of wilderness protected areas - which was a very special day for me - when I was there, starting to bring my comments, I looked and there was a beautiful birchbark canoe made by our Mi'kmaq. It brought me back to the day when I used to travel back into the wilderness areas.

Back then, when we were children - well, I shouldn't say "children," but young adults - we all had a canoe. Nowadays, children all have smartphones. I wish that more of our children had canoes today and spent less time on their smartphones, so that they could go to these special places. What we are doing here today is hopefully going to give more of an opportunity for that to happen.

With those few words, I move that we close debate on second reading of Bill No. 163, amendments to the Wilderness Areas Protection Act. I look forward to comments from the Law Amendments Committee.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 163. 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 Minister of Community Services on a quick introduction.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my colleagues' attention to the East Gallery, where we are joined today by the chair of the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia, former chair for Bedford United Church, and a business leader in our province, Darrell Johnston. I ask the members to give him the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, that concludes government business for today. I move that the House now rise to meet again Friday, October 4th, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Following the daily routine and Question Period, business will include second reading on Bill Nos. 169 and 170, and with time permitting, Address in Reply.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for the House to rise to meet again tomorrow, Friday, October 4th, between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

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

[The House rose at 3:24 p.m.]