



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2019

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 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

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present a petition. The operative clause reads as follows:

“We, the undersigned, respectfully call upon the Province of Nova Scotia, to dedicate the stewardship of the Crown land property known to us as Corbett-Dalhousie Lakes Peninsula, to the Municipality of the County of Annapolis, to be managed as an area of conservation and a sustainable climate forest.”

Mr. Speaker, there are 815 signatures, and as per the Rules of the House, I have affixed mine.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

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

“We, the undersigned, request that the Provincial Government place a guardrail on the right hand side of highway 366 (Tyndal Road) in the location approaching the first intersection with the Green Road when traveling east on route 366 (traveling from Amherst to Tidnish, Cumberland County, NS). This is an act of safety and prevention so that loss of life does not occur due to the standing water in that area which creates a hazard. This location is the site of multiple accidents each year.”

Mr. Speaker, there are 182 signatures, and I have affixed my name as per House Rules.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to table the Three Year Review of the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table documents in response to the member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage who asked during Question Period yesterday if I could provide the answer to how many organizations applied for community transportation grants.

Mr. Speaker, 18 organizations applied under our Community Transportation Assistance Program, and 18 organizations were approved. In addition, we had 13 applicants to the Accessible Transportation Assistance Program, and all 13 received funding. I will table those documents.

THE SPEAKER: The documents are tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, with your permission I'd like to do an introduction first.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

KEITH COLWELL: In the East Gallery joining us today is Bruce Hancock, executive director at the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, who works in the Aquaculture division. I ask him to stand. Also, Dr. Anthony Snyder, who is a fish veterinarian and Dr. Roland Cusack, who's our chief fish veterinarian. Thank you so much. I ask everyone to give your warm applause. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 1399

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

Whereas one of Nova Scotia's fastest growing industries, aquaculture, plays a vital role in job creation and expansion for coastal and rural communities, and the innovation and continued success within this sector provides the department with opportunities to create long-term sustainable employment, and one such opportunity is the role of an aquatic animal health veterinarian or, in simpler terms, marine fish health vet, and as the expansion of aquaculture continues in the province, the availability of these science-based careers will increase, enabling our young Nova Scotians to remain home; and

Whereas an exemplary example of an individual who has trailblazed in this field is Dr. Anthony Snyder, who is the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture's aquatic animal health veterinarian, marine fish health vet, and also serves as the president of the Nova Scotia Veterinary Medical Association and leads the council with professional, hard-working, and accountable leadership, volunteering his time for the betterment of his profession; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Veterinary Medical Association named Dr. Anthony Snyder the Young Veterinarian of the Year for 2019;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly recognize Dr. Anthony Snyder for representing the veterinarians, the department, and the association with

pride and professionalism and for being honoured as the 2019 Young Veterinarian of the Year.

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.

I would like to remind all members that resolutions, each whereas clause is to contain one sentence. If we can keep it down to that, that would be great.

The honourable Premier.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): May I do an introduction before I do my resolution?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

THE PREMIER: I want to draw the attention of the House to the East Gallery, where we are joined today by the Province's business navigators: Andre MacLean, Anne Baxter, and Evangeline Chrisovergis. I would ask them all to stand.

Mr. Speaker, these three individuals have helped countless new entrepreneurs in our province find their way through not only the regulations of the province but through the municipalities. Through their hard work, we have seen tremendous growth in small business entrepreneurs in our province. On behalf of all of us, we want to say thank you. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 1400

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

Whereas October 21st to October 26th is Small Business Week, a time we recognize small businesses, the entrepreneurs behind them, and the contribution they make to our province's economy; and

Whereas government has been working hard to create the conditions to help businesses start and grow, and in 2017, the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness launched a Business Navigator service, a unique, first-of-its-kind service to help start-ups and existing businesses navigate government rules and regulations; and

Whereas the service has received positive feedback from businesses and, to date, has helped Nova Scotia businesses over 4,500 times since its launch, collectively saving businesses an estimated \$3 million annually;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate the business navigators who have been providing this valuable service to support our local businesses and entrepreneurs.

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 Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 1401

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

Whereas the Regulatory Accountability and Reporting Act came into force on December 18, 2015, and provides that the Act shall cease to be in effect on the fifth anniversary of its coming into force unless the House of Assembly otherwise determines by resolution; and

Whereas a comprehensive review of the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness has been submitted to the House of Assembly, outlining the results of the Office in reducing regulatory burden on Nova Scotia businesses by \$34 million annually,

launching Canada's first Business Navigator program, and its success is aligning regulations between the Province and the Halifax Regional Municipality and across Atlantic Canada; and

Whereas the Office has received support and recognition from Nova Scotia businesses and industry leaders, including the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, Restaurants Canada, the Construction Association of Nova Scotia, the Pictou County Chamber of Commerce, the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce, and other groups representing small, medium, and large businesses across all communities in this province;

Therefore be it resolved that the Regulatory Accountability and Reporting Act shall not cease to have effect on the fifth anniversary date of its coming into force.

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 Fisheries and Aquaculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 1402

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

Whereas Mr. Robert Alexander MacDonald of St. Peter's, Richmond County, Nova Scotia, a successful businessman and passionate mentor, passed away unexpectedly on April 27, 2019, at the age of 49; and

Whereas Mr. MacDonald was the face of Gidney Fisheries Limited, and he participated in countless export and marketing development initiatives that the Province of Nova Scotia was involved in and was always willing to share his insights and provide feedback from both a company perspective and industry-wide perspective; and

Whereas Mr. MacDonald was an integral industry partner who contributed to the development of pilot implementation of the Nova Scotia quality certification program and was known to be one of Nova Scotia's lobster sector's most vocal advocates;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me to recognize Robert MacDonald as a loyal and determined leader, who provided many contributions to the Nova Scotia seafood sector and our economy.

[9:15 a.m.]

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

RESOLUTION NO. 1403

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

Whereas ground search and rescue volunteers in Nova Scotia play a valuable role in keeping our citizens safe, and helping police with searches for missing persons; and

Whereas 2019 marks 50 years since the first ground search and rescue team was formed in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the more than 1,300 ground search and rescue volunteers across Nova Scotia put in countless hours of training, searches, and fundraising;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House thank all ground search and rescue volunteers for their dedication and commitment to helping locate missing persons.

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 Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.

RESOLUTION NO. 1404

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

Attendu que le Prix Grand-Pre a été établi en 1987 afin de reconnaître les artistes néo-écossais de tous les domaines dans le travail reflète les valeurs culturelles acadiennes tout en faisant preuve d'excellence et d'originalité; et

Attendu que le secteur des arts et de la culture est une composante essentielle de la promotion, de la préservation et du développement de la culture et de patrimoine acadien de notre province; et

Attendu que monsieur Daniel LeBlanc, co-fondateur des groupes acadiens Grand Dérangement et Comté de Clare, producteur, directeur artistique et musical, et éducateur originaire de la Sainte-Marie est le récipiendaire de cette année;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les membres de l'Assemblée législative se joignent à moi pour féliciter monsieur Daniel LeBlanc pour cette distinction et pour ses contributions à la culture et au patrimoine acadiens de la Nouvelle-Ecosse et pour le remercier pour son dévouement envers la préservation et la transmission de ceux-ci à la prochaine et à la prochaine génération d'artistes acadiens.

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

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

Whereas the Prix Grand-Pré award was established in 1987 to recognize Nova Scotia's creative and interpretive artists, working in any medium, whose work reflects Acadian cultural values while demonstrating excellence and originality; and

Whereas the arts and culture sector is an essential component of the promotion, preservation, and development of the Acadian culture and heritage of our province; and

Whereas Monsieur Daniel LeBlanc, co-founder of Acadian band Grand Dérangement et Comté de Clare, producer, artistic, and musical director, and educator from Baie Sainte-Marie is this year's recipient;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Monsieur Daniel LeBlanc for this distinction and for his contributions to the Acadian culture and heritage of Nova Scotia and thank him for his dedication to the preservation and transmission of these to the next generation of Acadian artists.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to draw the attention of the members to the East Gallery where I would like to introduce a special guest, Len Baker, president and CEO of March of Dimes of Canada - if you would please stand.

March of Dimes Canada is a community-based advocacy group that provides a wide range of services to people with physical disabilities. They do important work raising awareness for those living with disabilities and have helped create a more inclusive society. I would ask our members to give Mr. Baker the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to draw the attention of the members to the Speaker's Gallery where I'd like to introduce two special guests, and I would ask that they stand as I call out their names: Roger Sevigny and Suzanne Sevigny.

Roger and Suzanne began fostering newborn infants back in 1969, which I think is before some members of this House were even born - not most of you.

For 50 years they have opened their hearts and home to children and youth in need of temporary care. They have adopted and raised four children while taking in hundreds of young people and providing care to special needs and medically fragile children for the duration of their fostering journey.

I just want to say that there's a special place in heaven for people who look after medically fragile children. (Standing Ovation)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, the Sevignys have been actively involved with the Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia, the IWK Health Centre, and other advocate organizations where they have graciously shared their experience and expertise.

They have made a profound impact on the children and youth they have cared for, the foster family community, and the many families, natural or adoptive, they have helped through the years. Suzanne and Roger are true heroes and I am so happy to have them with us today as they celebrate their 50th year of being a foster family.

DCS and I are going to be posting a video later today about their experience, so I urge you all to watch it; just watch it and make sure you have waterproof mascara on.

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

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 1405

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

Whereas October 20th - 27th is Foster Family Appreciation Week, an opportunity to recognize and thank the many Nova Scotians who open their hearts and homes to children and youth in need of temporary care; and

Whereas today there are about 685 foster families across the province providing children in need with safe and secure environments; and

Whereas foster families are inspiring and deserve recognition, not just during Foster Family Appreciation Week, but every day and every week;

Therefore be it resolved the members of this House join me in thanking foster parents for everything they do to provide love and support to the children and youth in their care.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East on an introduction.

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have six very important people up in the gallery. First, I want to introduce the constituent assistant for Dartmouth East, Ms. Brianna Faulkner, and along with Brianna we have my family - the lovely Christine Doyle along with our children. We have three unbelievably smart, hardworking, talented young ladies, Sophie Halman, Emma Myatt, and Ella Halman. And we have the Beast from Dartmouth East, Christopher Myatt.

I would ask everyone to please stand and receive the warm welcome of the House of Assembly. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 214 - An Act to Amend Chapter 42 of the Acts of 2005. The Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act. (Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin)

Bill No. 215 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 46 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Building Code Act. (Colton LeBlanc)

Bill No. 216 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 33 of the Acts of 2004. The Protection for Persons in Care Act. (Barbara Adams)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: Just before we do this, I want to remind members that the time limit for statements by members is one minute. I suggest you practise, and if you're longer than 45 seconds, you need to do some editing.

The honourable member for Pictou West.

PARKER, AMELIA: STEP DANCE, FIDDLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS - CONGRATS.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, Amelia Parker, age 13, of Central West River, Pictou County, participated in the Maritime Fiddle Festival in Dartmouth in July. She was awarded various medals, including top of her fiddle class for ages 13-18 and second place in step dancing for ages 15 and under. Amelia was also invited to travel to British Columbia in August to represent Nova Scotia in the Canadian Grand Masters.

I congratulate Amelia and applaud her for her work and dedication to fiddling and dancing. It is wonderful to see such a young girl succeed in art forms so important to Nova Scotia's heritage. I wish her the best of luck in her bright future of music and dance, and I am very proud of her for her incredible accomplishments at such a young age.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

B.C. LEGISLATURE: UN DECLARATION, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES - RECOG.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise this morning to recognize the work of our provincial counterparts in British Columbia, who yesterday introduced historic legislation affirming the rights of Indigenous people. The bill is the first in the country to legislate the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

New Democratic Party Premier John Horgan said of the bill, "This bill is critically important, because Indigenous rights are human rights . . . We all want to live in a province where the standard of living for Indigenous Peoples is the same as every other community in the province." I could not agree with him more.

The declaration recognizes that Indigenous peoples have the inherent right to self-govern, make decisions, and hold power - a critical step in our path to true reconciliation

that should be applauded. I sincerely and honestly hope that legislatures across the country, ours included, will follow suit in the near future.

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

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave for an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

PATRICIA ARAB: In the East Gallery, we are joined today by Jane Garnier, an incredibly talented young lady from Fairview who you're going to hear a little bit more about - who, I just want to add, was late coming in here because, as a little birdie told me, she stopped to buy a coffee for a homeless person on the street. (Applause) There's more to come. She's pretty awesome.

Jane is here today with her dad, Corey Garnier, and with my incredible, number one person - my constituency assistant, Allison Covert. If I could ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

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

GARNIER, JANE: PHOENIX HOUSE FUNDRAISING - COMMEND

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to stand and recognize Jane Garnier, an incredible young lady, who continues to impress me. A Grade 7 student at Fairview Junior High, Jane not only excels academically but is also involved in band, Girl Guides, and horseback riding. Jane loves to bake and even attended a culinary camp on P.E.I. this past summer.

On her own initiative, Jane is fundraising for a number of organizations before next Summer. Currently she is collecting donations for Phoenix House, an organization that provides housing, parenting supports, and many other services to youth.

Some of her suggested donations include food, new or gently-used clothing or footwear, gift cards, personal hygiene products, baby items, household cleaning supplies, and bus tickets. Jane will be accepting donations until November 15th.

I ask the members of this House of Assembly to join me in recognizing Jane and thanking her for being one of the most outstanding young women I've ever met in my entire life.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

[9:30 a.m.]

FANCY, LOUISE AND DWIGHT: 50th WEDDING ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

KIM MASLAND: On October 25, 1969, 50 years ago today, Dwight Fancy and Louise McBride of North Brookfield stood before family and friends and pledged their love for one another. Through sickness and health, good times and bad, they've enjoyed 18,260 days of patience, 438 hours of love, four very strong-willed children, six bright and beautiful grandchildren, one handsome great-grandson, and a multitude of cats and dogs that my brothers and I either convinced them to adopt or simply left in their care. Always our biggest fans, the hours they have spent at ballfields and basketball courts are too numerous to tally.

Theirs is a marriage that cannot be measured in material possessions but is best reflected in the lives of so many they have touched with music and their bottomless hearts. Their commitment to each other and their love have been and continue to be the key to the success of their family.

Mom and Dad, I love watching you grow old together. I'm so proud to stand here today and ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating my parents, Dwight and Louise Fancy, on their milestone anniversary and wish them continued health and happiness in the years to come. We will party on the 9th. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: You guys are making it really hard to cut you off at the one-minute mark. (Laughter)

The honourable member for Lunenburg.

SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted

SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: I'd like to have people look into the East Gallery. My constituency assistant Ruth Wawin is here with her mother Rebecca Rock. I'd like you to stand and have the welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

ROCK, REBECCA: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a long-time friend and recent retiree, Rebecca Rock. Rebecca retired last year after spending her teaching career educating elementary students in music and French. Not only is Rebecca a recent retiree and talented pianist, she is also an accomplished swimmer.

This past Summer Rebecca attended the 55+ Games in Antigonish, winning a gold medal in both her 500-metre and 100-metre freestyle races, as well as silver in her 50-metre and 100-metre breaststroke races. Her relay team also came away with a gold medal. Next Summer, she will represent the province of Nova Scotia in her respective swimming events at the Canada 55+ Games in Kamloops, B.C.

Rebecca, your children and I want you to know that we are extremely proud of you. They understand how difficult it was raising four headstrong and sometimes wild children, and they are so happy to see you excel in something you are truly passionate about.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Rebecca Rock for her accomplishments at the 55+ Games.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

WALTON, DORIS: AFTER THE SCHOOL BELL - THANKS

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to rise and recognize Doris Walton for starting the After the School Bell program in Amherst. This program helps children who need food so they are not coming to school hungry.

This program is based all on donations, and Doris has been working hard this past year to get over 800 bags of food to children. This has helped many families who are having trouble keeping up with the cost of living. Doris is continuing her project this year and hopes to bring in more bags of food as she is partnering with more schools throughout Amherst.

I would like to thank Doris for her passion in getting food to our children.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

HUANG, DEVIN: MUSICAL PERFORMANCE - RECOG.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a talented young boy by the name of Devin Huang. Devin is a 12-year-old student at Sacred Heart School in Halifax. Last May, I had the honour of having Devin play the piano at my Member Statement ceremony. He played three classical pieces, including Beethoven's Sonata No. 17; the "Tempest", 1st and 2nd movement; and a Chopin waltz. This left the audience in total awe. Devin is a very gifted musician who also plays the flute in his school band.

This Fall Devin is participating in several recitals, including Government House in October and a performance in November.

I am so excited to see where Devin's musical gifts will take him, and I hope to have the privilege of hearing him play again very soon.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

**D'ENTREMONT, LAURENT:
BOOK, *THE TWO ACRE FARM* - CONGRATS.**

COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, Laurent d'Entremont of West Pubnico is a long-time local storyteller, stand up comedian, and author. On October 24th a book launch for Laurent d'Entremont's sixth book took place at the Musée des Acadiens des Pubnicos, and in his book entitled, *The Two Acre Farm: More timeless stories by a long-time storyteller*, Laurent shared 76 historical stories.

Laurent is known for being quite the performer. He has entertained many over the years during his amusing stand-up comedy acts, and he is also known for touring the area in his antique vehicles.

I wish to congratulate Laurent d'Entremont on his most recent book and wish him continued success in the years ahead.

Monsieur le Président, je désire féliciter Laurent d'Entremont sur le lancement de son sixième livre et lui souhaite beaucoup de succès à l'avenir.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

WAINWRIGHT, JOHN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, Yarmouth recently lost a cherished and admired member of our community, Mr. John Wainwright. John was a respected business owner, active board member for several organizations, and was a dedicated Rotarian with the Rotary Club of Yarmouth.

For over four decades he was a member of the Yarmouth Fire Department and served as both deputy fire chief and acting fire chief. John was also one of Yarmouth's historians and a great storyteller and was particularly up to speed on Yarmouth's political history.

John was a constant and unwavering example of community and citizenship and he will be greatly missed by his family and loved ones, colleagues, and his many friends.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

COM. OUTREACH, LWR. SACKVILLE: MEAL EVENT - THANKS

STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the volunteers who are involved in the Community Outreach Meal Event in Lower Sackville.

Hosted by Knox United Church and provided by various community groups, the Community Outreach Meal Event, commonly known as COME, began serving the community two and a half years ago and continues doing so on the third Thursday of each month, providing free, hot meals in the community.

I would like to ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in applauding the volunteers who continue to work diligently to provide warm meals to the members of our community through the Community Outreach Meal Event.

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

FOLEY, ANITA - PHYSICIAN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of one of the greatest doctors and community leaders Nova Scotia has known, the late Dr. Anita Foley.

It is with a heavy heart and great sadness that we, the family, friends, health care colleagues, and community, said goodbye to Dr. Foley this past May.

Dr. Foley touched the lives of the community of Guysborough County and surrounding areas through her 40 years of practice as a family physician and left a legacy to local health care that will live on even though she is no longer with us.

Known as much for her straightforward bedside manner as for her long and varied career in health care, Dr. Foley graduated from Dalhousie Medical School and spent her time as a lifelong learner at St. Francis Xavier University.

As an award-winning physician, she was no stranger to accolades and recognition, and most notably being the namesake for the new wing of the Guysborough Memorial Hospital, the Dr. Anita Foley Health Services Centre.

I stand today in remembrance of our friend, doctor, and community leader. Let us remember Dr. Anita Foley for the amazing person and doctor she was, her commitment to rural health care and all the good she did, and what she meant to her widespread community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East on an introduction.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, we all know the impact that scouting can have on the lives of our young people and what a positive impact it is today. We have some young scouts with us here today and I would like for them to stand and receive the welcome as I announce their names: Lucas Kelly-Sandell, Nate Dubois, Alan Betts, my buddy Keigan Lord who took out a membership at the leadership and cast a vote - he's a voter, folks - and their leader Heather Carlin. Thank you so much, Heather.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

SMITH, GRACE: 39 YEARS, TERRY FOX RUN - DEDICATION

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Grace Smith, a constituent of mine who joined 30 other people in the Collingwood area for eight kilometres of the Terry Fox Run, from the River Philip Hall to the Collingwood fire station, this year on September 15th. Eighty-three-year-old Grace admits she didn't quite make the full run and that she had to jump in the firetruck for the last kilometre.

Grace has participated in the run between River Philip and Collingwood for the past 39 years and has organized it for the past eight years. Grace lost her brother and a sister to cancer and honours their memory with this walk.

I ask you to join me in acknowledging the amazing dedication that Grace Smith has made to the Terry Fox Run and thank her for her commitment.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

FILLMORE, ANDY: RE-ELECTION - CONGRATS.

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer sincere congratulations to all the elected and re-elected members who will be joining Canada's 43rd Parliament. Candidates, their families, and their volunteers worked tirelessly to earn the trust of Nova Scotians and Canadians, putting in the work that keeps our democracy ticking.

In the riding of Halifax, we were fortunate to have a committed and proven champion for the city and its residents in incumbent MP Andy Fillmore. Andy and his team never stopped knocking, calling, debating, and listening, putting forward ambitious, progressive, and feasible proposals for the challenges we face in 2019.

Andy ran on a strong record and a strong reputation. Having worked closely with him over these last four years, I've been pleased to see the progress we've made together and was proud to support him.

I want to congratulate Andy Fillmore on his re-election as MP and thank all of the candidates for Halifax for their hard work and contributions.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, permission to make an introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I call attention to the East Gallery, where we have Reverend Dorothy Huntley and Darlene Williams, who are lifelong friends and constituents, and with them is Angelique Gaudet, a student at Horton District High School who's very interested in politics.

I ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

WILLIAMS, CLIFFORD - PTE.: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, as we approach Remembrance Day, it seems fitting to honour those Canadian servicemen who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

One such serviceman was Private Clifford Williams, father of Reverend Dorothy Huntley whom I just introduced. Private Williams died in the days following D-Day and is honoured at Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery. Dorothy's mother, Edna, was frequently honoured in Canning as a war widow and often placed a wreath at the cenotaph on November 11th.

I wish to express my appreciation and the gratitude of all Canadians for the price Dorothy's family paid, and I ask all members of the House to rise and show our appreciation for Dorothy's family. (Standing Ovation)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

BENOIT ELECTRIC: 20th ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, as we come to the end of Small Business Week, I'd like to recognize John Benoit, president of Benoit Electric, a Beechville business that shares and operates out of the same building as my constituency office.

Benoit Electric is marking their 20th anniversary of committed service. John, a resident of Hubley and founder of the company, started the business in 1999 with only two employees and one service truck. Today the full-service company has grown to include 23 employees with a fleet of seven vans and a pickup truck.

Benoit Electric specializes in residential services and covers a wide range of electrical services. Their vehicles are fully stocked with supplies and equipped with GPS-based tracking systems to ensure accurate arrival times to service calls.

As leaders in the industry, Benoit Electric also installs and services generators, electric thermal storage units, and solar panels.

I ask the members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating John on his successful business and acknowledge Benoit Electric's 20 years of superior quality service.

[9:45 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

BALANCE FITNESS: ENGAGEMENT - RECOG.

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, as it's Small Business Week, I rise today to recognize two outstanding Dartmouth East entrepreneurs, Erika French and my former student Jade Martin.

Together, they run a gym focused on positivity. These women have become leaders in fitness and in the Dartmouth business community. They call their business Balance Fitness - this is meant to underscore society's need for not only exercise but good nutrition and mental health as well in order to achieve overall well-being. They have taken a comprehensive and holistic approach to health.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank Jade Martin and Erika French for their role in positively impacting the health and wellness in Dartmouth East. The level of encouragement and engagement they bring in their business every day is incredible. I wish them luck as their business continues to grow.

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

FRANCIS, RYAN: EAGLES, PLAYER OF THE WK. - CONGRATS.

BILL HORNE: I'd like to congratulate Ryan Francis of Beaver Bank for being named the Ultramar player of the week for the Quebec Major Junior hockey league. Ryan, a forward with the Cape Breton Screaming Eagles, has begun his third season with 14 points in eight games. Seventeen-year-old Ryan had his name appear as one of the 26 Q players of the NHL's central scouting list as a player to watch, ahead of next year's draft.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating Ryan on his award and wish him the best in the future.

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

COLE HBR. AND AREA: COM. RENO. - COMMEND

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the entire community of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage and the surrounding area for banding together to help fundraise and help repair the rental property of Cole Harbour resident Jason Selby whose home was damaged by delinquent tenants.

A public fundraising event hosted by Jen Michelle and Paco Macaroni will be held this Sunday on October 27th at 6:00 p.m. at Cole Harbour Place. We invite everyone to attend this musical extravaganza which will be featuring local bands and acts, including Jeff Brown; the Homewreckers; Leona Burkey; Dave Bradshaw; Coventry Lane; Colin MacEachern and the Camaros; J.P. Martin; George Wolfe; and young rockers, the Couch.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to thank my entire community for banding together to help a constituent.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

BLUE HARBOUR CHEESE: ARTISANAL CHEESE - CONGRATS.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, this week is Small Business Week in the HRM, and I would like to draw attention to a fabulous new small business that recently moved to Dartmouth North. Blue Harbour Cheese set up a shop at 6 Primrose Street this past September, and if that address sounds familiar to anyone, it is because it is the same building that houses the Dartmouth North Community Food Centre.

After six years in the north end of Halifax, the new location has allowed owner Lyndell Findlay not only to expand her cheese production facilities, but to open a retail space for the very first time. The shop features Blue Harbour's own cheeses, including the delicious urban blue, but also organic cheeses from all over Nova Scotia.

As a resident of Dartmouth North, I am so thrilled that I am now able to buy Blue Harbour's delicious artisanal cheeses just down the street, and I wish the company all the best on their new adventures.

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

HP VET HOSP.: GRAND OPENING - CONGRATS.

BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start by acknowledging and congratulating all the businesses and entrepreneurs in Hammonds Plains who have taken the risk and believe that Nova Scotia is a great place to do business. Right now, I would

also like to recognize the Hammonds Plains Veterinary Hospital that is celebrating its grand opening this weekend. It was born from a desire to provide our community with a locally-owned option for high-quality medicine, as well as personalized service.

The core team at this vet hospital have worked together for a number of years and share the same passion for their profession, love of animals, and care to their clients. They practise high-quality medicine and understand client experience is certainly important. The owners and veterinarians are Emily Poynter and William Hoskin, who worked hard to fulfill their dream of opening their own practice that focuses on doctor-patient relationships.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating the Hammonds Plains Veterinary Hospital on their grand opening.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

SCANLAN, DORIS - PROTHONOTARY: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I stand today to recognize Doris Scanlan of Pictou on her retirement from local courts after 35 years of service. Doris has worked at the court since its opening in 1986 where she began as the Deputy Prothonotary and later became the Prothonotary in 1995. Her unwavering dedication to her profession over the last 35 years has not gone unnoticed by her colleagues. She was a skilled and valued team member everywhere she worked and has taught many of the younger employees cherished lessons.

Doris is also an upstanding member of our community and plans to spend her retirement continuing to volunteer with many local groups. I applaud Doris for her many years of service in the justice system and wish her a happy and healthy retirement.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted

KELLY REGAN: I would direct the members' attention to the East Gallery where we are joined today by some members of the 1st Bedford Scouts. I would ask them to stand as I call out their names: Scout Leaders Paul Henderson and Heather Carlin, as well as Justin Henderson, Ethan Hargreaves, Keigan Lord, Nate DuBois, Lukas Kelly-Sandell, and Allan Betts. I would ask the members of the House to give them a warm welcome.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

BEDFORD SCOUTS: 40th ANNIV. OPEN HOUSE - CONGRATS.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate an organization on 40 years of great youth programming in our community. The 1st Bedford Scout Group is a very active part of Scouts Canada. They provide opportunities in Scouting from Beavers level through to Venturers, ages 5 to 18, for all young people.

Scouting gives young people confidence as they master skills and tasks. I think enrolling a young person in Scouts is a great way to get them on a good path in life. I often find the people I am drawn to most - the folks who are reliable and responsible, who are problem solvers - well, it turns out they've been Scouts or Guides.

The Scouts are planning an open house tomorrow, and it's so open that it's actually outside at the Chickenburger. The Scouts are going to set up a campsite, where they'll display items they regularly use when they're camping. They'll have activity stations set up for young people, and they'll hold a formal campfire opening, complete with skits, songs, and cheers. I'd like to congratulate Bedford Scouts on their 40th anniversary and thank the many adults and young people who have volunteered to make this such a strong organization. Well done.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

MACKINNON, DARRELL: WCB DENIAL - TRAVESTY

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to express my views on a WCB denial to Pictou County resident Darrell MacKinnon. The Act states clearly that when there is doubt and evidence evenly presented, the benefit of the doubt is to go to the injured worker. Well, not in this case. Several medical professionals, lawyers, and citizens familiar with the WCB Act have examined Mr. MacKinnon's case, and they have concluded that he should definitely receive his rightful compensation benefits.

In his particular case, WCB appeared to be ignoring this section of the Act; therefore, the David versus Goliath story continues. In this case it is an injured worker fighting for what rightly belongs to him. Positivity, confidence, and persistence are qualities that he possesses. Although at times he feels he's facing insurmountable odds, he realizes he deserves his rightful compensation. Therefore, he will continue to abide by the process, rejecting denials, and appealing again until such time as someone in the WCB steps up to the plate and corrects this travesty.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

COOMBES, KENDRA - BIRTHDAY WISHES

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to rise today and wish a very happy birthday to somebody who's watching at home, Kendra Coombes, who is one of my biggest supporters and probably one of our biggest challenges. She and her brand-new daughter, Rory, are sitting at home right now and watching live. She's one of the very few people I know that enjoys watching Leg. TV, and she truly does enjoy it. She is a remarkable young woman, who is a councillor with CBRM and has a wonderful, bright future in politics.

I'm sure we can all celebrate her birthday and wish her all the best as she is at home celebrating her birthday watching Leg. TV. Happy birthday, Kendra.

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

SMB CHIROPRACTIC CTR.: 25th ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Dr. Andrew Kleinknecht and Dr. Wanda Lee MacPhee on the 25th anniversary of their St. Margaret's Bay Chiropractic Centre and to thank them for their service to our community. Their mission is to support healthy living of families in their community by enhancing the natural healing power of the body. They have served many generations of family, including some who've gone on to become chiropractors themselves.

This small business is an important local member of the 1.2 million participants in the small business sector in Canada, which employs almost 90 per cent of all persons working in the private sector. I invite the members of the House of Assembly to join me in recognizing and congratulating Dr. Andrew and Dr. Wanda on their 25 years of chiropractic services to the residents of St. Margarets Bay.

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

TRASK, ALICE: DIABETES CAMP FUNDRAISER - COMMEND

LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, when 10-year-old Alice Trask's older brother, Mason, was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes it was a big adjustment for the entire family. Fortunately, the Hilden youth was able to attend a D-Camp for children with diabetes, allowing them a regular camp experience but with a team of medical professionals on hand for emergencies and to teach them how to manage their illness.

Alice, however, was concerned for the children who might not be able to afford D-Camp. She started selling lemonade at the Truro Farmers' Market, as well as taking donations online, raising \$647 through her Put a Squeeze on Diabetes campaign to send someone to camp.

I wish to recognize Alice for her selfless actions of seeing and responding to a need in her community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

2019 FEDERAL ELECTION, HARDWORKING VOLUNTEERS - THANKS

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, October 21, 2019, was an historical day as Canadians coast to coast to coast cast their vote, and their voices were heard. Nova Scotia elected 10 of 11 Liberal MPs and, let's be honest, one red Tory.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the hard work of all the volunteers on every campaign for every Party. They put in countless hours to elect the candidates and the Party they believed in. Halifax returned Andy Fillmore for a second term. I would argue that Andy's the hardest working MP in all of Nova Scotia. I'm proud to call him a partner and a friend.

A special shout-out to Joanne and Brenton and the entire team for all they did. As I told them at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday morning, the election is now over; it's time to get back to work.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

BLOIS, KODY: FED. ELECTION SUCCESS - CONGRATS.

KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Kody Blois on his election as MP of Kings-Hants. I had the opportunity to see him over the last couple of months on the doors, kicking dirt at the end of the driveway, and in the debates, and I can certainly attest to the tremendous hard work that he put into the election. He showed great communication skills and an ability to connect with citizens in all walks of life. I think he'll be an excellent and exceptional MP.

I do want to congratulate all the other candidates in Kings-Hants for their work in the election, and I look forward to working with MP Kody Blois. I ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in congratulating Kody Blois on his election in Kings-Hants.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

VANDERKOOI LIQUIDATORS: NEW BUS. - BEST WISHES

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, today I rise as we come to a close of Small Business Week, and I'd like to honour one of our newest businesses in

Amherst. I'd like to welcome to Amherst Mike Vanderkooi and his new business Vanderkooi Liquidators.

Mike opened his new store in December of last year and has been very busy. There have been many new businesses joining the Amherst business community and throughout Cumberland North. His business has an ever-changing selection of new and used furniture, antiques, and collectibles.

Today, I would like to thank Mike for choosing to open his business in Amherst and in Cumberland North and join the ever-growing commerce in the Amherst community. Mike, I would like to wish you the best during this new adventure.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

DIGBY SCALLOP DAYS: POPULAR DRAW - CONGRATS.

HON. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, for the 45th year, Digby hosted scallop lovers from near and far at Digby Scallop Days, the festival that celebrates our scallop fishing industry.

The scallop fishery has been part of the lives of our communities since the very early days. Digby's first settlers learned how to fish scallops from the local First Nations people. Many of their descendants still fish scallops. The people in the industry are always proud to show off their skills and get to do it at Scallop Days, both in demonstrations and at such competitions as scallop-shucking contests.

This festival is a popular draw for the area, people coming to participate both in new activities and the old favourites included since the early years of the festival. This combination of old and new is the reason we all love and go year after year, and visitors plan their vacation in the area to coincide with Scallop Days.

Congratulations to all the organizers on their success and a well-organized festival. I want to thank them and their volunteers for the many hours spent to ensure Scallop Days are uniquely special in the Digby area for everyone to experience.

THE SPEAKER: Just before we start Question Period, I want to remind all members that as presiding officer of this Chamber, it's my duty to ensure that this is a place for a respectful exchange of ideas and opinions.

Over the past week, I've noticed that the level of enthusiasm of all members has been greatly elevated. I want to let you all know that beginning today and for the rest of this sitting, there will be no tolerance for unsolicited interruptions during Question Period and debate.

I want to repeat that: there will be no tolerance for unsolicited interruptions during Question Period and debate.

Unless your name has been called by the Speaker and your microphone is on, I do not expect to hear your voice. If I do hear any unsolicited comments, I'm going to politely ask the member to excuse him or herself from this Chamber. I also want to remind everybody that the 45-second clock during Question Period is there as a guide for all members, including me as the Speaker.

[10:00 a.m.]

We do not have a hard rule in this Chamber on that 45-second clock. It is there by way of agreement of the House Leaders of all three Parties and everyone agrees that it is left up to the Speaker's interpretation of that clock.

I thank you all for your efforts in drawing my attention to the clock and when it expires, but I will respectfully ask you all to leave that up to me. I thank you all in advance for your anticipated co-operation.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM: PPS - CONTRACT

TIM HOUSTON: The Public Prosecutions Act, Section 6, states: "The Attorney General is the minister responsible for the prosecution service." I'll table that for the benefit of the Premier. Yesterday the Attorney General, the minister responsible for the Public Prosecution Service, told reporters, "I'm troubled by the fact that our prosecutors are looking out for their personal financial best interests over the needs of victims."

I'd like to ask the Premier: Does the Premier agree with his Attorney General that the members of our Public Prosecution Service are essentially just greedy?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that all members of this House recognize and understand the tremendous confidence I have in the Minister of Justice and Attorney General. He has been collaborative in his approach in dealing with not only prosecutors but people across the entire law enforcement agency.

We're going to continue to make sure that we support victims of crime at the same time ensuring that we pay our prosecutors with a wage that all Nova Scotians can afford to pay.

TIM HOUSTON: The best way to support victims of crime in this province is to support the Public Prosecution Service, people who go to work every single day to deliver justice. The best way to support them is to honour your word, honour your contract with them.

The Attorney General is also the Minister for Labour Relations, so the member of Cabinet whose role it is to support the Public Prosecution Service is also now negotiating against them publicly, talking to the media, making very derogatory comments about their motivations.

I would like to ask the Premier: What role did the Attorney General play in the negotiation process that got us to the decision to break the contract with our Crown Attorneys?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I have been very proud of the tone of the Attorney General and the work he has done. I think there are many people in this House who could take a lesson from the approach of the Attorney General in conducting himself, not only as the Attorney General but, quite frankly, as a human being.

TIM HOUSTON: Honour among the group, I guess, but honour when it comes to the contract, not so much.

In his mandate letter, the Premier directed the Minister of Labour Relations - also the Attorney General - to maintain fiscal discipline while meeting with labour leaders to review and discuss areas of “common interest” and “building a collaborative relationship” with public sector unions.

Now I don't know which part of common interest is the public undressing of our Crown attorneys, and I don't know that breaking a contract leads to a collaborative relationship but I'd like to ask the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Labour Relations: How does the minister plan to repair his relationship with the Crowns after such a mean-spirited betrayal?

THE PREMIER: The reality of it is that a 17 per cent pay raise, that the honourable member who stands in this House and supports, is unsustainable. He wants to pay a certain group of public servants 17 per cent and then say no to everybody else, or is he going to say yes? That's the reality of it, Mr. Speaker. You can't hold the process hostage by saying we're going directly to arbitration with 17 per cent, we want free parking and other perks, and not be willing to negotiate.

By the way, this bill before the House does not put a wage settlement on - Mr. Speaker, what it does is it gives them the right to strike to exercise their displeasure with

government, if they so choose, at the same time putting in place essential service legislation so that victims of crimes who require support in our courts will have it.

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

PREM.: ESSENTIAL SERV. LEG. - EXPERT OPINION

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw the Premier's attention to some important testimony which says that essential services legislation of this sort, in fact, is a denial of the right to strike. Here is the opinion of leading labour lawyer Ray Larkin, speaking about the essential services legislation of 2014 in Bill No. 37: All of those governments - Mr. Buchanan's governments, Mr. Savage's government, Dr. Hamm's government - they engaged in temporary interference in collective bargaining, but not one of them removed the freedom of workers on a permanent basis to exercise a right that is fundamental. When you take away the right to strike from a large portion of a bargaining unit, they're not going to have a say in their terms of employment.

Five years later, the Premier's on the verge this morning of, again, imposing an essential services regime on a group of workers, effectively eliminating their meaningful right to strike. I want to ask the Premier: On what logic is he ignoring this important expert testimony on this subject?

THE PREMIER: Quite frankly, Mr. Larkin, whose testimony I listened to and who I respect very much - we have a difference of opinion when it comes to collective bargaining, the approach it requires. We believe both sides have to come to the table looking for a deal. I want to remind the honourable member the opening offer was 17 per cent, and the closing offer was 17 per cent, going directly to arbitration without actually coming and looking for a negotiated agreement. We've said that all along.

I want to remind the honourable member that Crown attorneys in New Brunswick have this legislation that allows them to exercise the right to strike, at the same time putting together essential service legislation so the victims of serious crimes in this province will end up in court and have someone there to support them.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, it appears that the Premier's disagreement is with more than Mr. Larkin. In 2015, Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin and Supreme Court Justices LeBel, Abella, Cromwell, and Karakatsanis held that the prohibition against strikes undertaken by workers deemed essential in Saskatchewan's Public Service Essential Services Act substantially interferes with the meaningful process of collective bargaining and therefore violates Section 2(d) of the Charter and that this infringement is not justified under Section 1.

Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled on this subject. What makes the Premier think that he knows more than the highest court in the country?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the reality of it is, my job is to be responsible to all taxpayers to ensure that we provide a fair pay scale in this province, one that all taxpayers can afford, at the same time ensuring that workers have the right to exercise their displeasure with the government as they see fit, while we keep essential services in place. That's exactly what this legislation does, same as it did when it came to health care.

GARY BURRILL: I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier also has a responsibility to the law. I want to share this third testimony: Essential services legislation has not worked in other jurisdictions across Canada. It has not prevented illegal strikes. The collective bargaining process is working in Nova Scotia. Our system has not been plagued by strikes. It has been suffering from government's indifference. That is the real issue. Mr. Speaker, these words were spoken by the Premier in 2007.

Let me ask the Premier: Was he wrong when he said that essential services legislation is something that just doesn't work?

THE PREMIER: The reality of it is, Mr. Speaker, patients in this province deserve to know that they will have that service when they critically need it, just as victims of serious crimes in this province need to be reassured that they will have support in a courtroom when it comes to ensuring that we deliver justice to those people who are committing these crimes.

At the same time, I have a responsibility to all taxpayers, which is to ensure that we provide a fair collective agreement that represents the taxpayers' ability to pay and that recognizes the fact that we appreciate the hard work of Nova Scotians. I want to remind the honourable member that these are the highest-paid Crown attorneys in Atlantic Canada. We provided an initial bump of 4 per cent plus 7 per cent over four years. That is a substantial increase by any stretch of the imagination. But 17 per cent is just unsustainable for this province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: COLLAPSED CRANE - LIABILITY

TIM HOUSTON: It has been another week since Hurricane Dorian and the collapse of the crane. I remind the members that this is the government that thought they could handle that removal project more efficiently and more effectively than private industry. We know what's happening, Mr. Speaker. It's a complete mess, and no doubt the cost is escalating and escalating.

I would like to ask the Premier if his government has gotten around to doing a projection of the potential liability that he has assumed for the taxpayers on this removal.

THE PREMIER: Again, Mr. Speaker, this is an issue of public safety. As he knows, that site involved a number of businesses. No one was ensuring that the crane was secured to that building, and it came down. It became the responsibility of government to ensure that we protect the safety of the public. We will take every step to recover the costs associated with removing that crane.

TIM HOUSTON: You know what else is also a matter of public safety? That's having a functioning justice system staffed by Crown attorneys that are respected. I'm going to guess that whatever number this government started at, the cost of that project is significantly higher - much more than 17 per cent higher - at this stage. It reminds us of the 11 most dangerous words in the English language: we are from the government and we are here to help.

It just doesn't work that way, Mr. Speaker. The Premier won't table for this House the cost or potential estimate of the cost. I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, as one of the four ministers apparently involved in this file: Can the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal table a report for this House that at least shows us the cost to date?

THE PREMIER: I appreciate the opportunity for the honourable member to stand in his place. An opportunity, when he had an audience, to go on about 17 per cent - he has yet to confirm, has he changed his mind? Or does he think the Crowns deserve more than the paramedics? Or does he think that they deserve more than teachers? Where does he stand on a position?

Then on top of it, he says he stands for public safety and now he's complaining about a government that has gone out to ensure we protect that community. He can't have it both ways. That's the challenge with the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. One second he's standing on one side of the street and then he notices something moving quickly on the other side, and he runs over to change his mind.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

PREM. - FILM TAX CREDIT: ELIMINATION - MISTAKE

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. In October of 2013, the Premier stood with employees on the floor of a Halifax studio and told this province that he would expand the film tax credit by extending it for five years. In that same announcement, the Premier said, "The Sound Recording, Film, and Digital Media Tax Credits are a recognition that our path to prosperity lies with the people of this province." That was a quote and I'll table it.

Two years later, the film tax credit was slashed and hundreds of those same people of this province have been forced to up and leave to other provinces to find more reliable

work. There is a picket of workers who feel that they have been misled by this government, circling this House for the last several days - can the Premier please explain to all the workers of this province why they so often hear one thing but then see another?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank those in the film industry, Mr. Speaker, who continue to invest in our province. We have a competitive film tax credit that puts us in the marketplace.

I want to tell the honourable member: unemployment is at an all-time low. More young people are seeing the future for themselves in this province, creating jobs and opportunities not only for themselves but for others. Yesterday, I was at Dash Hudson, where there are over 100 young people who are creating jobs in this province, who are creating an opportunity for themselves.

They are one of many workplaces that are seeing tremendous growth in this province because of decisions this government has made around Gtop, investing in them, ensuring small business tax is lower. That's what happens when you have a government that works with the private sector to create job opportunities. I want to assure the honourable member that Nova Scotians are recognizing it, and they're recognizing it by living and working and staying here.

SUSAN LEBLANC: This province does not have a film tax credit. We do not have a tax credit and that is the entry into my next point.

Mr. Speaker, the film industry across North America has done the analysis to determine where the greatest value for their productions can be found. They have easy tables and calculators that plainly show which provinces will provide the best value for their money in the way of tax credits and incentives.

Since this government cancelled the tax credit, Nova Scotia has now fallen to the bottom of this list, or very nearly. Nova Scotia is the only province in the country where foreign location and service production - these are frequently the large foreign productions representing over half of the industry's value - has decreased, and it has decreased to less than one per cent of the national share.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier admit, finally, that when it comes to the film tax credit, he has made a mistake?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. The reality is there are 51 productions currently going on inside of our province. The honourable member talks about foreign investment; what's provided to films across this province is a credit for all of the Nova Scotia spend.

We're recognizing the investments not only in labour when it comes to that film - or in labour when it comes to the offshoots, Mr. Speaker - whether it's in hotels, food, or other aspects of hiring local Nova Scotians. How can the honourable member be against looking for jobs for Nova Scotians? The unemployment is at an all-time low. It's working. Let's celebrate the private sector. Let's celebrate the young people who are choosing to live and make a difference in our community.

[10:15 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MIL. REL. - NORTHUMBERLAND VET. UNIT: EMPTY BEDS - EXPLAIN

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier, who is also responsible for Military Relations. The welfare of those who bravely defended the freedom we enjoy today has always been a deep concern of mine. Currently the Northumberland Veterans Unit in Pictou has 20 beds but only 12 are occupied.

As members of this House would know, Veterans Affairs Canada can provide long-term care support only to Second World War and Korean War veterans. It perplexes me, Mr. Speaker, as to why we have Allied and modern-day veterans using community hospital beds when there are empty beds at the Northumberland Veterans Unit.

My question is: Can the Premier please explain why his government would not want to ensure that all veterans have access to a bed at the Northumberland Veterans Unit, whether they served in the Second World War or in Afghanistan?

THE PREMIER: I agree with the question, Mr. Speaker. We've actually been working with the national government to ensure that very thing happens. If there are clients or if there are World War vets or vets of any kind that the honourable member believes deserve long-term care in one of our units, I encourage her to reach out. We'll work with the national government. I've done it a number of times.

I also want to say to the honourable member that we're trying to make arrangements with the national government that if those beds are not being used by veterans and they are vacant in communities, we have long-term care patients that would like to use those beds. She is very right, the national government has made a decision.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I am right and actually we do have a contract with the federal government for the Northumberland Veterans Unit to fill those beds, but you're not filling them. The reality of our health care . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member not to refer to any other members directly. Keep your comments directed to the Chair.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will table this letter from the federal Minister of Veterans Affairs. The reality of our health crisis in Nova Scotia is that we do not have enough community hospital beds. This continues to be one of the reasons why our emergency departments are overflowing and wait times still remain unacceptable.

I've tabled the letter that I received from the federal Minister of Veterans Affairs and I quote what was in that letter: Veterans Affairs Canada's agreements with facilities that have contract beds, such as the Northumberland Veterans Unit in Pictou, allow them to offer these beds to other residents when they are not occupied by service veterans.

My question is simple: Does the Premier not see any value in opening up these beds to residents to help combat the health care crisis Nova Scotians are faced with every day in this province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I agreed with the question. I've said the very same thing. If there are people in her community that are looking for those beds, who are vets looking for that, we need to get the support of the national government to make that happen.

Again, Mr. Speaker, time is wasting. If there are people that she believes require those beds, pick up the phone and call. We'll work with them as we have with other people to make a difference and try to make sure we provide the supports not only for our veterans but those Nova Scotians who require long-term care.

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

TIR: TOWER ROAD DISREPAIR - ACTION

BRIAN COMER: My question is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. The five-year highway plan is missing an important stretch of road in Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg. The residents of Tower Road were confident that their road would be included in the five-year plan. It has been in disrepair for decades. This is an important artery, stretching from Glace Bay to Port Morien to Donkin. Those who queue on the road every day know that it is well behind schedule for greater improvements, but they are slow in coming.

My question for the minister is: What determines which roads are repaired and which are not? The residents are very concerned about this road.

HON. LLOYD HINES: I thank the member for the question. I would want to point out that each year we provide an opportunity for all members of the House to come and meet with the folks in our department, our senior people, and determine your priorities and what your inputs are. If you haven't had an opportunity to do that, I'd encourage you to do it. We're still at a stage where you would be able to have some input into the five-year plan.

BRIAN COMER: I thank the minister for that answer. The people in these communities have reasonable expectations. They don't expect that the repairs will be made tomorrow, but it's disappointing that year after year this road isn't even on the five-year plan. The longer the repairs are put off, the worse the condition of the road will get, and the more costly the repairs will become.

Will the minister commit to making the repairs of Tower Road, or at least adding it to the five-year plan?

LLOYD HINES: I thank the member for the question. Again, I would invite him to come to our offices and meet with our people and see what the opportunity is to take some action at that particular site.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

JUSTICE - MEP: STATUS UPDATE FORM - RE-EXAMINE

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

When an individual is registered with the Department of Justice to receive child support through the Maintenance Enforcement Program, they are sent a status update form, which I understand is sent to all participants who have had no activity on their file for a period of time. The goal of the form is to find out why there has been no activity.

Two options on the form allow the sender to stop payments of maintenance enforcement, but none of the options allow for the possibility that they just haven't received any child support payments. Unfortunately, this isn't an isolated incident, as a large portion of maintenance enforcement is unpaid.

I would like to ask the minister: Will the minister commit to re-examining this form to better reflect the realities of the Maintenance Enforcement Program?

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from my colleague. This is an area of serious importance for our government.

We have made significant changes in transforming the Maintenance Enforcement Program based out of New Waterford. We have made significant investments there and we have made significant technology investments in there to provide for electronic communications and updating specific to the form that my colleague has referenced.

I am certainly prepared, in discussions with my colleagues, to look at the form and, if there are specific circumstances that are impacted, look further into those circumstances to ensure the efficient and effective operations of our Maintenance Enforcement Program.

TIM HALMAN: I am sure the participants in the program appreciate that commitment.

There is one other additional concern that I have regarding the status update form. The deadline on the form is within ten days of receiving it, and those receiving these forms are often single parents. For them, sometimes a 10-day deadline - it may not be a reasonable request, given the nature of single parenting and the demands.

I believe the stakes are too high, in cases like child support, to insist on a 10-day turnaround. Many government forms of this type - my understanding is that they have a 30-day deadline.

My question to the minister: Will the minister consider changing the deadline on this form to 30 days from receipt to better accommodate the life constraints faced by some?

MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, again, I appreciate my colleague's point here. Whatever we are able to do to further enhance the Maintenance Enforcement Program, I am more than prepared to do.

There has been a significant transformation in the Maintenance Enforcement Program. We are seeing the lowest debt ever within the Maintenance Enforcement Program, and that is through the work of many employees here in Halifax and in New Waterford who are totally inspired by their work environment. That is a far shift from just a few years ago when they were totally demoralized, and I want to recognize them for their patience, their perseverance, and their commitment to single parents, predominantly.

I've said before that maintenance enforcement payments are the difference between living in poverty and living out of poverty, the difference between thriving and surviving, and I commit to my colleague that we will work to find solutions to this particular form.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

TIR: REEVES STREET PLAN - RESTORE TURN SIGNAL

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

People have raised concerns about possible traffic delays associated with changes to Reeves Street in Port Hawkesbury as lanes are removed from four down to three. One factor intended to fix that was including flashing green left-turn signals for Reynolds and Pitt Streets. We hear that plan has been eliminated.

With significant changes assigned to improve the look of Reeves Street and to gain better access for pedestrians between the community college and the town, why has the government suddenly decided to remove these turn signals from the plan?

HON. LLOYD HINES: I thank the member opposite for the question. I'd like to offer congratulations to the Town of Port Hawkesbury for their visionary approach to improving their highway system and create that kind of activity between the community college and the downtown, to be commended for that.

The project is a commitment from the federal government to ACOA, us, and the town to improve the public safety, but also to improve the esthetics of the area.

With regard to the left-turn signal, our safety people say it wasn't necessary.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I don't know if I heard an answer there, but I'll try again. The plan presented to the town and the one they voted for included the turn signals. Everyone wants to see these changes to Reeves Street be successful, and part of that is making sure the beautifications retain the practical need for people to be able to get to their destinations without being needlessly delayed.

The new Reeves Street is going to bring major changes for the town, and it has to be done right, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister reconsider the plan and include the flashing green traffic signals on those streets?

LLOYD HINES: The overall plan for those changes to Reeves Street, from our perspective, is based on public safety and the facility of transportation in that particular corridor, including the availability of pedestrian and bike lanes that are there. I'll undertake to have a look at the left turn signal again, to see if it is really required.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

EECD: SCHOOL SITE SELECTION - COMMUNITY INPUT

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. The school site selection process used to be guided by a board-level site selection committee that included SAC members, school board members, the African Nova Scotian representative and the Mi'kmaw representative, as well as members of municipal council. The average consultation period was around six months.

After the announcement of a new school for the Musquodoboit area, Musquodoboit Harbour and Area Chamber of Commerce President Kent Smith met with the minister, who indicated that there would be opportunities for public engagement in the new site selection process. That hasn't happened, and unfortunately the regulations state only that the

information must be provided to the public. They do not establish any process for consultation.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain how communities are supposed to provide input into the new school site selection process?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: The changes we made are very simple - we've gone from a very convoluted process that was not driven by a technical evaluation of sites. Oftentimes community members were discussing and recommending up to a dozen sites, many of which in many circumstances weren't even viable from a technical perspective - they couldn't get power, they couldn't get water, they weren't large enough. We've changed that process to do the technical evaluation first.

Engineers and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal work with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to do the technical evaluation of potential sites. We begin with the current site of the school, if we're replacing that school; we then look to close Crown land opportunities; we then look at private sector opportunities.

As soon as the technical evaluation is done and we have sites we know are viable, we go to the public to solicit feedback.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Wouldn't it make sense to include what is actually viable for the communities who attend the school? The Musquodoboit Harbour and Area Chamber of Commerce has been trying to engage with the minister in this process. They are concerned about the minister's consideration of a proposal that would have the school moved out of their community and into a business park.

The chamber provided the department with a community development plan and a business case for consideration in selecting a site for the school that is within the village core. However, it is unclear how decisions about school site selection are being made. In response to a freedom of information request, our caucus received a May 2018 email regarding Eastern Shore District High which states: Site planning already done for this one, and includes an attached concept plan.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister confirm if a decision has already been made regarding the siting of the school?

ZACH CHURCHILL: A decision has not been made for the site of that school. The Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce is one of many voices in a very large community that has an interest in where this school is going to be put. Their input will be considered, as will the variety of opinions because there are many who don't agree with the opinion of that.

What we are doing here, Mr. Speaker, makes sense, it's reasonable. We're not going to ask the community members to consider sites that are unviable, where we can't build a school, where we can't supply that school with power or water or sites that aren't large enough. That's not responsible to do.

It has created frustrations and divisions in communities in the past. We're fixing this to not only make sure that the important technical engineering work is done first before we go to the community, but to make sure we avoid delays in school construction, as happened under previous administrations.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

BUS.: INTERNET, CELLPHONE SERV. - SCHED. FOR IMPROVEMENTS

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Business. In honour of Small Business Week I felt it very important to bring up a very important subject that is continuing to be a barrier for economic development in Cumberland North and, I believe, throughout all rural Nova Scotia, and that is the lack of reliable internet and cellphone service.

In my area, right now I have a business that is possibly going to leave Cumberland North and move to New Brunswick because of the lack of affordable, reliable internet service. It's also a barrier to us bringing in new business to our area.

[10:30 a.m.]

My question to the Minister of Business is: Can he let us know when we can expect to see improvements to internet and cellphone service throughout Cumberland North?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for the question. This is one that she has brought to the floor of the Legislature many times, as have members of the House on all sides.

We're expecting to continue to begin to roll out the tenders for that \$193 million broadband investment before the end of the year. That schedule will get increasingly aggressive as we get into the new year.

We're proud of the plan we've put together, and of course the biggest part, the most important piece, is the money. But at this point, every day that goes by - I'm sure for the member's residents and others - there's frustration because they want it on the ground. So, for us, the plan's in place and the tenders are rolling out. Again, we will start to see those RFPs hit the street late in 2019 and then a flurry of those as we get into 2020.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is frustrating, and I'm here to represent the residents of Cumberland North, so it's imperative that I communicate that clearly. I have had meetings with the government staff who work on this in Develop Nova Scotia. They have assured me - which I was quite disappointed by - that no matter how many petitions I bring forth from my residents, no matter how much I bring this up, it doesn't factor into their decisions of where the money is being spent. I was disappointed because I believe the voices of the people should matter in this House, and it should impact where government money is spent.

I do have a question for the minister. They have assured me that only 5 per cent of Nova Scotians will be left without internet service. That's roughly over 47,000 Nova Scotians who are guaranteed still to be left without internet coverage.

Can the minister please share with us the current figure of how many Nova Scotians are without, and what the difference will be once they do their work and that investment is spent?

GEOFF MACLELLAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a tough place to be in. On the one hand, no one would disagree with the member around residents having a say, and petitions and wanting to have their internet first and have the best possible access to broadband.

At the same time, there has to be science put to this. There has to be a specific process whereby Develop Nova Scotia doesn't pick winners and losers. They don't pick the contractors or the participants for that work. They do the groundwork, they let the tender, and they let the market do its job.

In the interest of fairness, Develop Nova Scotia has been very objective. I can certainly appreciate that particular areas want to be priorities, and I hope that when the dust settles, that particular area is a priority.

Secondly, what we've run into - Mr. Speaker, I'll be quick on this - 95 per cent accessibility for Nova Scotians is actually the floor. The mistake that was made in the past was that broadband was promised to all Nova Scotians when there was no way we could get there. We're getting very close to the high 90s. It's going to be much higher than 95 per cent.

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

TIR: LOCH HAVEN LANE (OLD BARNS) - OWNER STATUS

LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. The Loch Haven Lane in Old Barns has a very confusing history to it. To my understanding, it is a provincially-owned, unclassified road

that has private roads connected to it. The residents of this lane have been assuming the maintenance costs as though it were a privately-owned road.

My question is: Would the minister look into the actual status and ownership of the road in order to clarify the situation?

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. If he would provide the details, I'd be more than happy to review that status.

LARRY HARRISON: I know the residents have been attempting to get answers to this question for a very long time, long before it even got to my office.

My question would be: Can the minister clarify, as part of the homework, how the residents can get this road reclassified?

LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I would recommend that the member set up an appointment with my office, and we'll dig into the file and see just what the status is.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

TIR – RAINBOW BRIDGE (CUMB. CO.): REPLACEMENT - STATUS

TORY RUSHTON: My question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal as well.

Yesterday the minister was quoted in the *Cumberland News Now*, stating that the Rainbow Bridge, on Route 2, was scheduled to be completed by the end of October. He states: "The aim is for the end of October. It's due imminently."

I'll be happy to see it in place, which means that I share, 100 per cent wholeheartedly, concentration on this bridge, as well.

The bridge is being assembled off-site and, in the meantime, traffic jams continue on Porter Road while motorists are rerouted.

I would like to ask the minister: Will the minister please explain, for the benefit of the members or residents of the Cumberland County area and this House, how he plans on having this bridge in place when the construction has just now started?

HON. LLOYD HINES: I thank the honourable member for the question, and I can say clearly, with regard to the Rainbow Bridge, that the end is in sight.

TORY RUSHTON: I am waiting to see the pot of gold on October 31st, but it's Halloween and I'm not sure where the two are celebrated. But in all seriousness, the

contract for the bridge stated that the bridge would need to be completed - need, to be completed by October 31st or be subject to a penalty.

The bridge replacement projects included a glued laminate-timber construction, which is new to this whole province - never seen before. No one in Cumberland County has seen this feat, so it leaves many questions. Will this feat be able to be accomplished by October 31st? And while we appreciate the bridge construction will be completed soon, we also hope the Province will enforce the contract.

I would like to ask the minister: Will the minister assure the people of Cumberland County that the bridge will be operational on November 1st, or will he be ready to enforce the penalty clause on this contract?

LLOYD HINES: The timbers for the approach spans - which are called “jump spans” - are arriving, and the last truckload actually comes today. The detour route paving and the shouldering is completed there.

With regard to the liquidated damages, which is a common condition in the contract for all this type of work that we do, we are very serious about enforcing the contract.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

EMO: FED. DISASTER FUND - MUNICIPALITIES

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Emergency Management Office.

The recent storms in Kings County - Hurricane Dorian, and Erin before that - caused millions of dollars of uninsured losses for the municipal units and for the Province.

The municipal units activated the regional Emergency Management Office which did a great job working with managing comfort stations, looking after vulnerable people, and many other things during the extended power outage due to Hurricane Dorian, but the infrastructure and the actual costs continue to accumulate.

I would like to ask the minister: Will the minister be supporting applications from the municipalities to seek federal disaster funding for all the work done and the accumulating costs they have already incurred?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. He has raised some very important issues there by way of all the folks who worked hard during that storm to look after all those in their communities.

We realize the effect that it has had on a variety of different municipalities around the province. I can assure you that our folks at EMO are working with and gathering that information, as we speak, and it is nearly complete.

For those uninsured losses, municipalities will file the appropriate documentation with our department. We will then make a decision around what those figures look like at the end of the day and decide whether we will work with our national government on the DFA program.

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for that answer. Many of our culverts and drainage systems were overwhelmed in these storms or completely washed out and the need to improve many of the culverts means that the costs of these storms will carry forward.

The initial cost to the Municipality of Kings will be well over millions of dollars - and I will table the estimates to that effect right here. The cost to the Province for road repairs, culvert replacements needed, and other costs will likely also be in the millions of dollars. The federal disaster assistance and flood mitigation program can assess these municipalities and the Province, too.

I would like to ask the minister: Will the minister be putting forth applications on behalf of the Province for funding for the work already done on the roads, as well as the future work that the Province needs to do as a result of these storms?

CHUCK PORTER: Again, I thank the honourable member for that question. We will - once the figures are all gathered across each of the municipalities right across the province - make a decision on what that number looks like and our approach going forward, if need be.

It is quite possible, given the description of what the honourable member has talked about - we don't know what the final cost is yet. We'll take the appropriate steps. As he may already be aware, and all members may be aware, we had talked to the national government very early on. They were here a couple of days following, and we made it clear to Minister Goodale at the time that we needed to work with him and his department. They were very open to that.

Obviously, we'll file the appropriate documentation; it's claims-based. We'll certainly go through that process and do everything we can to get what's needed to fix all the issues that were incurred by Hurricane Dorian here in Nova Scotia.

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

H&W - NSHA: ORG. CHART - PROVIDE

BARBARA ADAMS: My question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. I serve on the legislative Health Committee and the topic last month was the service of 811. For some reason, the Minister of Health and Wellness - who's had the 811 report for months - didn't release the report until the next day, after the committee had no opportunity to read the report.

I also asked a month and a half ago at the same Health Committee meeting: Where was the hierarchy chart for the Department of Health and Wellness and the Nova Scotia Health Authority showing who works where and who's responsible and reporting to whom? I asked for that hierarchy chart and was advised that there was one; to date it has been a month and a half, and I still have not seen it. I would like to ask the minister if he could table those two hierarchy charts today.

THE SPEAKER: Is the member asking for a report that the committee was looking for?

BARBARA ADAMS: No.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for the question. As the member knows, the 811 report that she referred to was made available to anyone who requested the nature of that particular report. It was regular operations within the Department of Health and Wellness.

As would be expected, we engage in reviews and assessments of programs and services that we're responsible for, to help inform policy and operational changes that we may make. That's part of what we do each and every day.

I'm not a member of that particular committee. The committee made no engagements that I'm aware of, to me or the department, looking for information about the 811 system prior to that particular committee meeting. When people expressed the interest, I made the report available.

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely outraged that the Minister of Health and Wellness, who knew that that topic of 811 was coming up, didn't think it would be important for the committee members, including his own committee members, to have that report. Perhaps they had the report.

It took a reporter to get the report before I did. This minister wasted our time and wasted this government's money and the taxpayers' money by withholding the report and not making it available to us. So, we're going to now have to call that committee back in order to highlight the fact that 80 per cent of physicians and 60 per cent of emergency ambulance providers did not think that this 811 service was doing what it was said to do.

I'll ask the minister the first question again: Will he table a hierarchy chart for the Department of Health and Wellness and the Nova Scotia Health Authority so that somebody's able to show us who is responsible for what?

RANDY DELOREY: Again, I think there's a disagreement in fact here; I think it's the way you would describe this, Mr. Speaker. Again, I made very clear the information that I have as part of the operations that we do throughout the delivery of health services. The report in question we had to help inform the work that we do as a department and that was operational work that we were doing.

As far as the member's question goes, I believe if I heard her correctly, it was a request to table the organizational charts today. Obviously, without advance warning information, I do not have those materials here to table today as requested.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

TIR - DEER LAKE: POT HOLE REPAIR - REVIEW

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. I'm sure the minister is tired of getting emails - and I can't imagine the number of emails he would get in the run of a year dealing with potholes. However, I recently read about a councillor in Deer Lake with an innovative solution for the town's constant pothole issues. As an experiment, he used an inexpensive expansion joint under the pothole fill. He reported that a nearby pothole was repaired 12 times in the time it took for his alternative repair to break down, and I'll table that.

[10:45 a.m.]

My question to the minister is: Could he tell us whether his department has had the opportunity to review this Deer Lake pothole repair?

HON. LLOYD HINES: That particular situation doesn't ring a bell, but if the member would like to supply that information, we would be more than happy to investigate that, if there's any innovation in the handling of potholes across the country.

PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, this repair transfers the expansion and contraction caused by temperature fluctuation to a joint instead of to the asphalt itself. The cost of this repair, versus that of the town's, is only an extra 40 cents per pothole. It sounds like an innovative, common-sense option for one of the major irritants of motorists on our provincial highways. The time and money spent on the nuisance of potholes would be welcome elsewhere, I'm sure the minister would agree.

My question to the minister is: Could the minister provide data on how much the province spends on pothole repairs a year, and if his department does their own trials and testing with alternative methods of fixing potholes?

LLOYD HINES: I really appreciate the member's constructive advice in bringing this matter forward. We're always interested in finding innovative ways. We would be able to supply the information on what our pothole budget is, as it were. I will undertake to get that information for you at a later date.

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

H&W - DEPT./NSHA: HIERARCHY CHARTS - TABLE

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness very quickly if he will table the hierarchy charts for the Department of Health and Wellness and the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: As the member would know, a number of changes have been taking place recently, both within the Department of Health and Wellness and the Nova Scotia Health Authority. There are some vacant positions, including at the senior levels of the executive; we have an interim deputy minister in the Department of Health and Wellness; and there's an interim CEO. I'll take a look at the charts and make sure that they're current and accurate. When we have the completed most up-to-date organizational hierarchies, we'll definitely make sure we table those as requested.

BARBARA ADAMS: I'm well aware of how often staffing changes, but I would take an old chart as well. I'll ask the minister if he will table whatever charts they happen to have right now because the committees indicated that they had them ready.

RANDY DELOREY: As I had indicated, I'll certainly endeavour to provide the Legislature, by way of tabling, the organizational charts. If the member is satisfied with an older, not-up-to-date chart, I can certainly table that information, but I do so with an asterisk to the members here. I do make every effort to ensure that the information I make available is the most current and up-to-date information that we have. Accuracy is important to me and this side of Legislature. We do everything we can to make sure that when we table information, it is the most current and accurate, but again, if the member requests, we'll provide older information as well.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

TIR: LANCASTER INTERSECTION (DART. N.) - UPDATE

SUSAN LEBLANC: I'm wondering if the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal could provide me and the House with an update on what's going

on with the Lancaster intersection in Dartmouth North and the relationship with it to the HRM.

HON. LLOYD HINES: This is a very important intersection in HRM, and . . .

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 203.

Bill No. 203 - Crown Attorneys' Labour Relations Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 203, the Crown Attorneys' Labour Relations Act, now be read a third time and do pass.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, this is an important piece of legislation on which I was hopeful we'd hear some feedback from the government. All we have heard from the government is from the minister that our Crown attorneys are greedy and from the Premier that our Crown attorneys are asking for too much. Somehow this is a bill that has fallen into the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, and we're not hearing much from Finance and Treasury Board either.

If I'd had the time in Question Period, I was going to ask the Premier who pays for his parking and where he parks because that has clearly become an issue in the last couple of days in the very significant discussions over maintaining our justice system.

Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 203 is a piece of legislation that has put this government's style on full display. The way this government operates has been fully described by the way they have operated and conducted themselves around this piece of legislation. Their

simple strategy: divide and conquer. Put Nova Scotians against a group of public servants and you can determine - whether that's health care professionals, whether that's teachers, whether that's doctors as a specific category, whether that's Crown attorneys - the strategy is always the same: pit Nova Scotians against another group of Nova Scotians. Step one, portray the public servants as greedy; step two, portray the public servants as unreasonable; and then step three, take a bill to the floor of the Legislature. That's their strategy, and we see it over and over again.

In this case, the script has been perfectly followed. I hope that at some point in this process the government, led by the Premier, can find it in themselves to acknowledge that this all started because they broke a contract, that this started because they won't honour their word. They won't honour their signature on a paper or the seal of the Province either.

I hope at some point they can sit down with the Crown attorneys and say look, we're sorry about the approach we took, we respect the work you do. I hope at some time the Minister of Justice can find it in himself to meet with the Crown attorneys and say I'm sorry, I don't honestly think you are greedy.

Probably the Premier made him do it, I don't think that's the minister's style, as he likes to say. I think somebody else put you up to it. I believe people who say those types of things are used to having somebody else pull their strings, and that's exactly why they say it about others.

We heard from the Premier on how, when you know something, when you know the way you operate, you assume that other people operate that way. That's why the Premier has no problem saying to people in the film industry, we'll extend the credit, we'll keep it going, and then do the opposite.

The Premier has no problem signing his signature to something, giggling and saying, I'm not going to worry about that. That's what has happened here. What a shame that cases are being dismissed in our court system for the last few days, because nobody who signed the contract wanted that to happen. Those who signed the contract in good faith were probably proud that they had 30 years of stability, that they had 30 years of no disruption to our courts. Those who signed that contract with their fingers crossed behind their back, knowing that they wouldn't honour it, probably aren't that fussed about the ramifications of their decisions.

We didn't have to be here. This government drove us here, and despite holding the wheel and pushing the pedal, they're pointing the finger at everyone else in the room. It is shameful. We know that the province is starting to see - the story's being written, and the story will end with the taxpayers of this province paying a lot of money when the Charter challenge is ultimately decided. The members in this Chamber, probably very few will still be in this Chamber at that time. The members for Argyle-Barrington or Sydney River-

Mira-Louisbourg might still be here decades from now, when this is decided. But the taxpayers of the province will pay, and that story will unfold.

It's already unfolding. When this government rushed down to the courthouse to get an emergency injunction and didn't have their stuff together, I'll say, guess what happened today? The Province has withdrawn that injunction because they're making it up as they go along.

Our justice system is too important to be impacted by a government that is making it up as they go along. The Premier can rewrite the negotiation history all he wants; it's not sticking. People know what this is about. People know that this is about a government that won't keep its word - not about fixing a road, not about negotiating fairly, not about properly rolling out programs. This is a government that won't honour its word; its word can't be trusted.

Some of the arguments they've raised along the way have really been foolhardy, like 100 people could set the pattern for 75; we dissected that and dismissed that over the last few days. We know that at the core, this is a government that is willing to sacrifice victims of crime to get its way on something. It is appalling. It is the worst type of government.

In closing, I just urge one last plea to the government to honour its word. I do hear people outside the building, those who would rather be in court right now, bringing justice to victims. I do hear their cries, and their cries are very simple. "Tell the truth" is what I hear them saying.

This is a group of individuals who do not want to be circling the Legislature, who probably hoped they'd never come to Province House in their life. Since they've been here, they're probably more disgusted than they ever were with the process. It must be very difficult to know the facts of how the negotiation unfolded and to hear the government try to rewrite them.

This is a pattern that we've seen with this government, as well, that the government freely offers its version of events, and they do it even more freely when they know that the other side is voiceless or silent.

I'm reminded of the Alex Cameron situation at this time. This is a government that won't let Alex Cameron tell his side of the story. This is a government that won't let Alex Cameron defend his good name, despite multiple courts saying he should have that right. Every time the court says Alex Cameron should have the right to tell his side of the story, this government says they're going to take a pile of government money and try to find another court that can delay his ability to defend his name. Now it has gone all the way to the Supreme Court. What will he say when he is ultimately given the right to speak? That's what we want to hear.

[11:00 a.m.]

We know that one judge has already ruled that it will be embarrassing for this government. We know this government likes to silence voices and that they speak with more aggression and more arrogance when they know that those voices are silenced. That is why the Premier is so confident in telling his version of the negotiations because he knows that the people on the other side are bound by honour, bound by a duty to public service to maintain the spirit of those discussions, which were without-prejudice negotiation discussions.

What type of a person leaves that room, gets a microphone in front of their face, and makes up a story that they think will vilify a group of Nova Scotians? That's the type of person who would break a contract and send our justice system into peril, which is exactly what has happened.

What the members on this side of the House want, and what the Nova Scotians who are outside want, is a return to normalcy for our justice system. They want the victims to have the opportunity to believe that justice has been served, that justice has been delivered. That's all the Nova Scotians who are watching this case want, that's all our Crown attorneys want, and that's all the Opposition members want - one simple ask of the government: honour your word. Honour the contract, conduct yourself with honour, stop with the misleading statements, stop with the political rhetoric. Honour your word.

This government will have one more chance this morning. Maybe one member over there will just have a tinge of guilt and will stand up for what is right, will stand up for what is just, and will stand up for what is in the public good.

I am hopeful that they do that, and I am hopeful that the Minister of Justice will apologize to the members of our Crown attorneys' service who only want to see justice delivered.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

TAMMY MARTIN: Oh, how I wish I was outside. Just listening to democracy, it gives me such hope and such pleasure. I just wish I was outside with the people of Nova Scotia who are standing up for democracy.

Mr. Speaker, this government does not care about collective bargaining. It does not care about our labour rights, our Charter rights, our right to freedom of association, or our rights to organize ourselves. It is a fundamentally autocratic position - it is a position of bullies.

The Premier has repeatedly said in the House that this legislation, Bill No. 203, is giving Crown attorneys the right to strike. I need to correct that assertion because it is false.

The phrase right to strike may appear in the legislation, but the other conditions of the legislation strip the right to strike - that the Premier is so generously bestowing on Crown attorneys - of its meaning and force.

I would like to bring the attention of the House to a little display of disobedience yesterday in front of the member for Glace Bay's office yesterday - and I wish I had been there as well, where some of the Crown attorneys took the legislation and set it on fire. They didn't, however, burn anything belonging to the member, but they did it as a show of solidarity, of what exactly they think of this bill. I only wish I could have been there as well.

This legislation strips the right of Crown attorneys to send any collective bargaining process disputes with the government to a fair, impartial, and binding arbitration process. In exchange, the legislation purports to give the Crown attorneys the right to strike but requires that, in order to exercise that right, an essential services agreement between the Province and the Crown attorneys must be in place in order for the strike to be legal.

The Act leaves the definition of essential services to the Labour Board, which we can assume - given all recent precedent - would find 85 per cent to 100 per cent of Crown attorneys to be essential and would require at least that service level be met in order for a strike to be legal.

Mr. Speaker, as I attempted to say yesterday and I will repeat today, an essential services agreement - one that's done properly, one that takes everyone's considerations at the table does not come quickly, but we know that this government doesn't take into consideration what is going on at a bargaining table.

An essential services agreement is essentially bargaining. However, as I attempted to say yesterday, the essential services agreement with health care workers in this province - for one agreement to be reached it took more than 8 months. Yet this government is going to reach an essential services agreement within 20 days.

Mr. Speaker, you don't have to be brilliant to understand there is a significant time frame difference between 20 days and 8 months, and to realize that in order for it to be done properly, it cannot be done in 20 days.

The 2015 Supreme Court of Canada decision *Saskatchewan Federation of Labour v. Saskatchewan* found that unions and workers' associations must have a lever in collective bargaining in order to help rectify the fundamental power imbalance between employers and their workers in employment relations. This government has taken this lever away from many groups of workers through essential services legislation and legislated contracts. With this bill, it will strip it away from Crown attorneys as well.

Mr. Speaker, let's think about who we're talking about - we're talking about Crown attorneys. I am not a lawyer, but I would think that they know what they are talking about. How does this government think they have a higher knowledge or better, more information than the Supreme Court of Canada? As my Leader talked about this morning in Question Period, the Supreme Court of Canada says that this is unconstitutional. Yet this government has absolutely no regard for the courts or for these Crown attorneys who they are legislating back to work.

The notion that this bill represents an advance in labour rights for Crown attorneys is frankly preposterous. That's almost funny to think that this is something good for labour relations in this province. This is yet again one more attempt to strong-arm unions. I don't know - is it that this government just doesn't want to see unions or associations in this province? You can't deal if you don't sit down and talk, and this government doesn't seem to want to do that.

To think that these Crown attorneys were called greedy. It is disrespectful for anybody to say that about their workers - it would really upset me. Imagine me saying that about my staff, that they are looking for a raise because they are greedy. No, they are looking for a raise because they are worthy. That's offensive, and I would dare say that the Minister of Justice should apologize for those comments.

What I find interesting about this approach, though, is that it serves as another example of the Premier's refusal to allow fair arbitration contracts between the Province and public sector workers - like teachers, nurses and employees of the justice system.

The Canadian Foundation for Labour Rights lists 229 restrictive labour laws passed by Canadian governments going back over 35 years. Since coming into office, promising to respect collective bargaining and the right to strike, the Liberals have made themselves a place on this list: 16 laws have been added to the list since the beginning of 2014. That is not a record that I say this government should be proud of. Nova Scotia has been responsible for six of them.

This brings me to the case of Bill No. 148, which I just love to talk about. Late December 2015, passage of Bill No. 148 occurred at 7:45 in the morning, after another all-night sitting of the House of Assembly that has become as much a part of the McNeil Government's repertoire as union-busting - another record for which I would not be proud, sitting on that side of the House.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd like to remind the honourable member that it is not proper to refer to any member of this Chamber by their proper name.

The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

TAMMY MARTIN: Bill No. 148 imposed a four-year wage package on Nova Scotia's 75,000 public sector employees. This legislation was originally passed in 2015 but was not proclaimed until August 2017. It unilaterally imposed a wage pattern of 3 per cent over a four-year collective agreement covering unions that refused to accept the same offer from government at the bargaining table or planned to challenge the government's wage offer through arbitration or strike.

Mr. Speaker, this government loves to talk about 7.5 per cent that the NDP signed a blank cheque - I love that phrase. I was at that table, and we bargained 7.5 per cent over three years, so let's break that down: it was 2 per cent, 2.5 per cent and 3 per cent. That, coming from the highest paid Premier in the country, is not even in keeping with inflation. At the end of the day if you look at that, health care workers who this applied to first took a decrease actually. We had several very intelligent financial people break it down, and health care workers in this province took a decrease because of the cost of living.

I'll bet that that same decrease didn't happen to the highest-paid Premier in this province. He says 7.5 per cent, and I love that because the NDP actually sat and bargained. Believe me, I was up there in the gallery - surprisingly enough I got kicked out. We were here to ensure that the NDP, although we may be onside on a lot of things - we were here to make sure that they knew we weren't going to take an imposed deal. We were going to bargain at the bargaining table. Mr. Speaker, it was 6:30 in the morning, I believe, when we finally came to a deal. It was a deal that was bargained, not a deal that was imposed.

Bill No. 148 also ended the accrual of Long Service Awards for these members who have them effective on April 2015, but these Long Service Awards were paid at the 2014 wages. However, it wasn't retroactive. Those of us who had to resign our positions in health care had to walk away from those Long Service Awards because this government took them away. But not for ourselves, right - there's still one in place for government. What's good for the goose, Mr. Speaker. Together these two measures shrunk the standard of living for our public sector workers, which was already among the lowest in the country.

Notably the Act also prohibits arbitrators from exercising any discretion on these issues when called upon to settle a dispute. It even prohibits arbitrators from ruling on the constitutionality of the Act, as they legally have the right to do. Again, Mr. Speaker, this government is trying to tell Nova Scotians that they are above reproach, that they answer to no one - not even the Supreme Court of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier frequently went on radio, television, and other media to state the government's case on Bill No. 148 and has used the same logic with the issue of the Crown attorneys. The Premier has insisted that he will not allow an unelected, unaccountable arbitrator to determine what is fair in compensation.

It is true that arbitrators are not elected, like politicians. They are selected jointly by labour, management, and unions, and from a list of highly-qualified academics - lawyers

or former judges - all of whom are well versed in all the relations of labour law and economics. These people that we're appointing, or that the employer and the union agree on as arbitrators, are not just people who have no idea of what they speak. They know the law. They come to these decisions because they know what they're talking about. We select these people, and we need to trust what they are telling us.

[11:15 a.m.]

I wonder if it is possible that the Premier's fixation on eliminating the role of arbitrators from collective bargaining comes from his run-in with James Dorsey, which was quite interesting. James Dorsey was appointed by this government to adjudicate the Health Authorities Act, Bill No. 1, in 2015.

Strangely enough, Dorsey's decision did not give this government what they were looking for, to reduce the number of health care bargaining units. Mr. Dorsey addressed that he had not met the Premier's expectations, saying: "The mediator-arbitrator is not simply an usher showing everyone preassigned seats."

Mr. Dorsey said - and I was at all of those sessions - that they come to their determination based on fact and law, that just because they're hired by this government doesn't give them a predetermined outcome, which is actually called bargaining - but this government doesn't know that.

As part of James Dorsey's arbitration process on the matter of assigning health care workers to specific bargaining units determined by the employer, Dorsey looked into the constitutionality of Bill No. 1 and found it to be constitutionally flawed. Imagine, somebody hired by this government actually found flaws in a law that this government passed.

He was particularly concerned with the fact that under the legislation, he, as the arbitrator, was obligated to consider the financial resources and ability to pay of the Province when determining the final financial agreement. Now, doesn't that just fly in the face of what the Premier is telling us.

The Premier has stood in this House and said "Nova Scotians' ability to pay" and that they don't want to leave that to a third party; the government doesn't want to leave that to an arbitrator. Well, here's James Dorsey telling the Premier in 2015 that absolutely James Dorsey took into account whether or not the Province could afford to pay.

Ultimately, the government attempted, unsuccessfully, to fire James Dorsey, after paying him around a million dollars, but he had already done the work to shift the workers, myself included, into four bargaining units. Isn't that funny; it seems to be a pattern. The government didn't get what they wanted so they tried to fire James Dorsey and erase the decision, but Nova Scotians be aware that it cost us about a million bucks.

It's a good thing, I guess, that Dorsey is not elected because the unelected state of arbitrators is a good thing for labour relations. They actually have to base their decisions on law and past practice and make an informed decision. It allows them to be independent - which this government didn't like - and to make decisions that are not subject to political or other pressures, that they attempt to come up with a solution that works for both parties, and through a process that is fair and balanced - imagine, what a term: "a process that's fair and balanced." That almost sounds like free and fair collective bargaining, but we don't know what we're talking about in this case.

It is actually inaccurate to say that arbitrators are unaccountable because they are accountable to the law, to higher levels of appeal, and ultimately accountable to the court of public opinion.

In the matter before us, the case of Bill No. 203, the Crown Attorneys Association did not want to give up their right to arbitration; they wanted to keep it. The government presented them with the option of trading arbitration for this so-called right to strike, and they refused. They actually refused, but they refused for a good reason.

An arbitrator helps to mediate disputes that have become extremely difficult to resolve. The arbitrator is agreed upon by both parties and hears from both sides at the table. We wouldn't be in this mess if the government had just sat down and tried to bargain a fair collective agreement.

If the parties are unable to agree on an arbitrator, they can use a panel, with each party selecting an arbitrator and the two arbitrators selecting a third. Even the arbitrators know that this is fair, that they're held to a higher account to ensure that this process is not flawed.

There are so many solutions to this problem that this government hasn't even tried because its goal was to weaken the position of bargaining and the position of unions. That is their ultimate goal.

The Premier has repeated over and over again the starting offer the Crown attorneys made on the wage scale, but anybody who sits at a bargaining table knows - and I talked to the Crown attorneys. I talked to them outside of this House, and you know what they said? They believe in the process. If this had gone to arbitration, they might have ended up with 5 per cent; they could have ended up with 3 per cent. If an arbitrator had told them that, they would have been okay with that because the process was fair. It wasn't heavy-handed by this government.

Of course, you ask for 17 per cent or 25 per cent when you go to the table; you don't expect to get it. Nobody expects to get 17 per cent. These highly educated Crown attorneys, I'm sure, didn't ever expect to get 17 per cent.

You know that when you go to the bargaining table, you ask for the Christmas Wish Book, and you get a flyer. These Crown attorneys would have been quite okay with a lesser amount had it been done fairly, had it been done independently. Binding arbitration carries no guarantee that either party gets what it wants; the only thing it guarantees is fairness and impartiality - and that is the key - as long as it's fair.

It's funny, I see every day how people are treated differently. Everybody needs to be treated fairly, and that does not happen. That does not happen with this government.

The fact of the matter is that the Crown attorneys were willing to have the arbitrator, to take whatever their decision was. The use of the power of legislation to override the collective bargaining process is insulting to all Nova Scotians who have ever fought for their rights, unionized or not.

Mr. Speaker, I will go back to 1925 - and I will correct the Premier - to when William Davis died picketing, not at work. He died picketing, standing up for unions, standing up and defending labour in this province, specifically in Cape Breton, because the government of the day and the employer of the day tried, unsuccessfully, to bully the workers. The government and the employer tried to bully the workers, and that is exactly what's happening today.

It's a shame - well, I will never forget my union heritage - but it's a shame that we've come so far that we don't respect the process and that we think we're better than it. To me, that's not a good place to be.

Rather than negotiating fair and sustainable deals, maintaining good working relationships with nurses and doctors and teachers and justice systems, this government just threw everybody under the bus. Anybody who has a collective agreement, this government threw under the bus.

My colleagues and I have said that the fight this government has picked with doctors, they've now picked with Crown attorneys. Do you know what? If they make \$65,000 or if they make \$650,000 - good for them - they went to school; good for them. Who are we to say, you already make enough money? How dare we?

I'm sure lots of people think we already make enough money. It's offensive for this government to pass judgment on somebody's salary and think that they're not worthy of a fair, negotiated increase.

I don't think this Premier is worth the highest paid premier in the country. That's my opinion. Should this Premier be the highest paid premier in the country? Absolutely not. Seriously. But that's my opinion. Do these Crown attorneys deserve a fair increase? Absolutely.

This government says this approach is to ensure the financial stability of the province, but you know what? Next week, next month, 10 years from now, it won't be this government, but somebody will pay the price. We already have the Supreme Court saying that this is unconstitutional. People have died for their rights to sit at a bargaining table, and this government thinks that they're above that. To me, that's a disgrace.

Nova Scotia will be forced, just like British Columbia was in the case of their class-size court, to pay back the hundreds of millions of dollars in lost wages. So much for fiscal sustainability. Maybe I'll get retro with this decision.

Mr. Speaker, we can't ignore our Constitution. We can't ignore the fact that we have signed on to our Constitution. We can't ignore the fact that free and fair collective bargaining is a right for which people, as I have said, have died. We can't ignore the fact that in 2016, this Premier signed on the dotted line agreeing to this framework.

I tried to say it yesterday, but I will say it today, because I was ruled out of order: we teach our kids that when you make a decision, I always say, pick a side; when you pick that side, I always taught my daughter to stand behind what you say. What this tells me is that the Premier can sign a document in 2016, saying that yes, absolutely, I agree with you. We'll do this for the next 20 or 30 years. But then now today, all of a sudden, he gets to change his mind and rescind that agreement.

I don't believe anybody in this House thinks that's right. I really, really don't. On a personal level, I don't think anybody in this House thinks that that's the right thing to do. Is that what you teach your kids? Is that what we teach our kids, that you can say something today but then change your mind tomorrow, and that's okay? Seriously? Wow. I don't teach my kid that, I tell you. I tell her, if you come to a decision, then you have to stand by it. You don't just get to change your mind because you don't like the way things are going.

Trust should be something that we all value. When I came into this job, I really believed, and I am extremely naive, that this was the epitome of - I can't even think of the best word - but the epitome of honour and grace and trust. I have never been so disappointed in this job. This job, these hours spent in the House, have been so disappointing to me. I miss my constituency office so much, where I get to help people and where we get to do good. That's not being done in this House, and it is so disheartening. I find it really sad because I believed in this, that this process was above reproach, and oh, now I'm going to cry. I have come to learn that that's not the case, that when somebody gives you their word, it's not their word.

Do you know what? Nova Scotians are paying attention. They really are. Nova Scotians are paying attention, and they see this too. They see that it's not only disrespect for unions, it's for doctors and for nurses. They just happen to be represented by a union. They just happen to have another voice. Good for them because, if they depended on this government to stand up for them, they would be sadly disillusioned, as I am.

[11:30 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, first of all I'd like you to know that I am physically losing my voice. However, I do rise to voice my opposition to this bill. One of the most important things an organization has, whether you are a private business, whether you are a public business or you are the government, is our employees. They are the absolute most important people we have or assets that we have. These are the people who, whether they are at the leadership level, whether they are at the staff level, whether they are at a line level, they interact and have an impact on our citizens, the customers, if you will.

You haven't heard a lot from me in this session, the first session, but often I ask myself, does it need to be said? Does it need to be said now? Does it need to be said by me? This is one of those occasions where the answer to those three questions is, absolutely yes.

In my 30-year career in telecommunications I was management. I went through three strikes, responsible for performance measurements, helping establish salary bands, progressions, all of those things. In my career so far as a politician, having been on the equivalent of the executive council here and others, we were able to provide direction for the negotiating teams to enter into negotiations with the unions representing our employees who, in turn, serve our citizens. That's an awesome responsibility, absolutely an awesome responsibility.

It was said earlier, in a different context, that you can't have it both ways. With negotiations that's the case, you can't always have it both ways, but you can have it for both parties to come up with an agreement that is good for both parties overall. I have not seen an area that I've ever been involved in where people say: no, it's either my way or the highway. I think this is where this is coming to.

I went back and took a look at the 2012-2046 framework agreement that was signed on June 7, 2016, three years ago, by this government. I also took a look at the actual document - I can table both of these and I will after my remarks - the employment agreement between Her Majesty the Queen in the Right of the Province of Nova Scotia, represented by the Nova Scotia Public Service Commission and the Nova Scotia Crown Attorneys Association.

A couple of things strike me: the agreement and the framework. The agreement that was signed was a four-year contract where the employees agreed to a zero, zero, 1 per cent and 2 per cent wage package. Also, you can't separate these things from an agreement. It all comes together. It has to work together. You cannot cherry-pick later what you want or do not want to go forward. That was meant to be a 30-year agreement or framework.

So, I'm looking at this framework, and one of the clauses in the preamble says that the parties wish to ensure any negotiating impasses do not result in a strike or lockout of Crown attorneys in Nova Scotia. The bill before us strikes that out. However, Clause (d) remains: the parties wish to conduct a negotiation of the terms and conditions for Crown attorney employment within a sound framework. That was three years ago, signed off by all parties.

Part of that sound framework was, in fact, arbitration. The arbitration was a procedure to determine interest, disagreement or dispute. I haven't seen it in the bill before us, but what happens now when you have that dispute? Is it again my way or the highway? I don't know. I think I'd like to see something proposed that would address what happens when you have an interest dispute.

Earlier it was mentioned about arbitration. When I looked at what is written in that framework, it clearly outlines the procedure to choose the arbitrators. First, the party originating would request three; it's presented to the other party; if they don't like it, put three more in; and then talk about it. If that doesn't work, there's a mechanism here to go to the Dean of the Dalhousie Law School. A lot of thought went into this three years ago and I'm left wondering, why the change?

It has been mentioned that - and I will not get into the details of the specifics of the contract that will be negotiated - but it has been mentioned, 17 per cent. That is a position. That is not unusual to put forward a position. If I interpret it correctly, the position of the employer was 4 per cent plus 7 - simple math would tell you 11, so it appears as though the employer is saying 11 per cent and then the employee is saying 17 per cent.

Then there's the argument that it happened so quick, they really wanted to go directly to arbitration. I think that's great; I absolutely do. How many times do we talk about dragging on negotiations? Why not expedite it? If we have a situation where we can speed up the process, why not go directly there? That's not a bad thing; that is a good thing. It respects everybody's time. You put all the cards on the table, and you move forward. So you know exactly what you're working with - since when is that bad? It's not bad in my opinion, Mr. Speaker.

In looking at the board, in the framework - which was a 30-year framework three years ago - it talks about what is to be considered before it, the arbitration board ought to consider. It has been mentioned here about the ability to pay, but the parties of this agreement three years ago recognized that.

In it, it talks about, relevant to the matters of dispute, including the conditions of employment in the public sector in the province - great. The desirability to maintain appropriate relationships in the conditions of employment as between classifications in civil service - wonderful. The need to establish terms and conditions of employment that

are fair and reasonable in relation to the qualifications required and the nature of services rendered.

We've heard about - and I'll use my terminology - benchmarking. If you take a look at another area within the employer's organization, outside the organization, and whether it be within this jurisdiction or elsewhere - that's a good thing. Here are the two that really caught my eye because they've been mentioned to justify this bill before us: the public interest, the arbitrator is to consider the public interest - pretty straightforward; and the second one is the province's ability to pay.

When this framework that was to be held for 30 years "within a sound framework", the factors that have been cited by the government in this particular case have already been considered in this. So, it leaves me to wonder: Would an arbitrator find out that we do indeed have the ability to pay? Is that the risk that is being run? Should the government and should the employees go to an arbitrator?

If that was a consideration three years ago perhaps it should have been addressed then. I would hate to think that this was a long game, knowing that this would come up in three years hence and that would be the time when it ought to be tackled. We can't have it both ways.

When I take a look again, in my experience, employees being the absolute best resources you can have, you can work with them constructively; you can change and negotiate; you can talk about changes, better ways to do things - but all of that is based on trust and respect.

When you have an agreement that has come about in good faith by both parties, it's incumbent on all parties to keep that and be faithful to it. There can be extenuating circumstances where something happens that nobody has ever foreseen, where it necessitates a second look and again getting back to take a look at something that is workable for all parties. I have not heard that argument here.

That is not the case here. What I am hearing is one party saying we cannot afford it and another party saying, well, we don't know if you can or if you can't but we can go to arbitration to find out, as we agreed to three years ago. Why is it that we find ourselves in this position now?

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your time. I am absolutely opposed to this. I do not know the details of the contract negotiations, nor should I. That is up to the government to know those things. However, to bring such a bill forward in this way, in this manner at this time when only a mere three years ago everybody entered into - I hope in good faith - an agreement that was to guide us forward for 30 years. That framework has been destroyed and I suspect some other things have been destroyed, as well.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, it's truly an honour to speak inside this Chamber where, at times, we can hear the Crown prosecutors and other supporters, many of them from the legal community, outside this Chamber. I stepped outside because when they were yelling, and I am sure that they will again, I couldn't quite make out what the phrase was. The phrase they are repeating over and over with noisemakers is "Tell the truth."

That lawyers, people who have studied law, people who have dedicated their lives to representing the Province, representing the public interest in courts of law, in courtrooms across Nova Scotia, have to stand outside this Chamber and yell, to try to implore the government to tell the truth is, for me, so serious. With this legislation, this government has taken a step that is deeply corrosive to the institutions that form the very basis of our democracy.

I know there's a pattern of behaviour, particularly when it comes to collective bargaining. Legislation has been used before and it has been used against teachers and it has been used against health care workers, and with members of the New Democratic Party caucus, and with members of the public before I was elected.

I was also deeply in opposition to those Acts and to those pieces of legislation. But there is something about this one which just reaches yet further.

[11:45 a.m.]

Maybe it is because the Premier's signature is on an agreement for 30 years that was signed just three years ago. Maybe it's that, or maybe it's just the audacity of taking this approach with lawyers because in the end, our right to be here - everything that we do in this Chamber - rests on a widespread tradition, a convention, that we respect the law.

If we had to invest in enforcement - if we had to use police or inspectors or the military to oblige citizens to comply with every piece of legislation that we passed, this whole system, this whole convention of our society would be brought to its knees in a week. Yet we have lawyers outside this Chamber and one of them has a sign she is holding saying, this government is not above the law. Others have signs that say, honour your word and others have a sign that says, violate our rights? Who's next?

I appreciate more now, having been in this role for a few years, how busy the work of an MLA is, how many files there are to try to be up to speed on. I know that members on the opposite side are doing their constituency work. Some of them are Cabinet Ministers and have umpteen different things coming across their desk. But I really ask that they consider what their role is today in voting on this piece of legislation.

I went to a presentation on freedom of information during Right to Know Week and Graham Steele, who was a minister in the Dexter Government, of course, spoke about why some things weren't done in the Dexter Government. He said, well I got busy, I had things on my plate; I didn't have the time or the bandwidth to go and find out why this thing that we had talked about doing didn't happen and under the jurisdiction of a different minister. I get that. I feel like I am always operating at this point where 95 per cent of my bandwidth is used up already.

But this is so serious. What this government is doing with this legislation is so corrosive to the very institutions that govern us, that underpin the legitimacy of democracy here in this jurisdiction, which has 250-plus years of democratic tradition and institution behind us.

It's also happening in a Canadian context, and in a global context, where we have seen a series of Acts that are corrosive to the rule of law. Nothing ensures that democracy will continue except actually adhering to it, except actually trying to strengthen it, except honouring your word and not running roughshod over people's rights that are protected by the Constitution.

Again, if no right is guaranteed except by recourse to the Supreme Court of Canada, we are in a very vulnerable situation indeed, and that is what this government is saying by ignoring advice from the most credible legal experts who appeared at Law Amendments. If I were looking for legal advice, ordinarily - if I had a friend who was a Crown attorney, I might approach that person. I might ask, does this sound right? You've got them outside this Chamber saying this government is not above the law. Shame. Absolute shame.

We look to the U.K. and we look south of the border and we look at even some of the stuff that happened during our federal election. We see some evidence of interference or false stories or memes spread, where there are attempts to confuse citizens or make citizens angry at some group that doesn't deserve their anger, to deflect attention from something else that's happening over here. We have to hold ourselves to a higher standard. Actually, we have to hold ourselves to the most basic standard: honour our words.

With this Act, this government is not honouring the word of the Crown, of the government of Nova Scotia, and it is not just going to come home to roost for the Premier at some point when it gets up the docket behind the challenges that are already underway in court - where this government has already brazenly passed legislation to curtail collective bargaining rights. When it gets there and a decision gets made, in those intervening years, that will have already come home to roost for whoever is in government in Nova Scotia.

Indeed, if the government shows that it does not respect the collective bargaining rights of Crown attorneys, if it doesn't respect the knowledge and expertise telling the government that this is not lawful, then what leg do we have to stand on when we say to

Nova Scotians, we're going to pass a law and we're going to ask you to change your behaviour?

In some way, the government of Nova Scotia is going to ask Nova Scotians, and it doesn't matter what it is - stop selling plastic bags in your grocery store or to stop selling vaping products to children at convenience stores to people below the age of 21, which is our proposal - no matter what it is, we legislate in this Chamber based on a convention that people will actually respect the law.

We have people who have gone to law school and who work in the employ of the government of Nova Scotia, representing the public interest in courtrooms across this province, who are picketing this Chamber, saying that this government is not above the law. That they have to say that, that they have to be outside this Chamber yelling, tell the truth. This is a very low day for this government. It's also a convention that we have power, to the extent that any of us has power as an elected official, as one of 51 members in this Chamber - that's also a convention. If we never exercise that power, then effectively we don't have any.

The Premier is one person. He is supported by every member on the government side. The members of the government actually have power if and when they choose to exercise it, if and when they choose to not stand behind a government that is not honouring its word and that is degrading the very institutions that underpin democracy in Nova Scotia.

The rule of law is all we've got, folks. It's that or it's something else that, frankly, I'm afraid to contemplate. We are here because we are choosing to participate in democracy. Democracy is underpinned by the rule of law. There are Crown prosecutors outside saying to the government, tell the truth, and that this government is not above the law. Just think about it.

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

BARBARA ADAMS: When I graduated as a physiotherapist, I became a member of a union, and that's my first experience. It was extremely comforting for me to know there was a union protecting my rights.

Then I moved back to Nova Scotia and discovered that those rights don't mean very much in this province, especially over the last six years. I don't want to have to speak to Bill No. 203 because I wish it didn't exist, but I am honoured to have the opportunity to say something to this government.

I was a member of the Nova Scotia Government Employees Union when the right to strike was legislated away from health care professionals. If we all recall correctly, even health care workers were like, well, you know we are an essential service - and we did so with very little resistance. We are a profession that works overtime - evenings, weekends.

We give up family time, we give up our own income sometimes to help our patients, and this government has taken advantage of our good nature.

I watched in dismay a few years ago as the teachers of this province protested and went on strike for the first time in this province's history because this government, once again, decided to tell the workers of this province that it didn't respect their rights. We saw what happened to this government when that happened. I am here in part because of that government's decision to strip away the rights of the teachers of this province.

At that time, thousands of people were communicating with this government. They came to Law Amendments committee until they were shot down. They were outside this Legislature in the thousands, begging for this government to listen to their voices and to not take away their rights as workers in this province, but this government didn't listen.

[12:00 noon]

Why not? It is because, as the member for Pictou East said earlier, this government has one playbook and one playbook rule set only: (1) go into negotiations, pick a number out of those negotiations, and then misrepresent it to the public; (2) pit Nova Scotians against each other, and try to turn them on each other by insulting them; and (3) legislate what they couldn't negotiate.

I am adding a (4): they then demand that those very workers whose rights they have violated - those very employees in this province whom they disrespected - work harder so that they can make the numbers that this government will then misrepresent in this House look better in time for an election.

The Premier has made the claim in this House that this bill is to protect taxpayers' money. He didn't say that running a ferry bill of \$20 million, without sailing the ferry, was protecting taxpayers' money. He didn't mention the fact that he is the highest paid Premier in this country, despite the fact that we have the highest child poverty rate, is protecting taxpayers' money. He has never offered to take a discount, and he parks for free. So, how dare he insult the Crown prosecutors for a perk he happily takes. (Applause)

This is the same Nova Scotia Premier who says, when we question any deal that this Province enters into, that we are then against something.

The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development said we were against four-year-olds. That's absurd, that's insulting, and, frankly, it is an embarrassing argument that this government uses. If we ask any question of this government, then we must be against something. (Interruption)

The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is trying to interrupt my thoughts, but this is really more important. If he had wanted to speak to this bill, he has the opportunity to stand up in this Legislature and do so. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Order. Order. I'll ask everybody to come to order.

Two things: there will be no back and forth; and second, to the member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage, you are not to address a member directly. You are to address your comments through the Speaker.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage has the floor.

BARBARA ADAMS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do recall the earlier Speaker of the House saying if there was any heckling that member would be ejected.

THE SPEAKER: Order. I am not the earlier Speaker; I'm just keeping order. Warnings have been laid out. I will do my job; you do yours.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage has the floor.

BARBARA ADAMS: Well, I do recall hearing earlier today someone in the House saying that if anyone was going to heckle, they would be ejected. Perhaps I'm wrong; we can go back to Hansard earlier. (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order. This is not up for argument. The member will speak on the bill.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage has the floor.

BARBARA ADAMS: We'll talk about honouring workers. This is the same government that, years ago, cut funding two years in a row to long-term care facilities. Maybe that's an accounting issue. In fact, it's a labour issue. It showed tremendous disrespect to every long-term care worker in this province because not only did you cut the budget, recently this government sent a notice to the long-term care facilities and said, we've got a problem with backup in the emergency department so stop sending the frail and elderly to the emergency departments. The only reason for doing that, I will suggest, is to make the numbers of people being transferred to emergency look better in time for an upcoming election.

This is the same government that says it is an accounting issue, not a labour issue, that sent a letter to the emergency departments telling them to improve their off-loading numbers. They didn't give them more long-term care beds, they didn't give them more acute care beds, which is the reason we have such lousy off-load times in the emergency

departments. They frankly told them, would you hurry up and work faster and harder, but we're not going to give you the money to do so.

There is only one reason for those letters going out to those people: it is so they can get the numbers to look better in time for an upcoming election.

When it comes to labour versus accounting and accountability issues, this government brought in collaborative health centres on the pretense that it would then reduce the number of people in this province without a family doctor.

We went from 57 to 83 collaborative health centres in the previous two-year period of time, except for the one promised in my constituency of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage, which seems to have disappeared off the government's radar. What they did instead is have the numbers of people waiting for a physician on the Nova Scotia Health Authority's Need a Family Practice wait-list in 2017-18 listed by this government; it's 45,555. In the Nova Scotia Health Authority, the number for 2018-19, is 51,802. I have done the math, and 6,247 more people are looking for a family doctor now than in the past. This government can say one thing and try to misrepresent the numbers in this House, but the facts speak for themselves.

The Premier stood here today and said that he was justified in bringing in this bill, and to justify says that he is right, that he has the right to violate the bargaining rights of Crown attorneys because the payers can't afford it. Clearly, he's saying that he has no confidence in the arbitrators of Nova Scotia.

He does not, in fact, respect any employee in this province who has a collective agreement. He doesn't respect those who work in long-term care facilities, he just tells them to work harder with less. He tells those who are waiting at home for home care - and I have the numbers if anybody wants them - he has spread out a similar amount of care over more people, so they're getting 10 hours less of care per month than they did the year before.

What this Premier has done to the Crown prosecutors of this province is so similar, in my opinion, to what an abusive spouse does to someone. I'll table the document.

THE SPEAKER: Order. The member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage is out of line to refer to the Premier and domestic violence. I ask you to retract that statement, and then we'll continue on.

BARBARA ADAMS: I'll retract the statement, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage has the floor.

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, the attempts to force a decision on someone, to insult them, to shame them publicly, to try to control their activities, to threaten to take away their freedom and control their finances is a pattern of abuse that has been repeated over and over again by this government.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Business.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the spirit of the debate here, but a member referring to the government as abusing spouses and insinuating that that's the motive of the government - I think it's very clear that that's out of order. We respect the members opposite and their ability to speak on this bill, but I don't think it's acceptable that that's the kind of thing we're listening to here. Nova Scotians are watching; I don't think they should be telling people that their government are abusers.

THE SPEAKER: I'll take it under advisement. This is the second and final warning on this for the member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage going down this line - all members, not just the one member. I will say to all members in this House that we are to keep our conversations and our arguments and our debates on a professional level and not to refer to anyone in this House or compare them to domestic violence. This is the final warning for all members.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage has the floor.

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, nearly every hospital employee, long-term care facility worker, paramedic, Crown prosecutor, and everyone else employed in those sectors is understaffed and overworked. They deserve to be treated with respect. They deserve to have their collective bargaining rights respected because if their rights aren't respected, whose rights are going next?

This bill is simply stripping away the rights of another set of Nova Scotians. This government stripped away the rights of the Public Accounts Committee by reducing the number of Public Accounts meetings from 50 to approximately 12 a year. This government offered collaborative health centres to doctors but only if they could state in their applications that having a collaborative health centre would reduce the number of people on the wait-list. There was no question in that collaborative health centre application on how it would improve health. The focus on this government is to improve the way it looks to the public.

I believe that this bill is a violation of workers' rights. I am sickened at how easily this has been brought in and rammed through without any warning or discussion with the majority of Nova Scotians. I believe this sets a dangerous precedent, sends a terrible message to anybody else in this country who might want to move here, who might want to set up a business here, who might want to negotiate any future contract with this government.

I believe Nova Scotians deserve a government with a Premier who has enough skills to negotiate and not legislate.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: May I make an introduction before I begin?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I'd like to draw the members' attention to the gallery opposite where we have Jacob Wilson here with us again. Jacob was our candidate in Halifax West. He did amazingly well on election night. It was very exciting to see the numbers coming through on election night. I'd like to thank him for putting his name forward and doing the hard work of running as a candidate. I welcome him to the House today. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to Bill No. 203 today. It pains me that we are having this discussion for all of the reasons that we've been hearing so far from the people in the New Democratic Party caucus.

This legislation - let us be clear - strips the Crown attorneys of any meaningful collective bargaining rights. We have heard something slightly different from the Liberal side of the House, but that's what this bill is doing. When the Liberals and the Premier talk about how this bill is offering the Crown attorneys the right to strike, it does not do that, because we know that Crown attorneys are essential to the workings of this province. Their work is an essential service, and therefore this bill is taking away their right to arbitration and cancelling any kind of right to strike.

This legislation reminds me of another essential services bill brought in this House by this government: Bill No. 37, which was passed in April 2014. At the time, Bill No. 37 was called a game changer in essential services legislation. It was the most radical and far-reaching change to our labour laws since the 1972 Trade Union Act. The bill took away the rights of 32,000 health care and community services workers in Nova Scotia. The legislation eliminated the right to strike for those workers and, at the same time, offered no way to resolve disruptive labour negotiations. The right to strike was the only tool that those health care workers had to warn that the health care system was running into the ground.

Inadequate funding was leading to short-staffing, poor morale, and increased injuries on the job, and without that right, what else was left to those workers?

[12:15 p.m.]

We have heard health care workers sounding the alarm about the crisis in our health care system for the past six years. Six years, Mr. Speaker. We have heard horrifying stories about what's going on in hospitals, what's going on with paramedics, what's going on with nurses. Those front-line health care workers - and workers in this province in general - are the folks who can tell us what is happening.

The government has no reason to listen to them, no reason to address their concerns in any meaningful way because their right to strike has been removed. Health care workers are taking to social media and the news to share their frustrations with a system that has been allowed to run on fumes for so many years that the engine is starting to break down.

If Nova Scotians wonder why we haven't seen more improvements in our health care system, they might consider the fact that the Liberal Government has silenced the canaries in the coal mine of the health care system by revoking their right to strike. The right to strike was the voice of the health care workers in this province, and Bill No. 37 silenced that voice.

What is to say that this bill before us today will not do the same thing to the Crown attorneys and silence their concerns about problems in our justice system? We know there are problems in our justice system. We have heard all kinds of things in the last couple of weeks, even, and because of the *Jordan* decision, we know that we need to address cases in our system quickly for justice for all. But if there are things going wrong, it will be the Crown attorneys who can tell us what's happening. By removing the Crown attorneys' ability to negotiate anything, we are also silencing them - they, who are the canaries in the justice system coal mine.

When Bill No. 37 was before Law Amendments, back in the day, Ray Larkin who we've heard about before in this House - a very well-respected and well-known labour lawyer in Halifax - presented a brief labour history of Nova Scotia. While many governments before this one have done things that he disagreed with - like temporarily interfering with collective bargaining - none have enacted legislation that permanently removes a fundamental right. In this respect, congratulations, the Liberal Government has made history.

Although Bill No. 37 was the first to permanently remove a fundamental right, of course, it wasn't the last, and I'm sure there will be more to come. We have seen what has gone on with the teachers in this province and other public sector workers. We're seeing it today with our Crown attorneys, and you can be sure we will see it continue to happen.

When the government members talk about this legislation in terms of the long-term financial sustainability that they think it will bring to our province, I worry that they don't understand the bigger picture. To me, it doesn't sound like they understand the importance

of the right to an effective strike as a fundamental tool for actually improving how our workplace functions, how they deliver services, and how they carry out their work.

The fundamental principle at stake here is that workers have a right to influence the conditions of their work. Relatedly, workers have an important perspective on how that work is accomplished and how they can provide important information on how to improve those processes.

If the government wants to ensure that services in our justice system improve, let alone continue, the right of workers to bargain collectively in a meaningful way must be protected. We talked about the word meaningful last night in the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

To say out of one side of one's mouth, that a group of workers has the ability to collectively bargain a contract; and then from in the other part of the mouth - there are several parts to this mouth, just so you know, as I go through this analogy - to take away any right to arbitration if those negotiations go south; and then to say, okay, instead of arbitration you can strike, if you need to; but then - and this is the fourth side of the mouth - to say, oh, wait a minute, you can't strike because you're essential to the workings of this province - which I totally agree with - we know then that that collective bargaining or that word "meaningful" is just moot. We're not talking about meaningful anything, except for meaningful silencing.

Earlier this week, or this past week in Question Period, we had been asking questions of the Premier on this situation, and I have been particularly galled by some of his responses. In one of the answers, I believe it was to the Leader of the Official Opposition when he asked a question to the Premier, the Premier said:

"We've been consistent from day one, Mr. Speaker. When we were given the privilege to govern this province, we were going to sign fair collective agreements - not only for those employees who work for us but for taxpayers across this province, 70 per cent of whom have no benefits in this province."

But hold the phone, Mr. Speaker, even in this answer he is not saying what is actually happening with this bill. He isn't signing a fair collective agreement. He's legislating a group of workers back to work - and there is nothing fair about that.

In his answers this week, the Premier has mentioned a few times that the province can't afford the increases that the Crown attorneys are asking for. We hear him saying 17 per cent, 17 per cent, 17 per cent - and unfortunately, as my colleague pointed out the other day, some media outlets were picking up on that for a little while.

Let's talk for a minute about what this province can't afford. This province cannot afford poverty. We cannot afford the continued rental increases that are crippling people who rent in this province - 35 per cent, 45 per cent, and 55 per cent rent increases in many parts of this province. We can't afford that, Mr. Speaker.

We can't afford this government's refusal to acknowledge a housing crisis at all. We bring up a housing crisis every single day in this House, and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing can only answer in talking points, Mr. Speaker. There is a refusal to acknowledge that there is a crisis happening in affordable housing and that there will be a homelessness crisis - and we sure can't afford a homelessness crisis.

We also can't afford a health care crisis and, while we're on the subject, we can't afford the crippling student loan debt that our young people are facing. And just to finish off my little spiel here on what we can't afford, we certainly cannot afford to not have a film tax credit that would actually put us in the game of attracting a huge amount of film production that is happening in the country. We are missing out on that work and we can't afford that.

So, this 17, 17, 17 talking point that the Premier is using is misleading and, if I may say - and I don't think that this is unparliamentary - I believe it's irresponsible. When using talking points like this, the Premier of this province is doing the people of this province a disservice. The people in this province whom the Premier continually references when he says he is saving them money - they deserve to know that time and time again the Premier says one thing and does another thing.

THE SPEAKER: Order, we're getting into the grey area there - misleading, saying one thing and doing another is implying that somebody is lying - so I'm just going to give you a little leeway.

The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Thank you for the gentle warning.

I want to talk about another thing that we sort of spoke on last night in the Committee of the Whole House. It's interesting that in the Committee of the Whole House we can address each clause of a bill, especially when the bill is terrible, Mr. Speaker.

One of the clauses we talked about had to do with the framework agreement, the framework agreement that I believe was for 30 years and was signed - wait for it - three years ago, Mr. Speaker. The Premier signed that, giving the Crown attorneys a right to arbitration after negotiation, after bargaining.

Three years was not very long ago. It's not as if this framework agreement was signed 20 years ago and times have changed and the economy has tanked and we're looking

at a different landscape. This framework agreement was changed three years ago, Mr. Speaker, and today the Premier has gone and simply changed his mind about the rights that he wants to afford the Crown attorneys.

It does remind me - and I will reference it again - of the cutting of the film tax credit. I talked about it in Question Period today. In 2013, the Premier stood with the film industry and said that tax credit works, we're going to extend it for five years because we see how valuable it is and then, two years later, he cut it. So he said one thing and then did another thing.

Mr. Speaker, this situation can be sold to the public in all kinds of ways, but the fact is that this Premier acts on changes that come to him. For whatever reason he signs an agreement and then breaks the agreement. That is fact, that is what is happening today with this legislation - he signed an agreement, he is breaking the agreement with the passing of this bill today. I am deeply disappointed.

Before I finish my speech, I just want to make a quick introduction, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North will make an introduction.

SUSAN LEBLANC: They get bored very easily, Mr. Speaker, but up in the gallery is my sweet little family: my partner Sébastien Labelle, my daughter François Labelle and my son - and I think it is his first time here in the Legislature today - Amié Labelle. He is waving very cutely. I'd like to welcome them all here and wish them a happy second day in a row of PD days. (Applause)

I will say that many children might be sort of worried about all the shouting going on outside Province House, Mr. Speaker, but those kids have been at more labour rallies than I have been at probably in their short life. They have been known to walk around the house going Ho, Ho, Ho, Ho, Ho, Ho in support of workers around this province - so love yous.

Anyway, I'm almost done. This situation can be sold to the public as many things, but the fact is that the Premier is taking away fundamental Charter rights of workers. He has done it before, he will do it again, and we should be very afraid.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I stand today to speak to Bill No. 203, An Act Respecting the Labour Relationship Between Her Majesty in Right of the Province and the Nova Scotia Crown Attorneys' Association.

Mr. Speaker, our government has voided the agreement they made with the Crown prosecutors that was made only in 2016. That agreement that our government made extended the Crown prosecutors' right to binding arbitration for 30 years in exchange for major wage concessions. Binding arbitration gives both sides an independent, third party way to resolve disputes without affecting public services.

We all know in this House that the agreement included the Crown prosecutors accepting a four-year contract with a 0, 0, 1 per cent to 2 per cent wage package and now, at the first opportunity, the government is renegeing on the agreement.

It has been very upsetting, Mr. Speaker, to hear from our Crown attorneys this week and how they are feeling a sense of betrayal as their contract has been broken by this government. I want to share a perspective that a Crown attorney shared with me in just making sure that we all understand what our Crown attorneys do in this province and what is their role, their very important role. They are dealing daily with people who in many cases have no respect for the law. Every file, every person they are working with is a result in some form of damage to another person.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read, without sharing the name of the person, an example of what has happened recently to one of our Crown attorneys. This is the kind of experience they are dealing with in their workplace, in their job. I'll share what was shared with me:

About three weeks ago an accused whom I had agreed to release on an undertaking to the court, turned around after he had winked at me from his cell and broke into my home. This individual is addicted to cocaine and is homeless. He knew me because I lived in a small town and he was on the same soccer team as my son. He came into my home while we were away, used our spare key, walked into our home, ate our food, used our shower, slept in beds, left disgusting things on the floor, rummaged through our drawers, and took medicine. He left his wallet behind, with my husband's credit card in it, and he left and locked the door.

[12:30 p.m.]

She goes on to share that a few days later her doorbell rang at night - yes, I can certainly table that, Mr. Speaker. This never happens in a small town unless they know someone is coming to visit. Because of the invasion and the vandalism, she froze and could not move. She said that when she finally did, she moved to the window, and a person looking a great deal like the accused ran down her driveway. She goes on to say, I'm not the same person since that day. I'll table that document, Mr. Speaker.

I share that because I think it's important for all of us here to understand the incredible service and the incredible work that our Crown attorneys are providing for the

people of this province. They're feeling very betrayed and very discouraged right now. I believe it's integral for us as government to create a positive, healthy workplace for our people, such as our Crown attorneys and other employees of this province - a workplace where they feel respected and where they feel appreciated.

In my years as a businesswoman, I came to understand the importance of a healthy workplace. My fear, as I watch what's happening to our Crown attorneys, is that the damage that is being done is going to take years and years to rebuild. Trust has been broken, and once trust has been broken, it takes a long time to rebuild.

Some of the attributes of a healthy workplace that I used to strive for as a businesswoman were to create a healthy workplace culture and a supporting workplace environment. If we want Nova Scotia to prosper, if we want Nova Scotians to excel, I believe it starts with the way we treat our people. We as a government should be treating our employees and the people who work for us in a respectful manner, a manner in which they feel appreciated. Breaking a contract that was done only four years ago is breaking that trust.

I was talking with a couple of colleagues last night, and I asked them - they're actually from Cumberland North. Here in this House we are supposed to be voting and we are supposed to be sharing our thoughts based on our constituents, based on the people who elected us. So last night I spoke to a couple from Cumberland North, and I asked them what their thoughts were about what's happening right now. They said, well, what happens when a government breaks trust?

We only have to look back in history to see what has happened with our Indigenous people and what has happened when the trust was continuously broken - continuously. I think it's important that we learn from history and understand the importance that we have as legislators of this province to honour our word, to honour our contracts with our people. Some would say that what's happening right now between the government and our Crown attorneys is exactly what's wrong with politics.

Just last weekend I had the honour of going to the Canadian Parliamentary Association meetings in Victoria, B.C. Some of the discussions we had with colleagues and MLAs from across Canada were about the challenges within politics, of the moral decay. There was a lot of discussion around how we can build trust again between governments and the people we serve. It won't happen. We won't be able to build that trust with our people unless we honour our contracts, unless we keep our word and we show the people we serve that we are people of honour and people they can trust. I do believe it is everything that people believe is wrong with politics.

We think in our own lives, when trust has been broken in a relationship, whether it's a personal relationship or a work relationship, how that feels. It is gut-wrenching. Some people never recover from that betrayal of trust. I am confident that we will lose,

unfortunately, probably some of the best Crown attorneys in this province because some of them will never be able to forgive this betrayal of trust. Whether it's a personal relationship or whether it's a work relationship, a breaking of trust is hard. It's hard on the heart.

We all make mistakes - we are human - but we should be learning from those mistakes and, as a government, I believe we should be honouring our contracts. I also want to state, just so that people know, and the people of Cumberland North would want me to say this, that I support good, strong fiscal management of this province, and I also support a government that stands for truth.

I also want to make another point of how proud I am of my leader who has made it clear to our caucus that not every vote in this House will be whipped, that we will be able to vote based on what our constituents - the people who elected us - want.

I think that we all must be thinking about, when we vote every time in this Legislature, who we serve. While we respect and honour our leaders, we are here to serve the people who elected us. We should always be thinking, every time we vote in this House, how do people want us to vote, the people who we represent.

When it is time to vote on this bill, I think all of us should be thinking, are we voting yes or no because someone else told us to or are we voting yes or no because that is what the people I represent would want me to vote. Am I voting for honour, am I voting for trust, or am I voting for the opposite?

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for having this opportunity to speak to this bill. I think it is time to change politics. I think, Mr. Speaker, it is time to change politics for the better - to honour our contracts, honour the people we serve. Let's start today by not voting in favour of this bill that breaks a contract with our Crown attorneys. Let's respect them and show them today how much we do so.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South on an introduction.

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw the attention of the members to the gallery opposite. It gives me great honour to introduce this individual who, during my fire service career, was one of my mentors. I'd like to introduce to the House Vince MacKenzie, Fire Chief from Grand Falls-Windsor, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Vince is here this weekend to take part with me in the Maritime Fire Chiefs Association executive meetings and preparations for the Maritime Fire Chiefs Association Conference which will take place here in Halifax next July.

So, if the House wouldn't mind, please give a warm welcome to Vince MacKenzie, if you don't mind standing up. (Applause)

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

GARY BURRILL: I must say, as we have, over the past week, been listening to the arguments that have been put forward in favour of this legislation by the government, particularly by the Premier, in the House and in the media, I've had the thought more than once that I felt sorry for all the lawyers who have been listening to it, not just because the bill is regressive and repressive towards their interests, but also because of how it must sound to them on the basis of the type of argumentative training that they all have.

It must be a shocking thing; it must even be an embarrassing thing for people whose vocation is professionally, precisely preparing and crafting arguments, for them to have to listen day after day to the shoddy, often very superficial, clearly weak, even sometimes juvenile arguments. The arguments that the government, and the Premier particularly, has been bringing forward and presenting for their position.

Like most MLAs, I don't have legal training, but I have spent quite a lot of my life at pretty close quarters with people who do, so I have some sense of what the idea of an argument means in a legal context. I have some sense of the precise thinking and the detailed work that goes along with the preparations of factums and so on, and the rest of the legal vocation.

In the course of speaking to people who have this training and who have been taught to judge and weigh and consider and prepare arguments in this careful, professional, and clear way, I have acquired the understanding that presenting a case before a judge, for example, could be a pretty withering experience for any counsel who would dare to go before the bench with an un-backed-up or a loose or a porous argument for their case.

I can't help but imagine, as I've been listening to the debate, I couldn't help but have it come into my mind what the experience might be if, say, the Premier would be required to take the case that he has been making to the people of Nova Scotia, in the media and here in the Legislature, if he would be required to be the person who would take this case and present it before a judge and to do that in a court setting where looseness with the facts would not be something that would be overlooked. Or if he were required to do it in a setting where an inadequate job of logically tying together one's points would not be something that would be overlooked.

Where a poor argument, superficially put together - tortured a little bit around a little skim of facts - is something that would not be acceptable is not something that would be an expected part of the scene in the same way as, unfortunately, it is de rigueur in the Liberal Party of Nova Scotia.

I've been thinking about this as we've been sitting here. Imagine that the Premier is approaching the bench to make the case that his government has been presenting here. To make the case before, let's say, an appeal proceeding of some manner, that it is to make the case that it was alleged - as this bill was first brought forward - that this was a bill the Premier would be assigned to argue before a judge. This is a bill to provide the right to strike for Crown attorneys, as the government at first has said and has said many times since, including here this morning.

I can imagine that, having read this bill and then having this Premier Counsel come before and say: Now what this bill is about, Your Honour, is about providing the right to strike to Crown attorneys. I can imagine that the judge would get a pretty serious and stern look on their face. Imagine as the judge listened to this argument, might get their glasses down a little bit and look over their glasses at this Premier Counsel that was presenting something so far away from the document that's before them.

I can imagine the judge saying: Just a minute Mr. Premier Counsel, it is self-evident on a plain reading of this bill that it establishes an essential services regime so stringent as to render the right to strike meaningless and ineffective. You had better skip ahead to some of your other arguments, Mr. Premier Counsel, I would say.

I think that would be a reasonable expectation of what we might hear from the Bench in that situation. I can imagine the Premier then, having received this professional rebuke, might stammer for a minute or two and be rather embarrassed; then he would set into the arguments that we have heard him so repeatedly bring forward since this legislation was introduced.

[12:45 p.m.]

He would say: Your Honour, 17 per cent. He would then continue through the arguments that we have heard so often: 17 per cent, Your Honour, the province can't afford this; 17 per cent, Your Honour, the people in my community would be happy for the 7 per cent we offered; 17 per cent, Your honour, I have to represent all the people in the province, and they don't have the fiscal capacity to pay 17 per cent. And so it would go on in this manner.

I can imagine - if this argument, which we have heard so repeatedly, so mechanically, so rotely, so often in this last week - if that argument were being made before a place where tightness of argument and precision of reasoning and accordance with the facts is something that is absolutely required and assumed in the conduct of discourse, that in that setting, we would find that the judge would clear their throat and interrupt the counsel, look down over the top of their glasses again, and interrupt to say, Mr. Premier Counsel, please confine your remarks to what this dispute is actually about. It is not about the details of your negotiating position. It is, rather, about the integrity of the government's commitment.

I can imagine the judge then continuing to say: What is at issue here, Mr. Premier Counsel, is that you and your government signed a contract four years ago which contained a provision for arbitration, which provision you and your government removed when it became inconvenient for your position. This case is not about your fiscal policy. The court is not hearing today your analysis of the fiscal situation of the province; this case is, rather, about the trust with which participants in collective bargaining may regard you and your government's commitments and your word. Please, Mr. Premier Counsel, do not divert the court from the matters which are before it for the purposes of your political agenda.

I can imagine then, that at that point, the judge would put their glasses back on, and the Premier would stand there, kind of unravelled a little, glowering, sputtering, red in the face, and stumbling around with his notes, figuring out where to go next. Then he would be digging again into his arsenal of arguments about the legislation and would say to the Bench: But Your Honour, these people bargained in bad faith. They came to bargaining with a demand and no intention of altering their position; they were gunning for arbitration. We couldn't let that happen.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry to tell you that I heard the Premier say this exactly here yesterday in media interviews outside this Chamber. When he did that, journalists immediately looked incredulous. They were incredulous that the author of legislation removing the right to arbitration, rendering the right to strike ineffective, should portray those to whom all of this is being done as those who have been doing the bargaining in bad faith.

I imagine that in the imaginary court I have been speaking about, the judge would have the same reaction that the journalists had here, yesterday. I can see the judge, when the Premier makes this argument, rolling his or her eyes. I can see the judge rolling their eyes, and by now they're kind of impatiently tapping their pen and looking sideways at the wall and then pointing out to the Premier the likelihood that this legislation is going to be dismissed in a future court challenge, and in addition to that, very serious questions about the fundamentals of procedural fairness are raised by the government's conduct in this matter. I can imagine the judge's barely constrained exasperation at having had to endure arguments so contradictory, so superficial, as though from the most junior, inexperienced, and yet so self-satisfied of counsel.

This government may win this vote today, but at every meaningful level their case has been dismissed.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I don't think I can match the rhetorical skill of the Leader of our Party; I don't have the years at the pulpit for experience. But as the last speaker on this bill, I'm going to go back to basics. I'm going to just spend a few moments reminding

everyone exactly what it is, with actually the least amount of rhetorical flourish as possible in this case, that we're talking about here.

It's a sad day in the province. The government has gone back on its word. We've heard this over and over again, and the government is trying to put forward its own version of the facts. In so doing, not only are they trying to bargain a contract on the floor of the Legislature and in the court of public opinion, but they are also misleading us, both inside this Chamber and out.

A lot has been said about the bill before us, and at this late stage of deliberation I will stick as closely as I can to the facts. This will be repetitive. We are taught upon entering politics that we must repeat ourselves in order to be heard, so I will repeat myself. I will, as simply as I can, lay out what has happened in the past week.

To begin, until the end of this day there is a framework agreement that is a contract reflecting the collectively bargained agreement between the Crown Attorneys' Association and the government. The Crown accepted this agreement in exchange for a very small wage increase because it guaranteed the right to binding arbitration for the duration of the agreement which expires in 2046, but which now lies meaningless.

The Premier of Nova Scotia signed this agreement. His government was at the table. This government bargained this agreement - not the boogeyman NDP, not the big, bad Progressive Conservatives - this government. Now the government is telling a different story. The Premier is saying that the Crown wanted 17 per cent and that that would somehow bankrupt the province.

If they feel that way, let's say that's true, the government had two very good options within this framework. First, the government could have bargained - not here, not on the floor of the Legislature, not in the scrums with the media, but at the table. The government said that the Crown came to the table looking for arbitration. I doubt that, but even if that were true, this government gave them that right and that was the second option. The second option was arbitration.

We're told that the government came to the table threatening legislation. Unlike the allegation against the Crowns, this is a breach of contract and fundamentally prevents the Crowns from collectively bargaining as per the rights given to them in Section 2(d) of the Charter, but we will come back to that.

Let's talk for a minute about arbitration. You'll note that the word "arbitration" rarely comes up in the Premier's comments. Why? Because it is the straw that breaks the camel's back of all of the misleading facts that have been put forward as a rationale for this bill. But when pressed, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, and the Premier say that the province can't afford what the Crown is asking.

The truth is, though, notwithstanding the fact that the Premier and the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board should never have walked into this Chamber discussing the terms being discussed in negotiation, the mythical number to which they keep referring is just that. It's a number. It's something under discussion.

I'd like to read from Section 16(b) of the framework agreement which has been tabled previously in this Chamber, which talks about what the actual arbitration process is. I think this will be of interest to members who have heard the Premier say repeatedly that we can't afford to go to arbitration and that arbitration will not take into account the province's ability to pay.

Section 16 (b): In the conduct of proceedings before it and in rendering a decision, the arbitrator or the arbitration board may consider any factor that appears to be relevant in the matter in dispute including: (1) the conditions of employment in the public sector in the province; (2) the desirability to maintain appropriate relationships in the conditions of employment as between classifications in the civil service - I know it's a little dry, but wait for it - (3) the need to establish terms and conditions of employment that are fair and reasonable in relation to the qualifications required and nature of services rendered; (4) the public interest; and (5) the province's ability to pay.

I'm not sure if the Premier heard me say that, so I will repeat it. In the framework agreement that the Premier signed giving the Crown attorneys the right to arbitration, that arbitrator is required, by law, to take into account the province's ability to pay. (Applause)

Where does that leave us, Mr. Speaker? That leaves us with a misleading bill, based on misleading facts, that has been called unconstitutional by every legal expert whose opinion has been sought. Ray Larkin and Paul Cavalluzzo pointed specifically to the Supreme Court of Canada precedent in *Saskatchewan Federation of Labour*. That case has been tabled twice in this Chamber. That principle says that where there is no meaningful right to strike, there needs to be the availability of another method of dispute resolution like arbitration.

This legislation does not give the Crown the right to strike. We have heard this over and over again. I will repeat myself: it does not give the Crown the right to strike. It takes away their right to access arbitration, arbitration that would take into account, among other things, the public interest and the province's ability to pay. It forces the Crown to agree on an essential services regime in an absurd amount of time - 20 days. I'm not a labour expert, but I would defy anyone in this Chamber to find a single essential services agreement in the country that was agreed to in 20 days. What happens if that's not agreed upon in 20 days? The Labour Board decides. We've heard from expert after expert after expert that all Crowns are essential.

Yesterday, as we were debating this bill, I took the opportunity to read the section of the Act that defines essential service. The definition of essential service in this Act

Respecting the Labour Relationship between Her Majesty in Right of the Province and the Nova Scotia Crown Attorneys' Association, says that essential service includes “. . . a service, facility, or activity of the Government that is or will be, at any time, necessary for . . . the safety or security of the public or a segment of the public, . . . the protection of the rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms of persons charged with an offence, or . . . the administration of justice, including the provision of pre-sentencing and post-sentencing reports and other advice.”

I will repeat myself: that sounds somewhat like the job description of the Crown attorneys of this province, so it is more than likely that all of the Crown will be determined to be an essential service. At the risk of repeating myself again, where does that leave us? No right to strike. And where does that leave us? In direct contravention of the Supreme Court of Canada. (Applause.)

This begs the question, which has been raised many times: Did the government receive an opinion that this legislation is consistent with the Charter? Again, I don't think we've heard the Premier use the word “Charter” as we've talked about this bill, but many of the rest of us have. He won't say, the government won't tell us if they received an opinion that this bill is compliant with the Charter, but Mr. Cavalluzzo, the Queen's Counsel who presented to us at Law Amendments committee, was very clear on this point. He said it is impossible that they could have received such a decision.

This brings us to the saddest point of all, a point well-articulated by my colleagues, the member for Halifax Needham and the Leader of our Party. This government does not seem to care whether the legislation that it passes is consistent with either the Supreme Court of Canada or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Let's put that in perspective. This government is legislating a group of lawyers in a way that is contrary to the Supreme Court of Canada and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and they don't seem to care. If this government cared, if this government had a desire to determine the constitutionality of this bill, there are several ways that could be done.

First, ask for an opinion from internal government lawyers on the constitutionality of this bill, as we just discussed. Has this happened? Mr. Cavalluzzo says it must have. Has it happened? We have no idea. The government won't tell us, we can't FOIPOP it, we can't ask for it; it's confidential information.

Second, listen to the Queen's Counsel and constitutional law experts who have weighed in on this with a single voice saying that this is not constitutional.

Third, refer the matter to the Court of Appeal for an opinion. That's not hard, Mr. Speaker. A simple reference could be requested from the Court of Appeal asking if this legislation is, in fact, constitutional.

I hope that for once, today in this Chamber, we will hear a single member of the government stand up and debate this bill and, when they do, I hope they tell us why they have not chosen to do that. My guess is that they didn't choose to do that for the same reason that they adjourned the request for an injunction that was before the court this morning. They don't want to hear the answer. They don't want to hear the answer.

This government prefers to go forward with its own misleading interpretation of the bill, the facts surrounding the bill, and the operation of the bill rather than ask someone who actually knows to tell them how it works. Let that sink in.

This government has not once said the words: this bill is constitutional. What the Premier has said, when faced with the overwhelming evidence, is that he disagrees. On what basis? Legal training? I don't think so. Advice? Share it.

The Crown attorneys I spoke to this morning are, and I think it's fair to say, aghast at the comments of the Minister of Justice yesterday, calling them greedy. I know both the Premier and the minister have offered to meet with them, but the Crown attorneys I have spoken with have expressed that this meeting will be meaningless if it is solely for the purposes of damage control.

First, the damage has been done. The Crown attorneys, by definition, uphold the integrity of the Crown and they are being told by their own minister that they are greedy. Imagine, Mr. Speaker.

Second, those comments simply add fuel to the fire that we are hearing outside this window at this very moment. If the Province will not retract this bill today, my suggestion would be that any meeting of that sort would be insulting.

Here we are, possibly moments away from this bill being law. I will reiterate my request that a single Liberal member join this debate. If you are going to vote for the bill, tell us why.

The Premier has misled this House, the media, and the public about the true purpose of this bill, the circumstances leading up to it, and its legality. (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Dartmouth South has indicated that the Premier has misled the House, and I ask you to retract that; it's unparliamentary.

The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: The Minister of Justice accused me of misleading this House just the other day in Question Period, and it was ruled that that was not

unparliamentary and that only by saying “deliberately misleading” would that be unparliamentary.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South will please retract the statement that the Premier has intentionally misled the House.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I will retract the statement I did not say, which is that the Premier intentionally misled the House. I will stick to the statement I did say which is that the Premier has misled this House. I’ll echo the comments of my . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Dartmouth South will retract the statement that the Premier has misled the House.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I will retract that statement and I will request, as I did in my point of order that was overruled, that the Minister of Justice retract his statement that I misled the House.

THE SPEAKER: That matter has been dealt with. We are dealing with this matter at hand.

The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I will complete my remarks which will be the final remarks on this bill by pointing to the way this Chamber operates and by saying that this government should be ashamed.

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

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, many people in the House have used their talk time to show a lack of respect. I do want to share with you a lesson that I was taught by my late father. His message to me, which is good advice and I have followed it every day of my life, is don’t play in the mud, don’t stoop that low, and consider the source.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue with my remarks. This bill is ultimately about ensuring that as a government we can provide for and invest in the public services that Nova Scotians rely on, now and in the future. To do this we must respect our fiscal plan and live within our means. That often requires difficult decisions. We make those decisions to establish predictability in our labour costs, which make up over half of the provincial budget. We make them so we can budget, so we can forecast, and plan with certainty and keep Nova Scotia on a sustainable path for the future.

This is not possible when key financial decisions are outside of our control. Crown attorneys are seeking an increase of 17 per cent over four years. That is a cost of \$5.2 million more annually. Government is offering a fair and affordable increase of 7 per cent over four years. This is in line with other recent public sector settlements and it is what government can afford. It will also maintain Nova Scotia's Crown attorney status as the highest paid in Atlantic Canada.

This isn't just about the \$5.2 million more for Crown attorneys. As government, we have a responsibility to treat all public sector employees fairly and consistently and to consider the broader impact on labour and our fiscal capacity. An increase of 17 per cent for Crown attorneys, which is 10 per cent above the established wage pattern, would cost taxpayers \$520 million more every year if it was applied to all public sector employees. That is not a one-time cost, Mr. Speaker, but, rather, would be added to base costs and paid in perpetuity. This is a significant fiscal matter that we believe should not be decided by someone outside.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard and acknowledge the views of others on this legislation. We heard the member for Pictou East support the 17 per cent increase while he had an audience in the House and, actually, perhaps he was competing with the other Opposition Party for the labour vote that he thought was here.

We heard others say this small group of a hundred Crown attorneys cannot set a pattern, but this is a very real risk to our fiscal balance. It is our job, as government, to manage that risk on behalf of the taxpayers of Nova Scotia.

We have also heard that the work of Crown attorneys is unique and challenging, and we agree. We heard that they do their work because they love their jobs, and we agree. Mr. Speaker, many public employees, whether they're teachers, nurses, or others, love their jobs. We have also heard that Crown attorneys are in challenging situations and they find themselves in those situations in the line of work. We agree.

We also ask that people consider child protection workers, paramedics, policewomen and policemen, who also find themselves, each and every day, in challenging and heart-wrenching situations. All our public servants provide unique and important services, and they are paid accordingly. Their salaries are based on the work they do, as well as on the education and experience required, and they can move up their pay scale as they gain experience on the job. While salaries vary a great deal, our goal is to be consistent in the wage increases we offer across the public service.

This legislation replaces arbitration with a right to strike. It requires that a level of essential services be maintained to protect Nova Scotians during a strike and sets out a process to determine those essential services. We are confident in this legislation. Arbitration has been effective in recent settlements, such as the health authorities, but in those situations, parties worked together. With the Crown attorneys, it was clear early in

the brief negotiation process that the association intended to reach an impasse and pursue arbitration with no movement on the proposals.

Our Crown attorneys are the highest paid in Atlantic Canada, and they will remain so with the 7 per cent increase on the table. The average salary for all Crown attorneys is currently just over \$120,000, with the highest being \$149,000. In fact, 80 per cent of our a hundred Crown attorneys currently make over \$100,000, and over one-third of them are at the top of their pay scale.

Under our wage proposal of 7 per cent over four years, two-thirds of the Crown attorneys would see additional increases exceeding 4 per cent on top of the wages, because we agreed to eliminate the two bottom steps in the pay scale. That means that the bottom salary for the newest junior Crown attorney would increase to \$81,591.

Mr. Speaker, negotiations should be about more than just resolving wage increases. To date, our government has negotiated 200 of the 300 agreements with our workers. That's why the Crown Attorneys' Association is welcome back to the bargaining table to continue the discussions that began.

By respecting our fiscal plan, we have been able to make investments like those we are making in new health care facilities, pre-Primary and inclusive education, affordable housing, highway twinning, and community colleges, among others.

I will add that both Opposition Parties voted against the budgets that provided for those programs and those services for Nova Scotians.

Mr. Speaker, people can trust that this government will make the tough decisions in the best interests of all Nova Scotians to maintain our fiscal stability, to protect our public services for the future, and to keep our province on a path for economic growth and long-term success.

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I alluded to it earlier, and I guess I'm just looking for clarification. Why are the rules different for both sides of the House? A member on the opposite side can use the word "misleading" but our own caucus member here can't use the word. With no disrespect to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, I think "mudslinging" and "stoop so low" and "playing in the mud" are unparliamentary words that should be added to that list. Mr. Speaker, I believe that everybody in this House needs to be treated equally.

[1:15 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I recognize the point of order being called, so I'd like to address it. Obviously, you can handle the part about the rules, but I can tell you that the member for Cape Breton Centre just referenced the mudslinging. I spoke to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. I was absolutely rattled a half an hour ago that a member in this House, from Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage, would suggest that we are like abusers, that domestic assault is okay to link to the government.

She was asked to retract it. She reluctantly retracted it and used words like forceful, confinement, threatening. Mr. Speaker, I get the spirit of the debate, I understand it. I have an eight-year-old daughter at home and someday she is going to hear these things and read these things, and I get the point of privilege and the point of the House procedures. This is about having an impact on our abilities to do our job. It impacts my ability to do my job when I am being compared to an abuser.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board's comments about mudslinging and those things, I asked her to do that because I don't know what we're doing in this place, if we're going to stand here across from each other.

The member has talked about respect through this whole bill, and I get that. They are entitled to their opinion and we are entitled to ours and we're going to vote on this, but there's no way that that can be acceptable in the Nova Scotia Legislature. The New Democratic Party House Leader just made many points about the decorum here and what's happening here. I felt the same way slightly before her comments. There's no way that as a Speaker, as a Legislature, as members, we can treat each other this way.

We do our job in here. This is about the bills of the province and it's important, but we walk out of here and we are human beings. There's no way it's acceptable that we label each other as domestic abusers. I want to say again for the record that it is absolutely unacceptable. Now you can reference that point of order.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I cannot speak to the comment that the member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage made, but I do want to say to the member for Glace Bay that I totally understand that feeling of thinking about what our children, and especially our daughters, will think when they look back at what their parents have been doing during the time that they haven't been home to put them to bed.

I also have a seven-year-old daughter and I want my daughter to understand that, when she grows up, she is growing up in a world where her voice matters the same as anyone else. In this House today we have seen, Mr. Speaker, some people's voices mattering more.

I want to echo the concern of my colleague, the House Leader for the New Democratic Party, that when the Minister of Justice's words using "misleading" were ruled in order, she began to use the very same word and then she was ruled out of order. I'd like to mark that, Mr. Speaker, because for our daughters who are growing up - and we made all the to-do about how we have the highest amount of women in this House ever and it is so historical and so amazing - I can't stand up to my daughter and say that we are building a community and a society in which my daughter and all daughters' voices will be heard.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable New Democratic Party House Leader.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day what we have in this Chamber, what we have in this province is rules. That's why we're here, we're here to make the rules. That's what we've been talking about this entire week. That's the job that we do in this Chamber.

I understand the comments of the member for Glace Bay, I understand that he was upset and that it was upsetting. There are many upsetting things, to varying degrees, that happen in this Chamber. We have been told - I have been told from the moment that I started this job - that our conduct in this Chamber is guided by a set of rules. Admittedly those rules are very difficult to understand. I bother the Clerks all the time, saying: Can we do this? Can we do that? Can we say that?

I spend an enormous amount of my time as House Leader, Mr. Speaker, trying to understand the rules. In the end, they are rules to which we all must equally be held. It is my strong feeling, in support of the point of order brought by my colleague, that that is not what has happened today in this Chamber.

THE SPEAKER: I'll take the point of order under advisement.

We'll now move on with the vote on Bill No. 203.

There has been a request for a recorded vote.

We will ring the bells for one hour.

We'll reconvene at 2:20 p.m.

[1:20 p.m.]

[The Division bells were rung.]

THE SPEAKER: Order please. Just before we proceed with the recorded vote on Bill No. 203, a reminder to all members to please remain completely silent while the vote

is being conducted. When your name is called, please stand tall and state a simple “Yea” or “Nay”.

[The Clerk calls the roll.]

[2:20 p.m.]

YEAS

Mr. Churchill
Mr. Furey
Ms. Regan
Mr. MacLellan
Mr. McNeil
Ms. Casey
Mr. Wilson
Mr. Delorey
Mr. Colwell
Mr. Glavine
Mr. Kousoulis
Ms. Miller
Mr. Porter
Mr. Hines
Ms. Metlege Diab
Mr. Ince
Mr. Rankin
Mr. Mombourquette
Ms. Arab
Mr. Horne
Mr. Jessome
Mr. MacKay
Mr. Maguire
Ms. Lohnes-Croft
Ms. DiCostanzo
Mr. Irving

NAYS

Mr. Dunn
Mr. Bain
Ms. Masland
Ms. MacFarlane
Mr. Houston
Mr. MacMaster
Ms. Chender
Mr. Burrill
Ms. Roberts
Ms. Leblanc
Ms. Martin
Ms. Adams
Mr. Lohr
Mr. Halman
Mr. Rushton
Mr. Craig
Ms. Smith-McCrossin
Mr. Johns
Mr. Comer
M. LeBlanc
Mr. Ryan
Mr. Harrison

THE CLERK: For, 26. Against, 22.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, earlier today I retracted some statement that I made during the debate over the bill that was just passed, and I would also like to offer my apologies.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I simply would like to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

LISA ROBERTS: Though I don't know the names of everyone in the galleries, I know that many of them are Crown attorneys and I would like to express my appreciation for their work, and ask all members to give them the warm welcome of the House. (Standing Ovation)

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 Monday, October 28, 2019, between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. Following the daily routine, business will include Third Reading on Bill Nos. 152, 189, 192, 193, 197, and 201; Address in Reply and for the members of the Legislature and for the public; the Committee on Law Amendments which will sit at 11:00 a.m. to consider Bill Nos. 204 and 213.

With that, I move that the House do now rise for today.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now rise, to meet again on Monday, October 28th, between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

[The House rose at 4:25 p.m.]

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS**Given on October 25, 2019****(Pursuant to Rule 30)****QUESTION NO. 9**

By: Lisa Roberts

To: Hon. Chuck Porter (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing)

Nova Scotia is facing a housing crisis. Housing is becoming increasingly scarce and unaffordable across the province, and this government has not acted on building substantial new affordable housing, or stemming unaffordable rent increases. Exacerbating this problem is the shortage of housing workers at the regional housing authorities available to support people in acute housing crisis or who need to find affordable housing.

(1) How many staff vacancies are there currently at the regional housing authorities?

(2) How many new affordable housing units will be created as a result of the three-year action plan from the bilateral housing agreement?

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1406**

By: Gary Burrill (Halifax Chebucto)

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

Whereas the Ardmore Tea Room has been serving the Halifax's West End since 1958; and

Whereas the diner is known for its delicious, classic diner menu; and

Whereas the Ardmore Tea Room is recognized as one of the most popular places in the city to go for breakfast;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulates the Ardmore Tea Room on over 60 years in business, and wishes them all the best in their future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1407

By: Gary Burrill (Halifax Chebucto)

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

Whereas Eastern Horizon Chamber Choir achieved first place in the Contemporary Music Category at the 2019 National Competition for Amateur Choirs, hosted by Choral Canada and CBC Music; and

Whereas Eastern Horizon Chamber Choir as a part of Choirs for Change, supports movement for social justice through innovative choral performances; and

Whereas the choir prioritizes composers and music that have been underrepresented in the choral canon;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulates the members of the Eastern Horizon Chamber Choir, along with their co-directors Jack Bennet and Christina Murray and pianist Lynette Walstrom, on their achievement and wishes them all the best in their future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1408

By: Gary Burrill (Halifax Chebucto)

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

Whereas Look Ho Ho Restaurant has been serving the Bayer's Road neighbourhood since 1959; and

Whereas the restaurant is known for their delicious Chinese takeout-style dishes, extensive menu, and friendly staff; and

Whereas Look Ho Ho Restaurant was nominated for Best Chinese in the Coast's Best of Halifax Awards for 2019;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulates David Cheung and the staff of Look Ho Ho Restaurant on the occasion of their 60th anniversary, and wishes them all the best in their ongoing endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1409

By: Gary Burrill (Halifax Chebucto)

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

Whereas Naughty Paw pet grooming & supplies moved to a new, expanded location at 6258/6260 Quinpool Road; and

Whereas Naughty Paw has been providing grooming services for cats and dogs since October 2018; and

Whereas Naughty Paw's successes are contributing to Quinpool Road's efforts to maintain and promote a pet-friendly neighbourhood;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulates Naughty Paw on their successes, and wishes them all the best in their future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1410

By: Gary Burrill (Halifax Chebucto)

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

Whereas the students of the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education have elected a slate of student leaders to represent them for the 2019-2020 school year; and

Whereas the elected leadership of the NSCECE Student Council includes Tahmina Dewan, Alice Adebayo, Rimpay Goyal, Victoria Ezeigbo, Norman Penny, and Kyle Shannon-Dwyer; and

Whereas the Student Council represents student interests at the NSCECE and contributes greatly to student life through service projects and activities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulates the NSCECE Student Council on their election, and wishes them all the best in their future endeavours as Early Childhood Educators.

RESOLUTION NO. 1411

By: Gary Burrill (Halifax Chebucto)

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

Whereas Phat Luong has been working as a barber in Halifax for 22 years; and

Whereas Phat's Barbershop maintains consistent popularity, winning Best Barber in The Coast's Best of Halifax Awards six times as of 2018; and

Whereas Phat is known for lively conversation and a loyal customer base;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulates Phat Luong on his accolades, and wishes him all the best in his future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1412

By: Gary Burrill (Halifax Chebucto)

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

Whereas the Sweet Hereafter cheesecakery celebrated their 8th anniversary in business on September 16th ; and

Whereas the Sweet Hereafter cheesecakery serves an appetizing selection of artisan cheesecakes; and

Whereas the Sweet Hereafter's cozy and welcoming cheesecakery has become one of Halifax's most popular dessert spots;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulates Joanne and Colin MacDougall and their team on the occasion of eight years of making and serving delicious cheesecakes, and wishes them every success in their future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1413

By: Gary Burrill (Halifax Chebucto)

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

Whereas Tart & Soul cafe and bakery has, in two short years, become a staple of the Coburg Road neighbourhood, serving fresh, baked from scratch treats and a variety of beverages; and

Whereas the owners Saf Haw and Lisa Brow supply their delicious baked goods to many of the city's cafes; and

Whereas Tart & Soul's successes are already gaining recognition with multiple nominations in The Coast's Best of Halifax Awards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulates Saf and Lisa on Tart & Soul's second anniversary in business, and wishes them all the best in their future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1414

By: Gary Burrill (Halifax Chebucto)

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

Whereas Sue Uteck served on the Quinpool Road Mainstreet District Association as an ex-officio member for five years; and

Whereas Sue, as a former HRM Councillor, contributed a wealth of knowledge and experience for the benefit of the Association; and

Whereas Sue has taken on the position of Executive Director at the Spring Garden Area Business Association;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thanks Sue for her service to the Quinpool Road neighbourhood, and wishes her all the best in her future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1415

By: Gary Burrill (Halifax Chebucto)

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

Whereas The Villian's Theatre is celebrating their tenth anniversary of theatre-making; and

Whereas The Villain's Theatre adapts texts from the early-modern period to produce fresh and engaging theatre for today's audiences; and

Whereas The Villain's Theatre, run by founder and Artistic Director Dan Bray and Artistic Producer Colleen MacIsaac, is a valuable member of the artistic community in Halifax;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulates The Villain's Theatre on the occasion of their tenth anniversary and wishes them all the best in their future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 1416

By: Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas Salt Springs Elementary School participated in the Adopt-a-Library WOW Program; and

Whereas Salt Springs Elementary School won the WOW reading challenge, 67 students from the school read 16,626 books, over the course of the school year; and

Whereas the school was presented for awards for top school in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, Canada and the world - what an amazing accomplishment;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the commitment, support and guidance of wonderful staff and the dedication and motivation of the students Salt Springs Elementary School.

RESOLUTION NO. 1417

By: Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas Scotsburn Recreation Art Gallery recently opened in July 2019; and

Whereas the gallery features work by a myriad of local artists including Ray Strickland, who is known for his beautiful paintings; and

Whereas Scotsburn Recreation Art Gallery will provide a space for artists to grow their exposure to the industry and to possibly be featured in more prestigious galleries;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the rural community of Scotsburn for taking on this creative endeavor, I look forward to watching the gallery expand and also to experience the art for myself.