



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2019

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2019

Sixty-third General Assembly

Second Session

9:00 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, Brendan Maguire

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a report entitled the Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act (IPTA) Annual Report 2018-2019.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1355

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

Whereas today, October 18th, is the 90th anniversary of the Persons Case, which in 1929 declared women are persons under the law and established women's right to fully participate in politics and affairs of state; and

Whereas the historic decision to include women in the legal definition of persons gave women the right to be appointed to the Senate of Canada, thereby paving the way for women's increased participation in politics and public service leadership; and

Whereas today in Nova Scotia, about 60 per cent of senior leadership positions in the provincial Public Service are held by women, and the number of women MLAs elected each election has increased with 16 women MLAs currently serving in the Legislature;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize this important anniversary and promote women in all their diversity as the leaders of Nova Scotia's future.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 1356

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

Whereas the YWCA is a movement working for the empowerment, leadership, and rights of young women and girls; and

Whereas the YWCA is a trusted partner that works with government to help combat gender-based violence, and during the third week of October, YWCAs from all over the world promote and encourage a Week Without Violence; and

Whereas this week focuses on raising awareness, promoting attitude change, and enabling individuals and organizations to take positive actions toward ending violence in their communities;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly join me in commending the work of the YWCA, observing the Week Without Violence, and committing to help end violence in communities across 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. 207 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 33 of the Acts of 2004. The Protection for Persons in Care Act. (Barbara Adams)

Bill No. 208 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 4 of the Acts of 2004. The Health Protection Act. (Susan Leblanc)

Bill No. 209 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 34 of the Acts of 2010. The Clothesline Act. (Lisa Roberts)

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 Kings North.

BAKER, OLIVER: 10 IN 10 CLEANUP - RECOG.

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize local environmental activist, 14-year-old Oliver Baker for his idea of a movement he calls “10 in 10”. Oliver is a current student at Northeast Kings Education Centre in Canning. In the Fall of 2018, when Oliver was in middle school in Grade 8 at Kings County Academy in Kentville, he challenged everyone to pick up 10 pieces of plastic in 10 minutes any time they were outside in nature, especially near waterways.

Oliver’s “10 in 10” idea awarded him acceptance into the EF Canadian Youth Ambassador Program. In April this year, he travelled to the Dominican Republic for eight days on a service tour and then travelled to Ottawa to meet with MPs and senators to discuss his idea further.

Tomorrow, October 19th, Oliver has organized a “10 in 10” Cleanup at Harbourville Beach in Kings County at 10:00 a.m. Please join me in acknowledging Oliver’s tremendous efforts to help clean up our environment by initiating this movement, and encouraging everyone to participate.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

KAPRA, JERJIS: U18 CHESS CHAMP - CONGRATS.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a local chess phenomenon. At just 13 years old, Jerjis Kapra is currently the highest-rated youth chess player for under 18 in this province. In addition, he is seven-time provincial champion for his grade level and has represented Nova Scotia nationally multiple times.

Earlier this year, Jerjis went to Vancouver as part of Team Nova Scotia, participating in the Canadian Chess Challenge. He holds the title of Grand Prix Champion and tied for first place in the Halifax Summer Open Championship when he competed with adult players. Besides improving his own performance, Jerjis helped to revive and organize the chess club at Park West School.

Jerjis’ leadership extends beyond chess. On June 17th, Jerjis received the Chief Scout’s Award for his leadership and volunteer service to the community. Would this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Jerjis on all his success. I am so proud to have such a dynamic youth in Clayton Park West.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

**STEPHENSON, JOAN AND TOM:
PRESERVING N.S. CARVINGS - CONGRATS.**

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, nearly 40 years ago, Tom and Joan Stephenson of Port Joli became aware of prolific folk artist John Smith from Sherose Island. Before his passing in 1968, Smith carved decoy ducks with a distinctive sparkle in their eyes, as well as other collectible works.

The Stephensons recognized the importance of keeping Smith's memory and his art alive. They worked to create and publish a 32-page book that contains coloured photos of his work and recounts recollections from those who knew him.

I am pleased to recognize and congratulate Tom and Joan for their efforts in preserving this piece of unique Nova Scotian history. If not for their efforts, the memories of John Smith and his distinctive work may very well have been lost and forgotten.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

**CALLBECK, CHRISTOPHER: RON MACDONALD
DISTING. SERV. AWARD - CONGRATS.**

KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia is home to many world-class universities that entice innovative leaders to live, work, and share their expertise within rural parts of our province.

Christopher Callbeck, VP Finance and CFO of Acadia University, is one of these leaders, who brings a long list of accomplishments over his distinguished career. This week he is in Ottawa to receive the 2019 Ron MacDonald Distinguished Service Award through the Canadian Research Knowledge Network. CRKN is a partnership of Canadian universities dedicated to expanding digital content. This award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated vision, dedication, and outstanding service in collaboration to advance knowledge in Canada.

Previous to his leadership at Acadia, Mr. Callbeck led the financial planning for Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick in Saint John and the expansion of the UNB Saint John campus, including the Dr. Colin B. Mackay Residence and the Canada Games Stadium.

I invite all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in recognizing Chris Callbeck on this prestigious award and his remarkable career within the Canadian academic community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

GREGAN, THELMA - DIR.: SCOTTISH RITE FDN. - COMMEND

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dartmouth East resident Thelma Gregan, Learning Centre Director of the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation of Canada Learning Centres for Children - Halifax branch.

[9:15 a.m.]

Thelma and her volunteers at the Scottish Rite Foundation use a one-on-one approach to tutoring children with dyslexia. Thelma ensures that those who would like to volunteer are qualified and provided with training at no additional cost. Not only do they help students, Mr. Speaker, but they also help parents and guardians understand dyslexia and how they can help their children.

I commend Thelma Gregan for her work done on behalf of the Scottish Rite Foundation and all the volunteers. Not only are they changing the lives of children who once struggled by giving them tools to thrive, but they also help build a love for reading.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

LISA ROBERTS: In the West Gallery we're joined today by Ruth Wolpin. I'll ask her to rise, and I apologize, I don't know your husband's name.

Ruth Wolpin is very much the inspiration for the Clothesline Act that I just introduced. Some people will remember that there is already a Clothesline Act on the books; this is an amendment to all people to hang out their laundry in this time of climate change. It's an important but small thing that we can do, and certainly is something that I enjoy doing. Thank you for joining us in the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

HUGHES, ANNE-MARIE: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to share with the House some of the activities of a super Bedford volunteer.

Anne-Marie Hughes has served as secretary of the Catholic Women's League at St. Ignatius Church for four years. Here's a bit of what she has been up to: she organized a

sew-a-thon for the IWK, producing 300 items, including pillowcases, baby blankets, and knitted hats for newborns; she organized a Harvest Tea to support the work of the CWL; she sings in the church choir; she makes baptismal bibs for babies being baptized. And that is not all - Anne-Marie is also a Girl Guide leader and a school library volunteer.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that Anne-Marie has chosen to move here from Calgary. She is a delightful addition to Bedford, and I know all members will join me in thanking her for her contributions to life in our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

DEWOLFE, CAL: MARATHON ACHIEVEMENTS - CONGRATS.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, Cal DeWolfe of Conquerall Mills won the 2019 Scotia Bank Blue Nose Marathon in Halifax last June. Cal won the men's full marathon in an impressive two hours, 34 minutes, and 42 seconds, the third fastest time ever posted at the Blue Nose. He entered the race to get a qualifying time for the 2020 Boston Marathon and it was the first time he raced over 17 kilometres.

In 2017 Cal received an undergraduate degree in philosophy at St. F.X. University where he competed as a cross-country runner. He was named the 2016 AUS Men's Cross-country Athlete of the Year, and he also captured an individual cross-country gold medal in his final year at St. F.X. in front of his parents and friends.

Cal currently attends Dalhousie University where he just entered his second year of law school. Cal says: I run because I am happiest when I am active, and I am still addicted to competition. He also loves the amazing running community that exists province-wide.

Congratulations to Cal DeWolfe for success in athletics and academics.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

SHARPE, PAUL: MEM. BALL FIELD - TRIBUTE

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the renaming of the Fencebuster's ball field in Springhill. Prior to the championship game at the Atlantic U13 Baseball Championships, friends and family gathered in memory of Paul Sharpe who passed away in May of this year.

Paul Sharpe, affectionately known as Gino, dedicated his life to teaching young people the game he loved so much. Even as he fell ill with the disease that would eventually take his life, he thought about baseball and getting back into the dugout.

Paul meant so much to the young people in Springhill and the community knew that he had to be recognized for everything he had done for the community and the sport - and what better way to acknowledge him than renaming the ball field the Paul “Gino” Sharpe Memorial Ball Field?

I ask you to join me in acknowledging the tremendous work and dedication Paul “Gino” Sharpe added to his community. His legacy will be carried on for years to come.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

LEBLANC, GEORGETTE: CANADA’S POET LAUREATE - RECOG.

HON. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Georgette LeBlanc, a poet from Clare whose two-year appointment as Canada’s Poet Laureate is nearing an end.

In 2018 the Speakers of the House and of the Senate appointed Georgette LeBlanc to replace fellow Nova Scotian George Clarke to this two-year term position. They described her as a rising star in the Canadian poetry community who is making poetry known to a generation of readers and authors.

One of her four works, *Prudent*, was a finalist for the Governor General’s Literary Award in 2014, and prior to that she won the Lieutenant Governor’s Award of Nova Scotia Masterworks Arts Award.

Over the years she has collaborated on several theatrical and musical projects but considers herself a poet first. During her time as Poet Laureate, in addition to writing poetry, she wanted to encourage and inspire other people to write poetry. Ms. LeBlanc has always encouraged people to stories, but this position allowed her to do it across the country.

As she prepares to leave this position, we can expect Georgette LeBlanc to continue to share her stories - maybe some about her time in Ottawa.

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

**BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB, SACKVILLE:
OVER 20 YRS. OF COM. SERV. - THANKS**

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Halifax’s location in Sackville at the Sackville Heights Community Centre.

With over 20 years in the community, the purpose and goal of the Sackville Boys and Girls Club is to provide a safe and supportive place for children and youth to experience

new opportunities, overcome obstacles, and develop confidence. The club also allows for children and youth to build positive relationships in an environment that allows them just to be themselves.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Sackville Boys and Girls Club manager Courtney Covey-Sprague, and Boys and Girls Club of Greater Halifax CEO Henk van Leeuwen, for their hard work in making the Boys and Girls Club a wonderful space for children in Sackville.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

FEDERAL HEALTH TRANSFER TO N.S.: INADEQUATE - RECOG.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, as the federal election draws to a close, Nova Scotians are wondering how the next federal government will address the health care crisis in Nova Scotia.

At this time, I think it is important to draw attention to the inadequacy of the federal health transfer to Nova Scotia - the agreement between the Premier and Prime Minister Trudeau that will cost Nova Scotia close to \$1 billion over the ten years of the agreement. That money could have paid for 396 physicians, helped us open new nursing home beds, or address the health care needs of our aging population. But it was left on the table when the Premier abandoned the collective bargaining power that would have come from a pan-Canadian agreement to take a bilateral deal that does not recognize the challenge of our aging demographic.

In the 1990s, the federal government paid 50 per cent of our health care costs; today they only contribute 25 per cent. Nova Scotians deserve better and I hope that they keep this in mind when going to the polls on Monday.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

JOHNSON, CHRIS: SIGNED WITH HFX. HURRICANES - CONGRATS.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Chris Johnson of North Preston who was recently signed to the Halifax Hurricanes to provide key offensive scoring and leadership to his young teammates.

He is no stranger to the National Basketball League of Canada as he played with the Cape Breton Highlanders and the Island Storm. He has had a very successful career overseas for years and followed up with two productive seasons in the Canadian league.

I recognize and congratulate Chris Johnson for achieving this high level of achievement and wish him every success in the future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MACDONALD, LORI ANN: SENATE 150 ANNIV. MEDAL - CONGRATS.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, let us acknowledge Lori Ann MacDonald who has received the Senate of Canada 150th Anniversary Medal. The medal is awarded to people who, through their generosity, dedication, volunteerism, and hard work, have made their communities a better place to live.

Lori Ann is a registered nurse who works in the field of palliative care. For her, it is not just a job, it is a calling, one she has made part of her life. Ask anyone who has experienced her care - her compassion has made an impact on thousands.

We hear the term today, dying with dignity. At a time when family and loved ones have questions, a time when there is great emotion and people must begin to let go of this world, Lori Ann is the person who brings trust and compassion. She helps bring families faith that everything that can be done will be done for their loved one. She brings dignity in those moments. She truly has made our region of the country a better place to live.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

GILBY, ALLISON: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. MARGARET MILLER: When you meet Allison Gilby, her kind and helpful spirit shines through. Allison started the Birch & Beech Nature Playschool from her home in Enfield in 2016, teaching pre-school-aged children to prepare for school, as well as to appreciate the nature around them and learn how to care for animals.

Allison's love of nature also inspired her to start the East Hants chapter of the Young Naturalists Club, reconnecting youth to nature on family-friendly outings. Nature is just one of Allison's passions - she is also a volunteer at the local food bank, a Girl Guide leader, and 4-H supporter.

Allison's dedication to her family, her neighbourhood, her community, and the young people of East Hants is admirable. Ask anyone whose life Allison has touched and they will say that she is one of the kindest souls and leaves a positive impact on the lives that she touches.

I would like to ask all members of this House to join me in thanking Allison for her dedication to the betterment of youth and families in our communities.

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

PERSONS CASE: 90TH ANNIV. - RECOG.

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, in the 2017 provincial election, our Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage constituency made history by having the first all-female candidates representing our constituency. Therefore, it gives me great pleasure to celebrate the 90th anniversary of women being recognized as persons in this country.

On this date 90 years ago, Canada's highest court of appeal handed down the historic decision to include women in the legal definition of persons. This decision gave women the right to be appointed to the Senate of Canada and would not have been accomplished without the determination of the Famous Five: Emily Murphy, Irene Parlby, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, and Henrietta Edwards.

To my 50 past and present female MLA colleagues, congratulations on this milestone. We have come so far towards achieving gender equality in the last 90 years. I look forward to seeing how many more walls we can break down in our next 90 years as persons.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I'd like to draw the members' attention to the gallery opposite, where we are joined today by a number of early childhood educators and their allies.

When I call your name, if you would stand, and then you can receive the warm welcome of the House: Margot Nickerson, Daphnee Hahn, Jillian MacIsaac, Bobbi Keating, Kristen MacIsaac, Jacklyn Rodler, and Lindsay Atwell. We're also joined by Nan McFadgen, president of CUPE Nova Scotia, and Naomi Stewart, national CUPE rep. If I've missed anyone, please stand as well.

Please stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

ECEs: WAGES AND BENEFITS - SUPPORT

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the diligent and important work of Nova Scotia's early childhood educators, especially those who are working in our regulated child care centres across the province. I can honestly say, and have said before in this Chamber, that if it wasn't for these amazing, mostly women, at

least half of our caucus would not have had the ability to run and take our seats in this House.

The work of these ECEs help to mould and nurture our children and significantly contribute to the economy of this province by allowing mothers and fathers to move into the workforce knowing that their children are well cared for and loved.

Unfortunately, many of these workers are barely able to subsist on the wages set by this province, and most have no benefits. They are hoping to change that, and we are standing with them.

Please join me in acknowledging the hard work that they do. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

KINGSTON STEER BBQ AND FAIR: 60TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, with great pride I stand before the House today to congratulate all who made the 60th Kingston Steer BBQ & Village Fair a huge success. Extending the celebration to four days, many family-friendly events occurred between July 11th and 14th, including the Grand Street Parade, lacrosse and roller derby opportunities, Sparky Fun Run, music in the park, and various beef meals.

Jennifer Crawford, winner of MasterChef Canada, was this year's parade marshal, and fairgoers were pleased to meet her.

Having helped behind the scenes cutting the meat for the past several years, I've seen first-hand the amount of work that goes into the event from the Lions Club, the village Legion, the organizing committee, the local fire department, and dozens of community volunteers.

This celebration also holds the record of being the longest-running continuous outdoor whole-beef barbecue in North America.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the House to join me in thanking Greg Peck for his leadership, organizers, staff, volunteers, supporting partners, and attendees for the best 60th celebration our community could have asked for.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

SACKVILLE BUS. ASSOC: SMALL BUS. AWARD WINNERS - CONGRATS.

STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate this year's recipients of the Sackville Business Association's annual Business Awards, where this year's speaker was entrepreneur Mr. Tareq Hadhad, Peace by Chocolate founder and CEO.

Each year the Sackville Business Association accepts nominations from the community for their annual small business awards. From the 366 nominations received this year, Eureka Technologies received the Best New Business Award, Brian's Barber Shop was awarded the Best Customer Service Award, and Hellas Diner received the Business of the Year Award. The awards were presented by Mayor Mike Savage at the Sackville Business Association's breakfast yesterday, October 17th, in Lower Sackville.

I would like to ask that all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly join me in congratulating this year's recipients of the Sackville Business Association's Small Business Awards and wishing them continued success. House of Assembly join me in congratulating this year's recipients of the Sackville Business Association's Small Business Awards and wish them continued success.

[9:30 a.m.]

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

SCH. SUPPORT STAFF: UNSUNG HEROES - THANKS

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind us of all the unsung heroes who help our wonderful teachers do their jobs, maintain our facilities, and support out children's education. I'm talking about the support staff - janitors, electricians, and teaching assistants - who are so critical to keeping our schools going.

Recently, 41 members of the Strait Regional Centre for Education staff were honoured at the Celebrating Service 2019 banquet. This 19th annual retirement banquet recognizes the service and commitment of employees, awarding the important contribution these employees make to the success of our students' education.

Specifically, I want to mention the contributions of Pat Batherson, an electrician at the Mulgrave Operations Centre; Raymond Byard, the head janitor at Chedabucto Education Centre/Guysborough Academy; and Jean Jordan-Robichaud, a teacher assistant at St. Mary's Education Centre/Academy.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate these honourees for their service and commitment to the Strait Regional Centre for Education and thank Pat, Raymond, and Jean for all their hard work in our schools.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

MACKINNON, DARRELL: WCB DIFFICULTIES - LACKING FAIRNESS

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Legislature today to recognize what I strongly believe is the lack of fairness or justice towards a Pictou County injured worker, Darrell MacKinnon.

Mr. MacKinnon, a former power line technician with NSP was injured at his worksite on February 13, 2012. Extensive medical reports from several of our best specialists were prepared and sent to WCB; the findings clearly indicated that his medical problems were directly linked to his workplace injury. Nevertheless, denial follows denial, appeal follows appeal, and the appeal tribunals continue.

WCB often ignores the findings of independent specialists because initial evidence presented was never properly considered at the time of the hearings; this information becomes stale and is not able to be presented again according to WCB policy. The board requests new evidence. They'll often send the injured worker to a doctor of their choice - a doctor being paid for by WCB - and there's no doubt of the outcome of these appointments.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

FLEMMING, SCOTT: COM. SERV. THANKS

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Scott Flemming for his hard work, business success, and voluntary contributions to our community.

A civil engineer by training, he's the co-owner and vice president of the Ocean Flemming family business. He has served on the board of directors of Phoenix Youth Programs and the Flemming Charitable Foundation, which has supported many local organizations including Metro Turning Point, Bryony House, and L'Arche Halifax.

This year, Scott led the Springvale Under the Stars organizing committee, helping raise money for the school community's neighbourhood improvement fund. It was a fantastic crowd that attended the outdoor film screening.

I ask members of the Legislature to join me in thanking Scott and the entire committee of Alex, Casey, Heather, Lauren, Jay, Jill, Deb, Bruce, Allison, and Derek for their efforts in bringing our community together.

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

BROOKFIELD ELKS: U12 FASTPITCH CHAMPS - CONGRATS.

LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, in August the Brookfield Elks Fastpitch captured the gold in the Nova Scotia U-12 fastpitch championship. It was held in Elk Park in Brookfield; the event hosted eight teams. The Elks provided an outstanding performance during the tournament, allowing just three runs in five games.

Coached by Brookes VanTassell, Craig Maguire, Brad Sutherland, and Peter Matheson, the U-12 team members are Emily Gates, Matthew O'Hara, Noah Lemmon, Keegan Maguire, Cohen Mingo, Kayla Kolstee, Porter Campbell, Kenzie Boyd, Raya and Rylan Sutherland, Caleb Matheson, Broden VanTassell, and - my own personal MVP - my grandson, Gavin Harrison. The nucleus of this team went to Hoyt, New Brunswick and they won the gold for the Eastern Canadians as well.

Congratulations to this local team, the Brookfield Elks.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

GARY BURRILL: I'd like all members to know that we're lucky to have joining us today in the West Gallery, Jacob Wilson. Jacob is the NDP's candidate in Monday's election in the riding of Halifax West, so I'd like everybody to give him a warm welcome. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**DINAH'S SOURDOUGH/BAYB BOUTIQUE:
ANNIV. CELEBRATION - CONGRATS.**

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate two local businesses that bring people together in one neighbourhood of Halifax Needham. This Sunday, Dinah's Sourdough is turning one, and the Bay B Boutique is celebrating four years in business. They are located next to each other on Novalea Drive.

Dinah's, in a very small storefront, manages to fit a piano and room for some other instruments - which is fitting as the owner, Dan, and at least one of the bakers studied jazz at St. F.X. Mostly it's a place to get bread and other baked goods or maybe grab a coffee and sit in the window.

Next door, the Bay B Boutique is a consignment shop that helps parents of young children equip and clothe their little ones for less and keep their homes from being completely overwhelmed by the clutter that comes with children.

This Sunday they are offering apple cider pressing and face-painting for free and will be bringing neighbours together.

THE SPEAKER: I'd just like to ask all members to keep the level of chatter down. There's any number of side conversations going on here, and I'd ask you to respect your colleagues as they have the floor.

The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

**ROOTS AND BOOTS FOREST SCH.:
FOREST EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN - THANKS**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Kellie Allen and Sara Wolthers, co-founders of the Roots and Boots Forest School offered in Jerry Lawrence Provincial Park.

Recognizing the benefits of being out in nature, Kellie and Sara brought the Roots and Boots program to life. Their specialized training in managing children outdoors allows these moms to guide and support the learning of young children in a safe, natural and unstructured environment in the forests.

Through their program, children learn to respect their environment, learn important skills for surviving in the wilderness, and becoming aware of potential dangers. When I stopped by, Mr. Speaker, they were learning how to distinguish animals apart, like squirrels and chipmunks and all the other types.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like the members of the House to join me in thanking Kelli and Sara for introducing children to the forests at an early age, sharing the tranquility of the forests, and connecting children to nature. Providing a love of the outdoors at an early age is sure to last a lifetime.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

BOURQUE, WENDY: WESTVILLE VOLUN. OF THE YR. - THANKS

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, today I want to acknowledge and pass along my congratulations to Westville's Volunteer of the Year for 2019, Wendy Bourque.

Wendy has been an active member of the Westville Rotary Club, and she had a huge impact on ensuring the splash pad was installed. She coached ringette, she was a

member of Westville's Homecoming Committee, and she also organized fundraising efforts for the Pictou County Fuel Fund as well as the SPCA.

Special thanks to Wendy for all the hard work and tireless volunteer hours you have invested in our community. Your time is appreciated, and I am proud of every hard-working individual and volunteer like you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

ECEs: DOING IMPORTANT WORK - THANKS

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I want to draw attention today to the incredible people who are early childhood educators at daycare centres in Dartmouth North. I have spoken before about the teachers and staff at the Dartmouth Child Development Centre, a very special place that centres diversity, kindness and friendship as core values. I will be forever grateful to DCDC for welcoming my family and taking such wonderful care of my children during their time there.

I also want to acknowledge Crystal Day Care in Highfield Park, a venturesome child care centre, and Willowbrae Academy in Burnside, and all of the ECEs working in pre-Primary programs and at the Dartmouth Family Centre.

Mr. Speaker, ECEs are invaluable, amazing teachers to our province's littlest citizens. They are some of their first teachers and help shape their values and friendships. All ECEs in Nova Scotia deserve to work in environments where their pay mirrors the important work they do and where they can depend on health benefits. Currently in Nova Scotia, there is a serious discrepancy in wages for ECEs.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to raise the wage floor so that ECEs can expect equal pay for equal work.

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

GRACIE, GLENN - PHYSICIAN: PHYSICIAN OF THE YR. - CONGRATS.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Glenn Gracie of Sydney.

Dr. Glenn Gracie has been named the College of Family Physicians of Canada 2019 Family Physician of the Year. He is a founding member of the Sydney Family Practice, which opened in 1974, and during that time has trained many medical students, residents, and international medical graduates.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Gracie is being recognized for 45 years of service to his community and to his patients, so I rise in my place and ask all members of this House to congratulate Dr. Glenn Gracie on being named the College of Family Physicians of Canada 2019 Family Physician of the Year for Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MACPHEE, MARY AND AL: PHILANTHROPIC GIVING - THANKS

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Al and Mary MacPhee, two wonderful and hard-working Dartmouth East residents who love to give back to their community.

In late 2018, the MacPhee family donated \$300,000 to the Dartmouth General Hospital Foundation's Above and Beyond campaign. As long-time supporters of the Dartmouth General Hospital Foundation, their donation will help the Dartmouth General increase capacity with in-patient, outpatient and diagnostic care, and help increase the number of orthopaedic and endoscopic procedures provided by the hospital.

I ask that all members of the House recognize Al and Mary MacPhee, as they remind us all of the importance of community engagement and how giving back to the community can help improve the lives of all Nova Scotians.

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

WALKER, CHERYL: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, on October 11th, my community lost a beautiful and kind soul. Cheryl Walker was an amazing wife and mother, a dedicated community volunteer, and a well-loved friend. Cheryl was the anchor of her family and was loved by all, especially those from her community of Fairview United Church.

Through Fairview United, she assisted many refugee families and helped them adjust to their new life, often being referred to as Canadian Mom. Mrs. Walker worked on many church fundraisers and events such as the Christmas Bazaar and the Easter Egg Memorial.

She was also the unofficial counsellor of District 10, working with her husband Russell, and was usually the first point of contact when constituents would call them on the phone. She also always gave the best hugs and seemed to always know exactly when you needed one.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of this House join me in sending condolences to Councillor Russell Walker; her children Laurel and Jason; her daughter-in-law Michelle; her treasured gift, grandson Luke; and all of us who mourn her loss.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

RUSHTON, MALLORY: NTL. WOMEN'S HOCKEY LEAGUE - CONGRATS.

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, just like many in this House, I adore the game of hockey and there's nobody shining any brighter and cutting up the ice any better right now than 22-year-old Mallory Rushton from Brookdale, who just signed her first National Women's Hockey League contract.

Mallory is exchanging her college uniform for a professional one. She will play for the Metropolitan Riveters based out of New Jersey. Mallory just graduated from the Rochester Institute of Technology and is already training and preparing for the opening camp in New Jersey.

I ask you to join me in congratulating Mallory as she goes on to play for the National Women's Hockey League and wish her the best of luck.

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

WALLACE LUCAS COM. CTR.: 60TH ANNIV. - RECOG.

BEN JESSOME: Yesterday I had the good fortune of introducing some folks from the community of Lucasville and, today, my Member's Statement reflects the minister's remarks yesterday.

I would like to acknowledge the 60th anniversary of the Wallace Lucas Community Centre, which took place on August 24th, 2019. The Community Centre was built on land donated by Lucasville resident Wallace Lucas. It once served as the community's only school at a time when racism made it impossible for young Black Nova Scotians to attend school in that community. It continues to remain a vital part of the community, hosting anniversaries, birthday parties, meetings, and other social events.

We celebrated the anniversary with a barbecue, dance, and opening ceremonies which were attended by the local councillor, the Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs, and my colleague for Sackville-Beaver Bank, who is actually a former student.

I would like the members of the House to join me in congratulating the community of Lucasville and the Wallace Lucas Community Centre for 60 years of celebration and community building.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

**MACDONALD, SHELDON: JAYS CARE FDN.,
BALL FIELD RECONSTR. - THANKS**

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, let us acknowledge Sheldon MacDonald for his work with the Toronto Blue Jays' Jays Care Foundation in reconstructing the baseball diamond in Judique.

Sheldon hit a grand slam for the young ball players of Judique, Long Point, Little Judique and beyond. This summer Finley MacDougall and Quinn MacDonald had the honour of cutting the ribbon to officially reopen the ball field.

Baseball and softball give young people a chance to spend their energy in a positive direction. They learn about sportsmanship and to care about their fellow team members. They learn what it takes to win, and they learn how to take a loss.

An accomplished pitcher in his own right, Sheldon won a national senior men's championship with Dartmouth Moosehead Dry in 2004. Local baseball will be alive and well for years to come because of him.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

NORMAN, FRED: INTL. SKILLS COMP. - BEST WISHES

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, the Toromont Cat Operator Challenge was held in seven different cities across Canada over the last few months. This competition was held to send the top three competitors to represent Canada in the final challenge in North Carolina.

One of the three excavator operators chosen to represent Canada in this international competition is Municipal Group employee, Williamswood resident, and a friend of mine, Fred Norman.

Freddie will be embarrassed that I am recognizing him, but he will do us all proud. Good luck, Freddie.

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

[9:45 a.m.]

KIWANIS: MORRIS LAKE BEACH AND PARK REPAIRS - THANKS

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the Cole Harbour Kiwanis Beach & Park at Morris Lake for all of their ongoing hard work and dedication. The Kiwanis beach and park is privately owned but open to the public for hiking, swimming, boating, kayaking, and much more.

Recently, the park's wharf suffered some serious damage, and with the help of Water Ski Nova Scotia, the Kiwanis Club was able to repair the damage and rebuild a stronger, safer wharf for public use. Without the many hours of volunteer work from the Kiwanis Club members, the park would not be enjoyed by so many community and non-community members.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in thanking the club members of the Cole Harbour Kiwanis Beach & Park Morris Lake group for graciously giving back to our community every year.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

BUTLER, BARBARA: 20 YRS. WITH MUSIQUE ROYALE - RECOG.

SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Barbara Butler who celebrated her 20th year with Musique Royale as their artistic director. Musique Royale is a not-for-profit organization that promotes varying genres of music, from traditional to contemporary, in historic venues throughout the province.

When Musique Royale began, the organization had approximately a dozen venues which hosted concerts across the province. Lunenburg now has approximately doubled that number. Barbara, an accomplished pianist and organist, has worked on a variety of diverse concert series aimed at building the local community. She even hosts concerts in her home in Oakland, just outside Mahone Bay, naming this venue "Cecilia's Retreat."

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and the members of this House of Assembly recognize Barbara Butler for her 20 years of dedication with Musique Royale and for her contribution to music on the South Shore.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

MAJOR, DIANNA: CDN. DENTAL HYGIENIST SUPERHERO - CONGRATS.

STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make special mention today of Dianna Major, owner and operator of Dental Magic Hygiene Studio in Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia.

The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association recently named Dianna the Canadian Dental Hygiene Superhero for 2019 for her integrity, professionalism, client focus, and extensive community service. Over 850 nominations were received, representing every province and territory in Canada. In the past few years, Dianna has partnered with Dress for Success, participated in Gift from the Heart, and provided free dental hygiene day for high school students.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Dianna Major on being chosen the Canadian Dental Hygiene Superhero for 2019 and thank her for her continued efforts in serving the community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**O'CONNELL, MEGAN:
THANKSGIVING BOTTLE DRIVE AND MEAL - THANKS**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the good deeds of Megan O'Connell, a young woman who lives in Dartmouth North. In the lead-up to the Thanksgiving weekend, Megan, a Grade 7 student at John Martin Junior High, organized a bottle drive to raise money to buy food to donate to Frank MacKay House, the shelter in north-end Dartmouth.

With the money that she raised, Megan brought the shelter both a turkey and a ham for its Thanksgiving dinner. The next day, Megan and a few friends returned to the shelter to serve the food to the residents.

I'm constantly in awe of the generosity of the people of my community. I feel grateful and lucky that Dartmouth North is home to such compassionate, community-minded youth as Megan. I ask all members of this House to join me in thanking Megan for her leadership and contributions to our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

PIKE, JONATHAN - COACH: CANOEING COMP. TRAINING - RECOG.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge an employee of the Maskwa Aquatic Club for his outstanding success in coaching.

Jonathan Pike has been the lead coach at Maskwa Aquatic Club for the past six years. In 2016, Jonathan led Maskwa to their first-ever Canadian national championship. As a former member of the National Canoe and Kayak Team, he knows what it takes to prepare for a competition. He has had success in both national and international competitions. His athletes have won at Junior Worlds, Senior Worlds, and Canada Games.

The camaraderie he inspires among the athletes and the discipline required to achieve their goals are invaluable in shaping the character of our youth. I ask the members to join me in recognizing the great job Jonathan is doing and wish him continued success in the future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

MACEACHERN, CRAIG: EDUC. IN BARBERING - CONGRATS.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, not everyone is comfortable to strike out on their own as an entrepreneur and take on the tasks of being a business owner. After 25 years in one career, Craig MacEachern continues to branch out, motivated by a strong sense of initiative and a desire for independence.

MacEachern, owner of Craig's on Mane in New Glasgow, and the Tweed Suit in Truro, is a well-known and popular barber and hairstylist. Craig is a creative person and recently expanded his professional horizons as a travelling teacher for Redken Canada. His additional responsibilities will take him on the road, travelling to different provinces in Canada, teaching barbering. His presentations focus on traditional and modern barbering skills and techniques to stylists and barbers.

We know that Craig will continue to be a successful entrepreneur, and we wish him the best of luck on the next leg of his journey.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

S. SHORE HEALTH SERV. FDN: 25TH ANNIV. PROJECTS - THANKS

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, the Health Services Foundation of the South Shore celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2018 with an incredible year of highlights. The one that shone the brightest, according to Executive Director Arleen Stevens, is the construction of a minimally invasive surgical suite, which was funded primarily by a generous donation of \$1 million from the Sander family. The suite is a dream come true for the operating staff. Previously the South Shore Regional Hospital had been the only regional hospital without such a unit.

To mark its milestone anniversary, the foundation launched Project 25 in 25 with the lofty goal of purchasing 25 pieces of new hospital equipment for the South Shore

Regional and Fishermen's Memorial Hospitals, which it proudly achieved and exceeded. The foundation also resurrected its support for physician recruitment through a strengthened relationship with the Nova Scotia Health Authority and a five-year infusion of \$500,000 from Jim and Carolyn Evans, who want this donation to act as a catalyst, allowing the foundation to re-establish its collaborative role with the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

Thank you to the staff, board members, volunteers, and donors who are the driving force behind the foundation's awe-inspiring year.

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

SCHENKELS, MARIKA: MCEUAN FDN. SCHOLAR - CONGRATS.

LARRY HARRISON: Sometimes there's a student who does it all, wants it all, and earns it all. This is the case with 18-year-old Marika Schenkels of Shortts Lake, who completed her high school credentials through a scholarship to the Marine Science Lab at the Lester B. Pearson United World College in Victoria, B.C. She is now studying medicine at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland with a \$200,000 scholarship through the McEuan Scholarship Foundation.

These opportunities don't come to just everybody; they are the result of a history of hard work, community involvement, parental encouragement, and diverse interests. In Marika's case these interests include volleyball, women's rights, videography, 4-H, community health, and swimming instruction.

I wish to commend Marika on earning these outstanding awards.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

SHEA, LORI: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, Lori Shea has been an indispensable member of the Bedford Eagles Minor Basketball Association for many years. She has held many key roles for multiple years each: president, treasurer, tournament facility manager, and scheduler, to name a few.

Lori makes sure everyone in the club feels welcome and appreciated, and she really focuses on developing children as players and as people. As president, she implemented training for coaches, and she ensured the organization remains on a good fiscal footing.

Many other organizations have benefited from Lori's passion and professionalism, as well, including the school advisory committees at Bedford South School and Rocky

Lake Junior High School, the Bedford South playground committee, the Bedford Beavers swim team, the Halifax Metro Basketball Association, and C.P. Allen basketball.

I'd like to thank Lori Shea for her many contributions to Bedford and thank her for the many, many hours of volunteer work that have helped make our community such a great place to live.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

WOODS, WENDY: AWARD-WINNING TRIATHLETE - CONGRATS.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, today I want to acknowledge Wendy Woods. Wendy has been an avid runner for many years and now has started to dip her toes in the water and take a bicycle out for a spin.

She participated in this year's Melmerby Triathlon and was presented with the 2019 Paul MacDonald Memorial Triathlete Award. This award is handed out every year to honour Paul and is given to the person who reminds everyone of Paul in some way. Paul MacDonald was an avid runner and triathlete, and 14 years ago died of a stroke. Paul often tried to get his friends involved, and he was definitely hooked himself.

Good luck on your next race adventures, Wendy. I hear that you also completed an Ironman this Summer too. I am so proud of the hard work and dedication that athletes put into training for these types of events. Keep it up, Wendy.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

L'ARCHE: 50 YRS. OF BELONGING - THANKS

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to bring the members' attention to an important organization that I think we are all familiar with. That organization is L'Arche.

What people here understand, especially if they have a L'Arche community in their region, is that the whole principle of L'Arche is rooted in relationships and belonging.

We all understand the valuable role they play in developing community for the residents and within the broader community that we serve, but what members may not realize is that this year marks the 50th anniversary of L'Arche Canada and 40 years of L'Arche Antigonish.

I want to acknowledge and thank all the many volunteers and staff who support the L'Arche community in Antigonish and across the world, but most importantly, let's take

this moment to recognize the many residents of L'Arche, who really contribute to our communities.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

COMPLETE CARE HOSP. FOR PETS: 10TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Complete Care Hospital for Pets in Lake Echo on the celebration of their 10-year anniversary with an open house and customer appreciation on July 13, 2019.

The Complete Care Hospital for Pets understands the special bond we have with our pets. They are dedicated to the health care and needs of companion animals. In addition to offering a full-service small-animal hospital, they offer an equestrian farm-call service and a home-call service.

I recognize and congratulate Mr. Tom Sladek and the Complete Care Hospital for Pets on their dedication to the health of our companion animals.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

**CHANGING THE CULTURE OF SEX. VIOLENCE:
GRANTS AWARDS - RECOG.**

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to invite everybody in the House downstairs today at noon, where there will be over \$400,000 worth of grants given out to the programs on our campuses that are supporting changing the culture of sexual violence. This is an invitation to all members of the House.

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

SUNNYVILLE UNITED BAPTIST CHURCH: 100TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 100th anniversary of the Sunnyville United Baptist Church.

Founded in 1919, the Sunnyville United Baptist Church has been a pillar of the community and an important place for worship and fellowship. The first mention of the Sunnyville United Baptist Church appears in the minutes of the 66th annual session of the African United Baptist Association.

The African United Baptist Association of Nova Scotia was founded by Reverend Richard Preston in 1854. The association is now comprised of 19 historically-Black Baptist churches in Nova Scotia.

Past leaders include Rev. M.P. Montgomery, Rev. A.F. Skinner, Rev. Kenneth Tynes, Rev. Wrenfred Byrant, Rev. Peter Paris, Rev. Harold Cornish, Rev. Lional Moriah, and Deacon Ira Jewel.

The present leader of the church is Deacon Clara Jordan, and she, along with parishioners, key dignitaries, and guest speakers, helped the church celebrate their 100th anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate the Sunnyville United Baptist Church on 100 years of Christian ministry and wish them 100 more.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

N. SYDNEY FALL FEST.: ROTARY CLUB FUNDRAISING - RECOG.

MURRAY RYAN: Mr. Speaker, this Sunday, October 20th, the Rotary Club of North Sydney will be holding their annual fundraiser, the Fall Fair. The North Sydney Rotary Club has been around for more than 75 years and continues to do great work in the community through the monies they raise.

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

[10:00 a.m.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

GOVT. (N.S.) - PICTOU CO.: ONCOLOGY SERVICE - RESTORE

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, the closing of the oncology outreach clinic in Pictou is a devastating blow. It's a major loss for patients who have already been triaged as the sickest. They're often elderly and under financial pressure. This group of cancer patients already had enough to deal with, and now they have to travel and be away from their support system. The issue has been brought up many times about doctors being overworked, but it has been brushed off by this government. The oncologists who come to New Glasgow are a very dedicated group, and many feel that good graduated residents were not given the opportunity to remain in Nova Scotia.

This government closed our short-stay mental health unit for three months about five years ago. We know that when things are gone, they sometimes never return.

I'd like to ask the Premier: Is there a plan to restore this important oncology service to Pictou County?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. He's right. There is a group of dedicated physicians who have been travelling the province - Pictou, and Yarmouth as well - those sites. They had given notice that as of November they would be removing that service - in fact, they needed a number of other supports, other physicians, as part of that.

I want to tell the honourable member that there has been an ongoing conversation to ensure that we can support what they're looking for. At the same time, part of the physician negotiations that have been winding through the process - we're looking forward to that coming to a resolution. At the same time, those Nova Scotians who require that initial consult will receive that.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, with planning, this was preventable. This is what happens when you don't make doctor recruitment a priority and you don't respect the efforts that our existing physicians and specialists put in; this is what happens when you fail to grasp the issues that are happening in health care and what needs to happen today to make sure that Nova Scotians can access health care; and this is what happens when health care professionals are pleading for support from this government for years and years and it doesn't come. This was entirely preventable with good planning.

I'd like to ask the Premier: When will this service be restored to Pictou County?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Again, I want to thank those physicians for the work that they've been doing across our province - not only oncology. There have been pressures on this health care system for over a decade. The fact of the matter is, successive governments ignored the fact of the transformation that was required.

The honourable member is very right. The call from health care providers who were saying that the current system would not sustain itself - they were absolutely right. That's why we're working with them, and it's why I've been very pleased to continue the negotiations. I look forward to dealing with not only the issue the honourable member is referring to but many of the other ones that were ignored by successive governments.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, after six years as the Premier, it's time to stop blaming other people and take some responsibility for what's happening in health care. It's time to pick up the mirror.

Now we have 65 cancer patients in New Glasgow who need to drive to Halifax for the compassionate care that they need because this government, in six years, hasn't figured out health care resource needs. The Premier can focus on past governments all he wants, but it doesn't help those 65 patients who now have had their lives turned upside down.

With 65 patients travelling to Halifax, I'd like to ask the Premier one more time: When will this service be restored to Pictou County?

THE PREMIER: Again, Mr. Speaker, the service that the honourable member is talking about is ongoing to November 1st. We're continuing to work with our clinicians to ensure that that service continues on. We're in negotiations with Doctors Nova Scotia on that. We're continuing to provide supports for those families.

No one in this House takes this issue lightly. We understand the impact of a diagnosis of any kind on a family across this province. Whether they're in Pictou County, whether they're in Yarmouth, whether they're in Sydney, whether they're in downtown Halifax, when they get that diagnosis we want to make sure that we can provide them with the supports as quickly as possible.

This issue should not be politicized, quite frankly. This issue is a serious one for Nova Scotians, and it's one that we continue to work with our health care providers to find a solution for and, Mr. Speaker, we will find a solution.

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

GOVT. (N.S.) - HEALTH CARE: HUMAN RES. - CRISIS

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to continue this line of questioning of the Premier.

Certainly the Premier is right that this is no matter to be taken at all lightly that doctors will not be able to be offering these oncology clinics going forward in New Glasgow and Yarmouth, and that people in these parts of the province now are going to have to travel to the city if they need cancer care.

Also, not at all to be taken lightly is the analysis of the cause of this that has been offered by Dr. Drew Bethune, medical director of the Nova Scotia Cancer Care program.

He said that the cause is that medical oncologists are no longer able to manage their tremendous workloads in this context. He goes on to speak about the real concern that there will be people in parts of the province who may altogether forego treatments that they should receive because of this change.

I want to ask the Premier if he agrees that this situation is evidence of a real human resources crisis in the health care system.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. He is highlighting Dr. Bethune, and all of the physicians across the province who are doing a tremendous job; his assessment is one that they've been looking at, wanting to add more physicians as part of that oncology team that is going across the province. We're working with them.

At the same time, we're in negotiations dealing with some of the very issues that Dr. Bethune was referring to and ones that we're hoping we can find a positive resolution for, not only for the support of those physicians who are feeling the pressure but also for those patients who require that comfort, to know that support will be there for them.

GARY BURRILL: This human resource issue and crisis, the trouble is that it's not isolated. People in Cape Breton today are reluctant to turn up at the regional hospital because they don't want to be adding to the chaos there. Surgeries and admissions are being cancelled because the hospital is over-filled with patients who can't get repatriated to their home hospitals in North Sydney and Glace Bay because doctors there are so over-taxed. They're not able to provide any more in-patient care.

I understand the Premier often points to the improvements he is anticipating and looking forward to with the redevelopment plan, but would he not agree that a very sharp hospital human resources issue exists in the CBRM that the government needs to address today?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we continue to work with all parts of this province to ensure that we have the right health care complement in every community - whether it's at the regional hospitals in parts of our province or at rural community hospitals or at collaborative care centres - ensuring that we have the appropriate health care teams there and the supports for them. We will continue to work with them.

As I said, the ongoing negotiations with Doctors Nova Scotia are to address some of the very issues that the honourable member is raising in the House. Some of those are related to compensation; we look forward to finding a resolution to that.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, human resources everywhere. This week until next Monday, the emergency department in Tatamagouche will be closed from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.; the emergency department in Pugwash is closed the same hours; Sheet Harbour's emergency department, closed from 7:00 p.m. until 7:00 a.m. the next morning and every night until next Thursday. That's not to speak of the routine closures in Glace Bay at the Northside General Hospital. Every one of these closures at its core is a human resources question of staffing shortages of nurses and doctors.

Emergency room closures, for this reason, have doubled under the current government. Does the Premier not see any connection between this and the way that his government has alienated and overburdened and disrespected medical personnel across the province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. He would know, during his tenure in office, they changed to the CEC model, which was providing the very changes to those emergency rooms, which they saw coming.

There is an adaption that we're going to continue to make as we go through it. Part of this is the way people practise today in many of our rural hospitals, where we used to have a number of opportunities, where physicians had privileges - required privileges - in those. That is no longer the case. Those physicians can work in communities providing primary care without ever needing, requiring nor wanting to work in a rural hospital.

We need to make sure that we have adapted and required enough physicians, why we've adapted the hospitalist model when it comes to the regional hospitals, why we need to look at what we're going to do in those rural hospitals. That is all part of the conversation and negotiations that we're having with Doctors Nova Scotia to address those very changing needs - not only to those of the patients, but quite frankly, for those who want a practice.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

H&W - YAR. CO.: ONCOLOGY SERV. - ACTION

COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is also on the topic of cancer clinics in New Glasgow and Yarmouth. Yarmouth's clinic is suspended effective November 1st for the same reasons as mentioned. That's only two weeks away.

About 50 Yarmouth area patients needing consultation with an oncologist will now need to make the three-hour-plus drive to Halifax, then the three-hour-plus drive back. Their stress is going to be compounded by more stress related to out-of-pocket expenses for gas and perhaps even lodging because this government failed to plan appropriate health care resources.

My question to the minister: What specific steps did he take upon learning that the Yarmouth cancer clinic would have to be suspended due to unsafe oncology workloads?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for the question - indeed, a very important topic for Nova Scotians, especially those in the New Glasgow and Yarmouth areas.

What I can assure the member is that Dr. Drew Bethune, who leads the Nova Scotia Cancer Care Program, has been working diligently with his team to identify and address the concerns. Dr. Bethune and I met earlier this week to discuss the situation. One of the critical things that he assured me was that, first and foremost, patients will still be given the opportunity to receive their assessments and that the care being offered by the clinicians will continue, and are now moved on to the focus of getting the services in the communities re-established.

COLTON LEBLANC: This government has had six years to get a handle on the problems that caused the latest symptom of Nova Scotia's health care crisis. The head of the Nova Scotia Cancer Care Program said that the pressures on cancer clinics include an aging population and an increasingly complex treatment landscape.

As Yarmouth learned previously with anesthesiologists, the margins for rural Nova Scotia are paper thin. We know that Nova Scotia isn't the only jurisdiction facing these problems, and we know that we have not seen the leadership we need to help navigate the terrain so that we don't end up in situations like the one that is in front of us right now.

My question to the minister: Had he received any indication prior to this week from the Division of Medical Oncology, the Nova Scotia Cancer Care Program, or the NSHA that the pressures on the cancer clinic program were reaching a breaking point?

RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for the question. As I've mentioned, the Nova Scotia Cancer Care Program manages cancer services throughout the province as part of the Nova Scotia Health Authority. I have the utmost confidence in that organization and their leadership as they assess the needs and submit recommendations.

Earlier this year, we took action as brought forward to us to establish an additional position for a radiation oncologist as part of the program. We've been responding to the recommendations and needs of that particular division as they bring them forward.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

EECD - ECE/PRE-PRIM.: PAY EQUITY ENSURE

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

The majority of early childhood educators are women, and their work has long been undervalued. All ECEs in Nova Scotia have the same professional training and credentials, regardless of whether they work in a licensed child care centre or a pre-Primary classroom. However, most early childhood educators working in licensed child care are paid less than their colleagues in pre-Primary classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, given that the government sets both fees and wages in child care, will the minister demonstrate his commitment to pay equity by ensuring that funding is adequate to provide all early childhood educators fair compensation?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I appreciate the question from the member. I had a really great chat with our early childhood educators who are in the audience today. I think what we need to recognize is that we all want the same thing. We want more families in Nova Scotia to have access to high-quality, regulated child care and the quality services that ECEs provide, and we want higher wages.

To correct the member, the government does not regulate the wages in the private sector or the not-for-profit sector. We do subsidize those wages and we set a wage floor, so there's a minimum wage in that sector. We have doubled the investment in the sector as well - the \$70 million a year - close to half of which is intended to ensure that private employers and not-for-profit employers are providing competitive wages.

We also are putting a working group together right now - which I've invited the members in the gallery to join - to look at helping the businesses and not-for-profits work together to have some buying power, to look at pensions, benefits, and other valuable things to having competitive remuneration in the province.

[10:15 a.m.]

CLAUDIA CHENDER: It's true that the government sets a wage floor. They also set a fee ceiling, and the impact of that is that centres cannot afford to increase wages under their own steam.

Mr. Speaker, recruitment and retention of qualified early childhood educators has been a long-term challenge. The implementation of pre-Primary has intensified worker shortages and about that fact there is no debate. ECEs working in pre-Primary classrooms have access to affordable health and dental benefits, which are not available to many ECEs working in licensed child care. Extending health and dental benefits to all ECEs is a small step the government could take to recognize the value of the work they do. I spoke to someone this morning who said that even though she does have benefits, she can't use them because the co-pay is too high.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to extending access to affordable health and dental benefits to all early childhood educators?

ZACH CHURCHILL: The reason we put a limit on fees is because we want the service to be affordable for families in Nova Scotia. That is exactly why we do it. We've doubled the income threshold to make this affordable for families; households up to \$70,000 a year are eligible for subsidy now to attend regulated child care.

We cannot extend government pension and benefits to non-government employees, so that obviously is something we are not able to do for the businesses and not-for-profit child care centres. However, we believe that if they are working together, and we want to facilitate this, they can have some more buying power in that sector to look at those options for their employees.

We think there are opportunities there, and we're going to work with them to make sure that they are doing it because we have a vested interest in that sector. We have a vested interest in early childhood educators. That's why we're creating hundreds of new jobs, and that's why we're investing in competitive wages in Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

TIR: BAR HARBOR TERMINAL: PRIVATE EMAIL SERVER - CONFIRM

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. I'd like to return to questions yesterday around communications between the department and a consultant on the Bar Harbor ferry terminal build.

The current Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage previously used a private email server. In that instance, the privacy commissioner concluded that the department at the time conducted no search for records, either inside or outside the government system. I can table that for the benefit of the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services, who is curious about that.

I'd like to focus on the minister's insistence yesterday that email is equally subject to freedom of information, when his own government's track record suggests the exact opposite, according to the privacy commissioner. Would the minister confirm for this House today whether communications and the reporting of the progress at the ferry terminal build were conducted via private email servers.

HON. LLOYD HINES: I thank the member opposite for the question. As indicated yesterday, the minister's office is not involved in the FOIPOP process. I strenuously object to the drive-by smearing of the integrity of great people who work for the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and give all for their public service.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd just like to remind the honourable minister that those are kind of unparliamentary terms - drive-by smearing.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

TIM HOUSTON: Okay, I didn't hear an answer to a very specific question about whether the minister is aware of whether private email servers are used or not. That's a very specific question. Once again from this minister, not even close to an answer.

This goes beyond the current situation and I think it goes to the top. The message at the top of this government has always been to use the phone to keep secret information away from the process. I'd like to table the Premier's comments on that.

The Premier was very clear that that's his own process when it comes to trying to keep information hidden from taxpayers. So maybe it's no surprise that the message filters all the way down to the Cabinet, to the staff and to the departments.

I'd like to ask the minister very specifically: Did the minister instruct the staff at TIR to use private email accounts or it is simply a product of this government's culture of secrecy?

THE PREMIER: Again, Mr. Speaker, there's a theory around here that you can say anything and somebody will believe it. The honourable member actually tabled documents in this House that were on government emails that had the very document he is saying everyone is trying to hide from, that was on - they were talking about in government documents.

There is a rule, Mr. Speaker, that if someone is unable to - you can use a private email to have it sent to, but that document has to be put on a government server. The very document he is referring to - four different times the things he tabled were on government emails. It was not the minister, it was hard-working public servants - by the way - some of whom worked for that government when they were in power, not only in government jobs, but for Party jobs. Stop calling into question the integrity of the people who are working on behalf of the hard-working people and stop stretching the truth.

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

TIR: CRANE REMOVAL - POTENTIAL COST

TIM HOUSTON: I hit a nerve with the culture of secrecy and obviously it does come from the top and filter down, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to return to our weekly question about the Hurricane Dorian crane collapse fiasco that this government is running. Everyone is happy to see that the removal is progressing, but there is still a question that hasn't been answered; this government accepted a lot of liability and we want to know how much.

It would be really nice if this government has asked that question, as well. We are no closer to finding out how much, and we are no closer to finding out if this government has any interest in how much the cost might be.

I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal - should he be allowed to answer - if he can give this House some indication of the potential cost for the crane removal.

HON. LLOYD HINES: I thank the member opposite for the question. Work on cutting and dismantling the tower has been pushed back a little bit because of the recent storm. The good news is that the great job those folks did, risking life and limb to secure and fasten the tower, has worked. We went through that windy day yesterday without any problem.

It is very challenging, and it is impacted by the weather, and we really appreciate the patience of the people who have been displaced and whose lives have been interrupted by this; we are working very hard to get them back to normal as soon as we can.

TIM HOUSTON: The question is: How much? I could ask any series of questions about the Department of Transportation and I think we know what kind of answer we are going to get, but it won't stop us from asking the questions.

The Premier is anxious to answer on the first opportunity, so give the Premier an opportunity to answer this time: Can the Premier enlighten Nova Scotians how much liability is accepted on behalf of taxpayers?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member would know, this has been a challenging file. The crane is owned by one company that was hired by another developer; the crane collapsed on another building and we had to step in around indemnification for the companies coming in to secure that site.

The reality of it is, as we've said in this House many times, we did an ultrasound before we went in on the site to see what damage had been done by the crane. Second of all, (Interruption)

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

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, it is ongoing. As we also said, we will be doing a further ultrasound, when the crane is down and the work is removed, to do a full assessment. That, at the time, will give us an indication of the full and total costs associated for the province when it comes to that particular site.

Unlike Opposition members, we don't have the luxury to make it up. We have to actually do the hard work to ensure we secure the protection of the people. We make sure we provide opportunities to people in this province. No matter how often they want to erupt, no matter how often they want to continue to interrupt and avoid the facts, the reality of it is that this province moved, that community is safe, and Nova Scotians are grateful for this government for not making it up.

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

H&W: EYE CARE SPECIALISTS - RECRUITMENT UPDATE

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, I hope we are afforded the same extension of time as the Premier was with that answer. (Applause)

My question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. In the last House session, the former member for Northside-Westmount raised the ongoing exodus of ophthalmologists from Cape Breton. At the time, the Premier said he was very confident that his government could attract the necessary eye care specialists to replace those leaving the island permanently.

The minister would know that Cape Bretoners need timely access to eye care services close to where they live because the alternative is paying out-of-pocket to travel as far as Halifax for appointments and follow-ups.

My question to the minister: Does he share the Premier's early confidence in the capacity to replace those ophthalmologists that Cape Bretoners depend upon?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for the question. As the member rightly indicated, the need of eye care and support services provided by our dedicated clinical staff and physicians is important and valued for the people not just of Cape Breton but the entire province.

What I can advise the member is there were several new ophthalmologists who were attracted to and hired within the Eastern Zone which does serve the people of Cape Breton. There are still opportunities, I believe, in the Cape Breton region itself for the Sydney industrial area, and that work is ongoing.

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, a recent letter from the Canadian Council of the Blind has raised some questions about the confidence of the minister and the Premier. It points out what we already feared, that four of the five ophthalmologists serving Cape Breton left their practices by June 2019 - and I'll table that letter.

It points out that there is no plan known to their patients as to how the province will replace those ophthalmologists. This raises serious concerns, Mr. Speaker, particularly

among those seniors who rely on local eye care for glaucoma treatment, maintaining independence, and ensuring quality of life.

My question to the minister: What is the minister's specific plan to attract the necessary ophthalmologists to Cape Breton?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, again recognizing the importance of these services, what I can advise is, as I answered in the previous question, the Nova Scotia Health Authority with their recruitment initiatives has been successful attracting several candidates within the last year, I believe three new ophthalmologists serving the Eastern Zone, which is the zone which encompasses the Cape Breton region that the member is referencing, again directly in the Sydney-industrial Cape Breton region.

There continues to be some vacancies, but the fact that they attracted and hired three ophthalmologists, Mr. Speaker, within the zone within the past year I think shows that the members should have some confidence in the effectiveness of the Nova Scotia Health Authority's recruitment initiative.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

BUS.: LNG TERMINAL OPERATIONS - DISCONTINUING

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, this question could be Energy, it could be NSBI, it could be the Minister responsible for the URB. I'll let whoever wishes to answer.

Millions of dollars have been invested in the construction of an LNG terminal at Bear Head near Port Hawkesbury. It has been constructed on prime industrial property once owned by Nova Scotians through their government. The establishment of this terminal would boost the local economy and the location is strategic from an energy perspective.

Has the minister been made aware that the current owners, LNG Limited, have signalled an intent to discontinue Nova Scotian operations?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I thank the member for the question. Certainly, I don't have that detail, I've never been given that indication whatsoever. There have been a number of LNG discussions around what the potential is in that region, and saying that the economic benefit would be significant is an understatement. But again, like many of the major projects we have in the province and the region, our position is to set the tone, set the environment, and let the private sector do their work.

There have been a number of years with a number of ongoing ebbs and flows around market conditions and major investments, as obviously this would take, so we're letting the private sector make their plays and organize. Certainly, if there's anything we

can do with respect to information or land acquisitions or things of that nature, we'll certainly be open to those conversations.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to see the government protect the interests of Nova Scotians. I understand that operations will now be run from Houston. My concern is that they could decide to sit on this asset for years before advancing the project to the point where Nova Scotians could benefit from jobs.

They would be stranding a valuable asset we have to boost our economy, and there would no longer be any local management in our province to keep the project moving.

I want to redirect to the Minister responsible for the URB. When the URB approved the construction permit for this project, they required Nova Scotia-based management capabilities. Will the minister responsible for the URB ensure that the terms of this permit will be enforced should local operations discontinue?

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for the question. What I can say at this point is that I have had the opportunity on multiple occasions - whether it has been here in the province or nationally or internationally - to help promote that project, so we've done our part as a government to ensure that we saw the potential of what that was for Nova Scotia. We will continue to do that.

[10:30 a.m.]

As my colleague the Minister of Business has said, a lot of this is dictated by private sector investment and decisions. But from our perspective as a government, I've had multiple opportunities to represent their interests to ensure that everyone was aware of the potential of that project and what it meant to this province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

LAE: RACIALIZED PEOPLE - WAGE GAP

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

We know that across Canada racialized people earn an average of 87 cents for every dollar that their white peers make, and for racialized women that gap is even more significant at 67 cents to the dollar.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education tell us how much racialized people who work full time year-round in Nova Scotia make, as compared to a white male in the same situation?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want to give the wrong information; I will get that exact gap for the member. I can say that the gender wage gap in this province is 88 cents. It has been increasing, and that is an area where we are focused on having improvements.

In the area of African Nova Scotians and Mi'kmaq, there is a wage gap. That is why we have various programs in the Department of LAE which I would encourage people, especially in this House, to know about so you can tell your constituents.

We have Pathways to Shipbuilding where we've had a graduation class of females, we've had graduation class of Mi'kmaq, we've had a graduation class of African Nova Scotians. As people in their communities, and this has been reported back to me directly, see other people in their communities in this role they strive for those.

Our Premier has done an incredible job in terms of bringing gender parity to the bench, and I think all young women will see themselves in those roles, to become a judge in the future. Mr. Speaker, there have been a lot of minorities who have been put on a bench as well, and I think that's a positive for this province.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, we have laws around pay equity to ensure that there is no disparity in pay between employees who do the same or similar work based on their sex. Earlier this year a review of Nova Scotia's labour standards regime recommended improving our legislation to guarantee pay equity for all employees, regardless of their employment status, race or ethnicity, ability or disability, or age, in addition to their gender.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister support the suggested amendment to our Labour Standards Act?

LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, as I said before, these are areas we are working on. Legislation has been brought in and it will continue to be brought in as evidence proves that it will actually reduce the gender wage gap and, as well, racialize the differences.

As the member speaks, she is correct that it is illegal to pay one person a lower amount, or a different amount, based on their race. What I can say is that where the difference in the wage happens is globally, so globally people in these marginalized positions are making a lower wage. That's also why in our Graduate to Opportunity program we have bonuses for people who are minorities, we have bonuses for people who are in under-represented groups. What that will do is ensure they get their first job because if those people are being racialized from the start of their career, if we can get them into their first job that will also in the future help eliminate that wage gap, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

JUSTICE: MENTAL HEALTH COURTS - AVAILABILITY

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. The Dartmouth Mental Health Court has been very successful for many years and serves the citizens of HRM very well. People with mental health issues who are charged with an offence related to their condition can be sent to Mental Health Court as an alternative to criminal court.

A court-mandated treatment plan can literally save lives and has done so in some instances; however, Mental Health Court is only available in HRM and not throughout the province. This service could have a very positive impact on those struggling with serious mental health issues across this province.

Can the Minister of Justice tell the House if there is a plan to have mental health courts available throughout Nova Scotia?

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I do acknowledge my colleague's question, the importance of that question. The Dartmouth Mental Health Court is one of our specialty courts in the province that serves an outstanding purpose. We recognize the strength of that program.

That program has been sustained under the leadership of Chief Judge Williams. She has done an outstanding job in her leadership in introducing specialty courts to Nova Scotia.

That court model, Mr. Speaker, actually has expanded. There is an addictions court within the Annapolis Valley and, most recently, a wellness court that captures both domestic violence and addictions service courts in the Bridgewater community.

The importance of the question is very relevant to this floor and to Nova Scotians. We continue to see this as a best practice model. We have expanded that program, and we will continue to do so into the future.

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for that answer. In fact, as the minister has mentioned, there was a voluntary mental health court in Kentville that served the citizens of the Valley. The judges, Crown attorneys, and NSHA mental health and addictions staff made it work above and beyond time allocation of their regular work or within that time allocation. However, they did not even have the staff resources to produce an annual report.

A former Liberal Justice Minister and Deputy Premier stated, "We recognize that we need more specialty courts. We believe in it. We think it's the right thing to do." I will table that.

My question for the minister: Given the dire need of mental health court services in the Valley, Yarmouth, Cape Breton, and Pictou County, will the minister do the right thing and restore the mental health court in Kentville and evaluate a province-wide expansion of that court?

MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I think it is critically important to identify the significance of these programs in our communities.

This is the first I've heard, and I wish the member had come to me directly. He knows he is able to do that, but this is the first I've heard that the mental health court process doesn't exist in the Valley.

It is my understanding that a provincial court judge from the South Shore travels (Interruption) If I may, Mr. Speaker - travels to the Valley to provide this service in that environment with all the stakeholders.

We recognize the strength of this program. We have expanded it to the South Shore under a new model called the Wellness Court that captures domestic violence and addiction services. This is a significant program and we will continue to look at this program with the intention of expanding it around the province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

H&W - PARRSBORO: HEALTH SERV. - RESPONSIBILITY

TORY RUSHTON: The South Cumberland Collaborative Emergency Centre continues to have regular closures. The Nova Scotia Health Authority has been looking for staff for this facility for years.

The advertisement for a doctor for Parrsboro suggests that it is a position for a collaborative health care model in the community with a nurse practitioner. It also states with an advertisement that they are looking for a nurse practitioner. For many of these residents, this is the only line of health care they have, when this is open. I will table that.

My question for the Minister of Health and Wellness is: When will the minister take responsibility for the health care services in Parrsboro and area?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as we continue our discussion around the important topic of health care, health care services, and access across the province, again, I believe there is common ground in this Legislature in the recognition of the importance of having access to the care that Nova Scotians need in our health care system. That is something we all agree with, Mr. Speaker.

We know very well that focusing on primary care, mental health and addictions, and continuing care are the pillars that support the rest of our health care system, including our acute care system and emergency care system. That is why our efforts and our investments have been focused in those areas.

Our recruitment efforts for communities from one end of the province to the other have been focused on those areas, and we will continue to do so.

TORY RUSHTON: I recognize the conversations we have in this Legislature, but the fact of the matter is that my residents only recognize when the ERs are closed in Cumberland South.

Bayview Memorial Health Centre in Advocate is also looking for several positions: one position for a long-term care nurse and another position for a nurse practitioner. I will table those. This suggests that health care in Cumberland South is in serious need of help.

Will the minister acknowledge that the glut of unfilled positions suggests that the health care crisis in Cumberland County is bigger than the Nova Scotia Health Authority acknowledges?

RANDY DELOREY: Again, the work of the Nova Scotia Health Authority to identify, recruit, and fill vacancies, whether they be for nursing or other health care professions or physicians in communities from one end of the province to the other, is fully transparent.

Positions are posted online as they go through to reach out and identify and attract potential applicants, whether they be physicians, nurses, or other health care providers.

We work with the Health Authority around incentive programs, support programs for nurses, including nurse practitioners. We expanded the number of training seats and created an incentive program to cover the cost for people who want to take that training.

We make the investments to help support the recruitment efforts of the Health Authority.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

LAE: WCB PERSONNEL - ACCOUNTABILITY

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. Darrell MacKinnon, a resident of Pictou County and a former powerline technician, slipped on ice at his workplace on February 13, 2012, and injured himself. I have a consent form from Mr. MacKinnon, if required.

Several neurologists demonstrated how symptoms adversely affected his ability to safely carry out his work duties; however, his application for WCB benefits has been denied, denied and denied. Our best specialists in the province continue to be frustrated with such denials.

My question for the minister: Why are WCB personnel not accountable for their decisions, especially when their denials result in lost income to injured workers and their probability of not being able to care for their families?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: The member has brought this to my attention before. As I've communicated to the member, I don't diagnose, I am not a doctor. What I have done is provide information to the member.

The Department of Labour and Advanced Education funds - one actually in Pictou - an organization that helps workers appeal Workers' Compensation Board decisions. That would be the avenue to take in this instance.

I do not get involved in any medical diagnosis in workers' compensation; I think it would be irresponsible for any politician to do so. Anybody who is in the role of overseeing the Workers' Compensation Board, that just wouldn't be proper to do. We have professionals, they are medical professionals, they are highly trained. They need to do the diagnosis and they need to decide whether benefits are provided or not.

PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, this gentleman has gone through all the stages, including the injured workers' office in New Glasgow, many times. He has been diagnosed by the very best specialists we have in this province and they continue to be frustrated with the results he receives from the WCB.

Having had the opportunity to assist several injured workers during the past 10 years, I've come to the conclusion that perhaps it is time to review the Workers' Compensation Board's governance, effectiveness and policies. In fact, a former WCB employee agreed with this statement.

While some workers feel they had a good experience, many others described their experience as situation critical. Injured workers are losing many things they have worked hard for. It is the inconsistency of the experience that causes concerns.

My question to the minister: Will the minister review the Act governing the WCB with an eye to looking at more accountability for the decisions made by this organization?

LABI KOUSOULIS: I'd like to thank the member for the question. It highlights the great work that has been happening at the WCB as they have been moving into the digital age. They have actually, even up to now, pretty much remained as a paper-based organization. They have undertaken a huge progression to actually move into the digital

world where every aspect of their files will be digital, as well as the process in terms of helping; that will streamline processes, it will standardize processes to a higher degree, and it will create an environment which is much friendlier for users to use.

There were also recommendations done by the Auditor General last year in relation to this and the WCB, as well as the Department of Labour and Advanced Education have accepted those recommendations in full and they are currently in progress.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

EECD - PRE-PRIMARY PROG.: GREENFIELD ELEM. - LEFT OUT

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. In the 2017 election campaign this government promised to create a universal pre-Primary program for four-year-olds. When the rollout began it was stated by the government that priority was given to those areas where there are few to no current regulated child care options. I'll table that.

In Greenfield, Queens County, there is Greenfield Elementary School but there are no daycare or preschool options, yet Greenfield Elementary School was not given a pre-Primary class in the first round, the second round or the third round.

I wrote to the minister and asked if there are plans to bring pre-Primary to Greenfield Elementary and he told me that there weren't. I'll table that, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the minister is: If the program is supposed to be universal and priority given to under-serviced communities, why has Greenfield Elementary been denied a program?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: In this time next year every single school community in Nova Scotia will have access to a free, universal, pre-Primary program. There were other criteria used as well. Where service was needed was the primary criterion; space available in schools was another criterion. I'm not sure exactly the reasons why this one hasn't been filled yet, but we can provide that to the member.

However, what I do find interesting is that on one hand the Progressive Conservative caucus can tell us to slow down, stop, vote against pre-Primary, and then ask us why we haven't got into their communities quicker. Imagine that.

[10:45 a.m.]

KIM MASLAND: Oh, my, I'm really glad to hear that Greenfield will have a pre-Primary program next year. I'm really glad to hear that. But Greenfield Elementary was ideally equipped to host the program this year. They have the space, they have suitable

playground equipment, they have playground supervision. Students could access the free breakfast program. The caregiver is close to the school, should there be an urgent need, and it keeps these kids within their community until they reach Grade 7. But they were denied the program because there were likely to be fewer than five children enrolled. These children are forced to travel as much as an hour to attend the nearest program.

My question to the minister is: Can the minister advise if there were other schools in the province that offer pre-Primary programs to fewer than five students?

ZACH CHURCHILL: One has to point out the irony of this situation. Just last week the member for Dartmouth East was telling us that we moved too quickly with pre-Primary implementation, that we were too ambitious. After the 2017 election, the Leader of the Official Opposition said that if he was in power there would not be a pre-Primary program.

Here we have a member of the Opposition saying, when are we going to have one in my community? Here's the answer: every single school community in this province - because this government has had the ambition to move forward with this on an aggressive agenda - will have access to this program next year. There are only 50 sites left, and I want all the members of those school communities to know that pre-Primary is coming. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

TIR - HWY. NO. 125: POOR CONDITIONS - ADDRESS

MURRAY RYAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Once again, it's rutting season in Cape Breton - highway ruts. The twinning of Highway No. 125 was completed in 2011. There have been continuous issues with ruts developing in both the east- and westbound lanes for many years. These ruts cause dangerous levels of pooling, which subsequently increase the risk of hydroplaning, losing control of one's vehicle.

In recent years there have been several accidents that have resulted in fatalities and near-fatalities. This 29-kilometre highway handles a high volume of commuting traffic that is increasing more and more every day with the continued closures of the Northside General Hospital ER.

My question to the minister is: Can the minister explain why this particular highway is so prone to rutting and what is being done to remedy this risk?

HON. LLOYD HINES: I really appreciate the question and I want to assure the member that public safety is our number one consideration at the department. I'd be happy to investigate this more fully with him at his leisure.

MURRAY RYAN: I thank the minister for that answer. Scheduled repaving is currently occurring in a section where there was an accident earlier this year due to rutting. The paving was too late for this driver. However, this past weekend I was driving between North Sydney and Sydney River during the rainstorm and saw cars all over the highway trying to avoid the ruts. In particular, cars in eastbound lanes near Campbell's Hill were hitting water-filled ruts, with the water shooting up over the tops of their cars. Even at low speeds these are dangerous. Drivers should not be risking their lives getting to and from the hospital in Sydney.

My question to the minister is: Will he commit to having his department address these ruts along the eastbound lanes before another near-fatality occurs?

LLOYD HINES: As the member indicates, we are currently working to do repairs and maintenance in that area, particularly in the interests of public safety. We will take another look to see just what else needs to be done.

I'd be happy to work with the member to effect those changes.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately vehicle collisions occur way too often along a section of Highway No. 103 at Exit 32. The dangerous section of the highway has been brought up many times in this House. The then-minister in 2016 said that it was on his radar screen. He spoke of short-term and medium-term solutions - what are they?

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, that concludes the government's business for today.

I move that the House do now rise, to meet again Tuesday, October 22, 2019, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Following the daily routine and Question Period, business will include second reading on Bill No. 204; third reading on Bill Nos. 152, 169, 175, 177, and 187; as well as Address in Reply.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for the House to adjourn, to rise again on Tuesday, October 22nd, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 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 Tuesday, October 22nd at 1:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 10:51 a.m.]