



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2019

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2019

Sixty-third General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, Brendan Maguire

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

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

“We the undersigned call on the Government of Nova Scotia to take action to protect the Lakes of Dartmouth by:

- Exercising its legislative authority over water resources, including lakes,
- Providing provincial oversight and leadership in ensuring the health of these precious natural resources and recreational and economic assets of the Dartmouth community, and
- Working with Halifax Regional Municipality to improve lake conditions.”

Mr. Speaker, there are 283 signatures affixed, and I have affixed my name as well.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

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

“We the undersigned call on the province of Nova Scotia to immediately improve access to affordable housing for seniors and for residents on a fixed income in Sackville.”

Mr. Speaker, this petition has a total of 343 signatures, and I have affixed my own.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

BARBARA ADAMS: I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause being:

“We, the undersigned, request that the Government of Nova Scotia, and in particular, the Department of Health and Wellness, commit to the residents of the Constituency of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage, that they will provide immediate funding for a Collaborative Health Centre in our community and We, the undersigned, also request that Department of Health and Wellness commit to the residents of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage, that our region be given priority for the creation of the next Collaborative Health Centre in NS.”

Mr. Speaker, I have affixed my signature as per the requirements of the House. There are 1,249 signatures.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause being:

“We request that the Province initiates a systematic Vision Zero approach to identify Provincial laws which contribute to unsafe road conditions for vulnerable road users, and laws that will reduce those dangers . . . We request the Province initiates a Vision Zero Road

Safety Strategy which uses statistical evidence to determine common causes of incidents. The strategy should identify evidence based suitable countermeasures and provide a budget for their deployment.”

Mr. Speaker, there are 21 signatures, and I have affixed my own.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

THE SPEAKER: As Speaker of the House of Assembly and pursuant to Section 18(4) of the Auditor General Act, I am pleased to table the Auditor General’s Financial Report for October 2019.

The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, may I do an introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

THE PREMIER: I would like to draw the attention of the House to the East Gallery, where we are joined today by Alfred Burgesson. Alfred dedicated much of the time working for several organizations in Halifax to ensure that young Nova Scotians can grow and thrive here and to make sure that their voices are around the table.

I would ask Alfred to rise so that he can receive the warm welcome of the House.
(Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 1425

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

Whereas Alfred Burgesson moved with his family to Nova Scotia from Ghana at a young age and grew up with a passion and drive to become a leader in his community; and

Whereas Alfred has helped to create youth organizations addressing social and economic issues through innovation and collaboration, such as HFX Collective and Halifax Social Network, and works with many groups to ensure that our province is a place all Nova Scotians can thrive; and

Whereas this past July, Alfred was appointed to serve in the Prime Minister's Youth Council to work alongside other young Canadians to provide their perspective on the issues and challenges facing their communities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Alfred Burgesson on his appointment to the Youth Council, as well as to recognize him for the impact he has had on Nova Scotia and the positive example that he is setting for all Nova Scotians in our province.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

RANDY DELOREY: I would like to draw my colleagues' attention to the East Gallery today, where it's my pleasure to introduce Amanda Dean, the vice-president of the Insurance Bureau of Canada; Erin Norwood, government relations manager with the Insurance Bureau of Canada; Rita MacAulay, health promotion coordinator at the Department of Health and Wellness; and Jennifer Russell, the executive director of the Atlantic Collaborative for Injury Prevention.

These guests are some of the many people working diligently to raise awareness and build partnerships, share knowledge, and promote injury prevention for Nova Scotians

and all Atlantic Canadians. I ask that they all rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

[1:15 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1426

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

Whereas preventable injuries have a significant impact on Nova Scotians and Nova Scotia's health care system; and

Whereas preventable injuries have a significant impact on Nova Scotians and Nova Scotia's health care system; and

Whereas the majority of injuries are preventable; and

Whereas the Atlantic Collaborative on Injury Prevention, the Community Against Preventable Injuries, and other partners recently launched a campaign to help change attitudes and behaviours around preventable injuries;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize preventable injuries as a serious health issue and commend the efforts of ACIP and partners in raising awareness and working to minimize preventable injuries at home, at work, on the road, and at play.

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. 1427

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia Fisheries & Aquaculture Loan Board is a development agency that acts to build a financial, stable, and sustainable fisheries base in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas for many years, the fishing industry has been seeking improvements to the Loan Board's programs, including more streamlined processes and reduced application fees; and

Whereas by working closely with the industry, government has responded to industry requests to offer new loan product, lower interest rates, lower service fees, shorter processing times for large loans, and longer amortization requests;

Therefore be it resolved the House of Assembly recognize that an improved Nova Scotia Fisheries & Aquaculture Loan Board now has a record number of clients and has helped Nova Scotia's fisheries and exports reach a record \$2 billion plus in 2018.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness on an introduction.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw my colleagues' attention to your gallery where we have today some special guests from Antigonish and I'll ask that they rise as I recognize them.

Jeff Teasdale, who is the executive director of the Canadian Association for Community Living in Antigonish and, honestly, just an all-around great guy. Garry Kell is a well-known arm wrestling champion and entrepreneur, and I look forward to hearing of Garry's accomplishments that are going to be shared with the House in just a moment. Trevor Sanipass is an arm wrestling coach from Lower Sackville, I believe, and is joining

them here today as well. If my colleagues could please give them a warm welcome. (Applause.)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture, and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 1428

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

Whereas Nova Scotia has an abundance of sport and recreation opportunities including arm wrestling which has evolved over the years into a very fun, technical and competitive, well-known and favourite sport; and

Whereas with a lot of determination, hard work, and practice, Garry Kell has become one of the best arm wrestlers our province has ever seen, earning himself the coveted title of Canadian Men's Arm Wrestling champion; and

Whereas Garry will be travelling to Poland this December to compete at the 2019 World Armwrestling & Para Armwrestling Championships, and I have no doubt he will make us all very proud;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly congratulate Garry for his excellence in the sport of arm wrestling and wish him the best of luck as he represents our country on the world stage.

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. (Standing Ovation.)

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

RESOLUTION NO. 1429

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

Whereas municipal governments across the province provide services that enhance the quality of life for citizens; and

Whereas dedicated mayors, wardens, councillors, and staff are essential for the effective governance of their municipalities; and

Whereas citizen involvement on committees is also essential for an active community, and we encourage Nova Scotians to participate;

Therefore be it resolved that as November 17th to 23rd is Municipal Awareness Week, all members of this House of Assembly recognize the vital role of municipal governments and all who support it.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

KELLY REGAN: I'd like to draw the attention of my colleagues to the East Gallery where we are joined today by some special guests from Bonny Lea Farm. Joining us today is David Outhouse, the executive director, and Liz Finney who is the fund development coordinator.

I recently had a lovely visit to Bonny Lea Farm, and I would ask members of this House to join me in giving our guests a warm welcome. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 1430

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

Whereas in 1973, Bonny Lea Farm was founded to provide people with disabilities with opportunities to lead meaningful and productive lives within their community; and

Whereas today Bonny Lea Farm offers a variety of programs and services that empower participants to develop life skills, overcome barriers to employment, and access independent living; and

Whereas Bonny Lea Farm has been a leader in disability support services, ensuring programming is focused on the needs and goals of each participant and designed to support each one in reaching their own potential.

Therefore be it resolved the members of this House join me in thanking Bonny Lea Farm for their role in providing Nova Scotians with disabilities with the diverse opportunities to learn, grow, and succeed in their community.

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 on an introduction.

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, Monsieur le Président, je voudrais attirer votre attention et celle de tous mes collègues de l'assemblée à la galerie est.

In the East Gallery, we have with us today a group of 21 Grade 7 students from l'École Mer et Monde de la Conseil scolaire acadien provincial sur la péninsule de Halifax. They are accompanied today - avec leur enseignante - their wonderful, excellent teacher, Madame Anne-Sofie Laines-Frigon and Mr. David Richardson.

I am just going to read all 21 names and ask them to stand: Crépin Atiwoto, Madelaine Baikie, Zoe Bakeeff, Sophia Black, Michela Bona, Sacsha Devred, Harlow

Diamond, Aden Goguen, Lucas Lai, Cosette LeBlanc, Alex Leeshanok, Ainslie Lewis, Owen Lytle, Maria McDougall, Augustine Monge, Ethan Peng, Teagan Richardson, Travian Richardson, Samuel Van Buskirk, Patrick Villeneuve, and Orelia Muleba.

Ces élèves sont venus à l'Assemblée législative pour un tour guidé en français et pour apprendre plus de nos institutions.

They have come to our Legislature to get the tour in French and to learn about our Legislature. I ask all my colleagues to please give them the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 217 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 260 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Liquor Control Act. (Tim Houston)

Bill No. 218 - Entitled An Act to Preserve the Independence of Student Unions. (Brian Comer)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

GORDON WILSON: I'd like to bring the attention of the House to the East Gallery, where we are joined here today by a group of Grade 9 students from the Meteghan high school. This group of students is accompanied by a teacher and another member of the community. They are here to lobby the government on behalf of their group on bilingual signs.

I think this is an example of a civics lesson in how government works and how they can work with government that very few students have the opportunity to experience. I really commend them and am proud to have them here.

I'd like to introduce them: teacher Phil Muise; Natalie Robichaud, the executive director of la Société acadienne de Clare; and students Gaetan Deveau, Crystal Madden, Blake Theriault, and Nicole Thibodeau. I would really like to bring the applause and the

attention and the pleasure that the House has at having them here to all of them. Thank you very much. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Joining us in the gallery opposite today is a group of individuals representing an exceptional project coming out of Autism Nova Scotia called *Autistics Aloud*.

These include - and I'll ask you to stand as I read your name - magazine editor Patricia George-Zwicker; contributor Hugh Calvin Garber; David Patterson, Regional Coordinator at Autism Nova Scotia; and Brian Foster, the COO of Autism Nova Scotia.

I would also be remiss if I did not introduce my extended family, who are sitting with them: Hugh's parents, Allison and Jeff Garber; his sister Vera Garber; and my father-in-law Peter MacLellan, who will be known to people mostly on that side of the House.

I would ask you to join me in welcoming them with snaps. (Finger snaps)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

AUTISTICS ALOUD: FIRST EDITION, *LIFESPANS* MAGAZINE - CONGRATS.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge one of Autism Nova Scotia's longest-running initiatives, *Autistics Aloud*, and to congratulate them on the recent release of Edition 1 in the new *LifeSpans* series. *Autistics Aloud* is a grassroots publication that will have been handed out to many members, which provides a platform for autistic Canadians to share a first-voice perspective on autism through stories, poems, photography, and art.

As the name *LifeSpans* implies, the contributors are children, teenagers, adults, and seniors who have shared their vision for a more inclusive community. The youngest contributor is my 10-year-old nephew and the oldest is the 50-year-old editor, which provides many different perspectives throughout the magazine.

Over the next three years, Autism Nova Scotia will publish nine more editions of *LifeSpans* that will explore themes such as mental health, sexuality, and housing through a uniquely autistic lens.

The copy of the magazine in front of you is yours to celebrate and share. I ask again that we celebrate these folks by snapping. (Finger snaps)

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: Thank you. If I could bring everyone's attention to the East Gallery, we are joined today by a very famous constituent of mine, Wayne Little. He's here along with his wife Sharon, his mom Florence, and his son Matt. If I could ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House? (Applause)

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

**LITTLE, WAYNE - PHARMACIST:
OUTSTANDING CARE AND ADVICE - THANKS**

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a well-known constituent of Fairview-Clayton Park, who many would recognize from Shoppers Drug Mart on Joseph Howe Drive. Wayne Little, co-owner and pharmacist - and more importantly, my human reminder to get a flu shot every single year - was born and raised in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. Wayne graduated from the College of the North Atlantic in 1982, has owned Shoppers for over 10 years, and continues to provide advice to patients on a daily basis. In his spare time, Wayne leads a healthy lifestyle as an avid cyclist and swimmer.

While September 25th marked World Pharmacists Day, I would like to thank and celebrate Wayne for providing many community members, including me, with incredible care and advice.

[1:30 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**MACDONALD, RYAN:
MELMERBY OLYMPIC TRIATHLON - CONGRATS.**

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ryan MacDonald of Green Hill on his third Olympic race win at the Melmerby triathlon. He finished the race in two hours, six minutes and two seconds, beating his strongest opponent by almost six minutes.

The race consists of 1.5 kilometres of swimming, a 40-kilometre bike ride and a 10-kilometre run. The race occurred in the middle of a heat wave this year, making the event even more challenging.

I admire Ryan for his dedication to fitness and his love for competing in such an intense race. I hope to be able to watch Ryan continue to succeed in something that he enjoys so much. To achieve such an incredible time in an Olympic race is truly something to be proud of.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: In the gallery opposite I'd like to draw the members' attention to the hard-working staff at the Clean Foundation. We're joined today by Lauren Murphy, Scott Skinner, and two of their colleagues whose names I don't have on the sheet in front of me. Please stand and enjoy the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MURPHY, LAUREN: CLEAN FDN., GREEN ECONOMY - CONGRATS.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I'd like to recognize the contributions of my friend and Dartmouth South resident Lauren Murphy in the development of the green economy.

Lauren is the manager of education internships at the Clean Foundation. She and her team recently completed the eighth season of the Clean Leadership Summer Internship program, placing 73 students in workforce-integrated learning positions with 56 organizations across the province; 51 of these were in rural areas outside of HRM and 43 interns represented under-served populations in Nova Scotia. This program was strongly supported by various provincial government departments including Environment, LAE, Aboriginal Affairs, Energy and Mines, as well as by partners including Divert Nova Scotia and Indigenous Skills Canada.

Lauren and her team at Clean also deliver the federal government's Science Horizons program which provides wage subsidies for graduate internships in the clean economy across the country. In the past three months they've secured positions for nearly 100 graduates, including 37 here in Nova Scotia. Lauren also sits on the Halifax Chamber of Commerce's Accessing the Skilled Workforce Task Force.

She has become a driving force in creating opportunities for youth in the clean economy which is vital to our future in Nova Scotia. Please join me in celebrating Lauren's

achievements and wishing her well as she presses on in the important work of helping Nova Scotia transition to a green economy.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

SPENCER, HALEY: JONATHAN MCINTYRE SCHOLAR - CONGRATS.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, the Wilson Family Scholarship program started in 2009 as part of Wilson's 10-year celebrations. The scholarships are awarded yearly to those who have achieved success at school or in a trade and are involved with other communities through volunteering, sports or the arts. A permanent scholarship was added in memory of Jonathan McIntyre, son of Linda McGill, long-time employee of Wilsons, who died in a tragic accident. Each year Linda reviews the applications and selects the recipient of the scholarships in her son's memory.

The 2019 recipient of the Jonathan McIntyre scholarship was Haley Spencer from Great Village, Colchester North. Haley has been a part-time employee at the local Wilsons station. An excellent student, Haley graduated from Cobequid Educational Centre in Truro and is studying at Acadia this year. She is enrolled in kinesiology and plans to become a teacher.

Since childhood, Haley has been an avid athlete and has excelled especially at softball and hockey. She has also coached and been an active community volunteer. She was heavily involved in the rebuilding of a local ballfield which has been enjoyed by ball teams from around the province.

With her academic and athletic abilities, we know that Haley will do well in kinesiology. We wish her success, congratulations and a rewarding year ahead.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

GEHUE, KEVIN: ALZHEIMER'S FUNDRAISING - THANKS

KIM MASLAND: There are very few people in Liverpool who don't recognize the name Kevin Gehue. Always willing to help out as a volunteer and always willing to support community events and organizations, Kevin goes the extra mile time and time again.

Recently, as a volunteer with the Happy Wheelers walking group, Kevin participated in the Queens Manor Walk for Alzheimer's fundraiser. Armed with his kind heart and determination, his efforts raised the sum of \$505, almost half the entire amount raised.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize and congratulate Kevin on his successful fundraising campaign and thank him for all that he does as a volunteer in his community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

OCEAN BREEZE: STROLL AGAINST HATE - CELEBRATE

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, on July 26th of this year, Ocean Breeze residents Tim Gottschall and Devin Moore woke up to hateful homophobic slurs spray painted on the wall outside of their apartment.

This terrible act was made all the more bitter as it took place during Pride Month in the HRM. Dartmouth North resident Brittney Markey posted a picture of the graffiti on social media, and it quickly went viral. When former Ocean Breeze resident Jason Spurrell, who may know as drag queen extraordinaire Rouge Fatale, saw the post, they went to work turning the ugly act into a beautiful show of community resilience. The following Saturday, hundreds of people - some dressed in drag, others in rainbows, 2SLGBTQ people and their allies - marched through the quiet streets of Ocean Breeze and gathered in front of Tim and Devin's apartment. A barbecue and party followed.

I rise today to express my gratitude to Jason, all the organizers, and everyone who attended the stroll through Ocean Breeze, proving that there is no room for hate, homophobic or otherwise, in Dartmouth North.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: We have with us here my amazing CA who has been with me for 15 months, and this is the first time that I'm introducing her officially in the House and welcoming her. She has been amazing, competent, and compassionate. I don't know how much more work this woman can do, but we achieved so much in the last 15 months thanks to Zeina Klayme who is the best addition to the Clayton Park West MLA office. With her, as well, we have Gail Scarola, my casual staff. Both are the best team, and I think that when you surround yourself by intelligent, strong women, you can achieve so much more. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

SIMMONDS, TYLER - FINALIST: JRG EMERGING ARTIST - CONGRATS.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Tyler Simmonds of North Preston, a filmmaker, artist, writer, peer support worker, and entrepreneur from North Preston, who uses creative talents to inspire others. He is a public speaker and

filmmaker, speaking openly about his experience with mental illness, and reminds people that recovery is possible.

He is a finalist in the prestigious 2019 JRG Emerging Artist grant, presented at the JRG Society for Arts awards in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on October 16th this year.

I recognize and congratulate Tyler Simmonds for achieving this high level of professionalism and advocating for those with mental illness and wish him every success in the future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

CARTER, DARRIN: FORESTRY ENTREPRENEUR - RECOG.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I rise to recognize the importance of the forestry sector in Cumberland North and would like to specifically honour one of our leaders in the forestry industry, Mr. Darrin Carter.

Darrin Carter started going to the woods with his father when he was 12 years old and at 16 started running a skidder full time. At the age of 21, he started his own business with a few power saw men and a machine. In 1988, he mechanized his business and now, 34 years later, Darrin Carter has 20 employees working 13 machines. His forestry business cuts an average of 120,000 tons a year. Revenue last fiscal year was over \$4 million, and to replace his assets alone would be over \$9 million. He has grown his business with the intent to have two of his sons take it over.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing this important forester, Darrin Carter, his family, and his employees, an important part of our economy in Cumberland North.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

THOMAS, REBECCA: BOOK, *I'M FINDING MY TALK* - CONGRATS.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, as we approach the end of Mi'kmaq History Month, I want to congratulate Nimbus Publishing, located in Halifax Needham, and Rebecca Thomas, poet and spoken word artist, on the release of Rebecca's first book, *I'm Finding My Talk*, a response to the iconic poem by Rita Joe, *I Lost My Talk*, about losing her language while a resident of the Shubenacadie Residential School.

I'm Finding My Talk is being released tomorrow, Wednesday, October 30th, with a celebration at Nimbus's Open Book Coffee on Strawberry Hill Drive in conjunction with the release of a new illustrated children's book edition of *I Lost My Talk*. Both books are illustrated by Mi'kmaw artist Pauline Young.

Language carries culture, and the resurgence of the Mi'kmaw language - in conversations, in schools, through learning apps, on provincial and municipal signs, and in books - is a reason to celebrate and a sign of the tremendous resilience of the Mi'kmaw people.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

AL-ISSA, KHABAT: JANO ENFIELD TAILOR SHOP - WELCOME

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place today to celebrate Khabat Al-Issa, his wife Jin, and their son Jano, who arrived in Nova Scotia in October 2016 as refugees from Syria.

Khabat studied tailoring at the Al-Mamoun International Centre in Syria. From buttons to zippers, making something a little more custom fit or mending canopies, for him no job is too big or too small. His work is professional, tidy, and completed in a timely fashion with a little Syrian flair.

Tailoring is a passion for Khabat. His cousin, owner of Rezan's Tailor Shop in Bridgewater, has aided, mentored, and encouraged the Al-Issa family to get settled in Canada. Rezan also assisted Khabat in getting his tailoring shop opened in Enfield.

Khabat is very thankful to the community of Enfield and those who have helped him and supported him along the way of getting the Jano Enfield Tailor Shop up and running. While his English is improving every day, it's still a work in progress. Khabat expresses his gratitude the best way he can - a welcome smile and a thank you are evident as soon as you walk in the shop.

Mr. Speaker, Khabat is very thankful to be in Canada, as we are to have him. He loves the people, the friendliness, being able to work, the culture, the seasons, but mostly how his son can experience a healthy life and get an education and be anything he wants to be. Thanks to Khabat for moving to Canada. We certainly appreciate him.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

SHEPHERD, ALLEN: COMBING THE ADVOCATE SHORELINE - THANKS

TORY RUSHTON: I rise today to congratulate and thank Allen Shepherd from Advocate Harbour in his fight against beach pollution along the shorelines of his community.

The Advocate shoreline is often known as the driftwood capital of Nova Scotia, but with the many pieces of driftwood comes a lot of garbage that comes in daily. Mr. Shepherd, this season, has filled four full dumpsters thus far.

I ask you to join me in thanking Allen for his time and dedication and service to cleaning up his community's beaches. I also may add, if you have the chance check out his Facebook because he's a spectacular photographer as well.

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

MCINNIS LAKE FARM - HOST: 2019 CDN. HORSE DEMO. - CONGRATS.

HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Colette and Sterling Gates of McInnis Lake Farm in New Ross, the hosts of the 2019 Canadian Horse Demonstration this past September.

Many do not realize that the Canadian horse was recognized as the designated horse breed of Canada by Parliament in 2002. Originally introduced to North America in 1665 by the King of France from his own stables, the breed gradually became in danger of disappearing. Dedicated horse lovers managed to save the breed, known for qualities of great strength and endurance, resilience, intelligence, and good temper - like the good people of New Ross. Colette and Sterling Gates continue this tradition as leading members of the Canadian Horse Breeders Atlantic Division.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the members of the House of Assembly to join me in recognizing and congratulating Colette and Sterling Gates of McInnis Lake Farm, the Canadian Horse Association, as well as the Canadian horse itself on a wonderful event.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MINISTER'S COUNCIL ON EDUC.: GAELIC REP. - RECOG.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to request to be able to read this statement in Gaelic after reading it in English.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development for appointing a member of the Gaelic community to the Minister's Council on Education.

Thousands of young Nova Scotians want to learn about the history and culture of their people in school. Young Gaels will now benefit from the insights brought to the table by Mr. Shamus MacDonald. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development must have representation of a people to be able to accurately represent who they are. This is especially true for matters of language, history, and culture. We know history can sometimes contain interpretation and matters can be conveniently left out to

suit one group over another. Local language dialects and traditions deserve their recognition.

Shamus MacDonald will ensure the minister and his department benefit from these insights in providing learning experiences to students. I want to thank the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for the good work they've been doing over the past number of years to bring Gaelic learning opportunities to students, and I would like to wish Mr. MacDonald success in helping to ensure young Gaels enjoy the discovery of learning more about their people and themselves.

[1:45 p.m.]

Bu mhath leam Ministear an Fhòghlaim a mholadh seach gun do chuir e air adhart Gàidheal gu Chomhairle an Fhòghlaim.

Tha mòran òigridh ann an sgoiltean Albainn Nuaidh ag iarraidh fiosrachaidh air eachdraidh is cultar an cuid dhaoine. A nis, coisnidh Gàidheil òga mathas bho 'n lèirsinn a bheir Seumas Dòmhnallach air adhart.

Feumaidh fianais nan daoine fhèin a bhith aig Roinn an Fhòghlaim chum 's gun teid riochdachadh cothromach a dheanamh. Tha seo gu h-àraid fìor a thaobh cànan, eachdraidh agus cultair. Tha fios againn gum faod fiaradh a bhith ann am mìneachadh eachdraidh aig amannan agus faodar dearmad a dheanamh a bheir barrachd cothrom do aon bhuidheann seach buidheann eile. Feumar sùim a ghabhail ann a bhith cur an cèill cainnt is dualchas ionadail.

Ni Seumas Dòmhnallach cinnteach gum buannaich am Ministear agus an Roinn bho' n eòlas seo ann a bhith toirt cothrom ionnsachaidh do sgoileirean.

Bu mhath leam taing a thoirt do Roinn an Fhòghlaim airson an deagh obair a rinn iad bho chionn bhliadhnaichean ann a bhith toirt ionnsachaidh do sgoileirean a thaobh na Gàidhlig; se mo dhùrachd gun soirbhich leis an Dòmhnallach ann a bhith deanamh cinnteach gum faigh Gàidheil òga cothrom air barrachd ionnsachaidh a thaobh an daoine agus an cuid dualchais.

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

DUNCAN MACMILLAN HS: HANDS ON HISTORY - CONGRATS.

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Hands on History Program run by historic Sherbrooke Village where Grade 6 students from Duncan MacMillan High School in Sheet Harbour had the opportunity to participate in this summer.

The Sherbrooke Village Hands on History Program invites people young and old to participate in village life by offering a hands-on, interactive, educational, and fun experience.

Led by their wonderful teacher, Madame Power, the students wore period clothing and learned what it was like to live in 1867. Participating in a trip back in time were Lydia Josey, Bree Ronaghan, Savannah Pye, Keira Hutt, Ryleigh Muir, Kairi Roberts, Savanna Munroe, Brayden Logan, Keaton Gammon, Cody Lloyd, Jacob Owen, and Alana Gammon, along with their teacher Madame Power and parent chaperones Shirley Munroe, Lisa Hutt, and Melissa Owner.

The group spent time carrying wood, baking cookies, making wooden toy schooners, and visiting the artisans in the village.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to commend the Duncan MacMillan High School Grade 6 students for participating in this learning opportunity and thank historic Sherbrooke Village for providing this educational program.

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

COLE HBR. CONSTITUENTS: COLLAB. HEALTH CTR. - REQUESTED

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the amazing constituents of Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage and their endless efforts to improve the lives of everyone in our communities.

As everyone knows, we are the only constituency in Nova Scotia that does not have a single family doctor, nor do we have any mental health care, community services offices, or pediatric care.

Today, on behalf of all the constituents of my communities, I tabled a petition from 1,249 constituents calling on the provincial government to commit to funding a collaborative health centre for our community.

The petition carries the voices from the people I listened to on their doorsteps, three years ago, who were calling out for better health care in our community.

Last year I introduced a bill in the Legislature calling for breast density scores to be revealed and reported on for every patient in Nova Scotia having a mammogram; today the government honoured that request.

I now call on the government to heed the call of my constituents who are repeatedly calling for better health care services and a collaborative health centre in our community with mental health services and social services.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

HFX. ENTREPRENEURS: GIVING BACK TO THE COM. - CONGRATS.

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, small business owners are the backbone of our province. Today I want to recognize Vasilios “Billy” Nikolaou who is the owner and operator of Armdale-based Totally Electric Ltd. Billy provides an array of electrical safety services and quality work for residential and commercial construction projects.

He is also the co-owner of an Armdale staple, the Armview Restaurant & Lounge, alongside Peter Tsuluhas and George Kapetanakis. This business is one of our oldest and most beloved local restaurants.

All three businessowners give back to the community through donations to charities, including the IWK Health Centre, the SPCA, their annual Christmas Feed Nova Scotia events, and for the first time Halifax Taco Week, which will see money from each lamb barbacoa taco donated to the food bank.

I want to congratulate all three businessowners on their professional success.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**MUIR, SHERRI/MACDONALD, SCOTIA:
INTL. PAGEANT WINNERS - CONGRATS.**

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge and congratulate Sherri Muir and her daughter Scotia MacDonald of Scotsburn for being awarded Miss Nova Scotia International 2019 and Miss Teen Nova Scotia International, respectively. Sherri was named Miss Nova Scotia while Scotia was awarded Miss Teen Nova Scotia runner-up. Scotia was also invited to compete in the nationals in Toronto but decided to decline the offer as it would interfere with her first weeks in college.

The mother-daughter pair have been involved in pageants for a few years, but this is the first big win either has received. They have been encouraging others to step out of their comfort zone and try something new, just like they decided to do.

I am proud of both Sherri and Scotia for their achievements and hope they both continue to participate in their chosen competition while inspiring others.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

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

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw the attention of the members to the gallery opposite, where I'm joined by my hard-working and amazing office staff: Bev Doman, who is my constituency assistant, and Grace Szucs, who's my outreach officer - both of whom do a huge amount of work while I'm in here with all of you, tending to the needs of the people of Dartmouth South.

I definitely couldn't do my job without them, and I'm really glad that they got down to the Legislature to join us today. Thanks for joining us. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

COM. CAMPFIRES: MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE - RECOG.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about a brand-new mental health initiative in Spryfield called community CAMPFIRES. While it's not an actual campfire, the weekly drop-in sessions provide the same kind of warmth and community by creating a space for people to connect and build wellness skills.

The community CAMPFIRES are led by Healthy Minds Around the Loop Association, an association focused on providing better access to mental health services in Spryfield and area. Recently the group hosted a walk-and-talk series at Long Lake Provincial Park, provided free mental health first-aid training, and are now hosting the community CAMPFIRES.

I would especially like to recognize Stephanie-Lynn Osberg, who is leading the CAMPFIRES and whose passion for tackling mental health issues is truly inspiring.

Mr. Speaker, it is groups like Healthy Minds Around the Loop that make our communities thrive. I'd like to thank this group and Stephanie and wish them the best of luck with the launch of the community CAMPFIRES initiative.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

LEGION CALAIS BR. 162: GATHERING TO REMEMBER - COMMEND

STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour the members of the Royal Canadian Legion Calais Branch 162 in Lower Sackville. On November 11th, members of the Royal Canadian Legion Calais Branch 162 will gather along with community members and organizations to remember Canada's veterans at the Sackville Heritage Park Cenotaph by paying their respects to all those who served Canada to protect our rights and freedoms, as well as those in other countries.

I would like to ask that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the members of the Royal Canadian Legion Calais Branch 162 - and all Royal Canadian Legion members - for their dedication and commitment, year after year, to ensure that we honour and show our gratitude to the men and women who served and, in some cases, made the ultimate sacrifice so that we can enjoy the freedom that we do today.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

CHAULK, DAVE: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, the voices on local radio become part of our daily lives as they inform, entertain, and educate their local communities. For over 36 years, a wonderful, deep voice, well known to generations of Annapolis Valley radio listeners, has been heard reading the news and delivering commentaries.

Recently, Dave Chaulk announced his retirement and turned off his microphone with his final shift on the air for K-Rock 89.3 FM on November 15, 2018. He spent 25 years directing the news at Magic 97, now Magic 94.9, before becoming K-Rock's first news director when the station launched in 2008.

Although he has retired from a total of 47 years in media, Dave remains deeply active in his community through volunteering and is the chairman of the New Minas Village Commission.

I invite all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Dave Chaulk on his retirement and for the many years of being a reliable and reassuring voice throughout the Annapolis Valley.

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

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

BRAD JOHNS: I would like to draw the attention of members to the West Gallery, where we are joined today by a resident of Sackville-Beaver Bank, Ms. Charlene Safire, who is joining us today for today's Question Period. I'd like to ask all members of the House to please welcome her and give her a warm round of welcome to the House.

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

ADAMS, STEPHEN: RETIREMENT FROM MUNIC. GOVT. - BEST WISHES

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to be able to stand today to recognize a former colleague of mine, whom I had the privilege to work with side by side for 16 years while on the Halifax Regional Municipality. Councillor Steve Adams announced on October 18th, almost 28 years to the day of his first municipal win on October 19, 1991, that he would no longer be offering for a ninth term as the councillor for Spryfield, Herring Cove, and Williamswood.

Having won his first election in 1991 at the age of 30, Steve went on to win eight more consecutive elections. Over that time, he worked with four separate mayors, eight city managers, was acclaimed twice as councillor, and served twice as deputy mayor. Just to put it into perspective, over his 28 years there have been seven premiers, eight members of Parliament, and nine different legislative members representing his area.

Councillor Adams has always been a hard-working and strong advocate for the residents of Spryfield and Herring Cove. Some of his many achievements include new parks, playgrounds, and paving projects throughout the community; community centres; and the construction of a new fire hall for Herring Cove and a new one coming to serve Williamswood.

Mr. Speaker, to say that I have the utmost respect and admiration for Steve would be an understatement. Not only do I consider him a former colleague and mentor but also a friend. I ask the members of the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly to join me in wishing Steve all the best as he moves to his next phase of life, and on behalf of his residents and friends I want to thank him for his years of service.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

**COASTAL FIN. CREDIT UNION:
SUPPORTING RESIDENT DOCTORS - THANKS**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, Coastal Financial Credit Union has purchased and donated a home in Yarmouth to provide housing for potential family doctors in our community. Working with the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce, our community navigator, our municipal units, and the Province, Coastal Financial Credit Union recognized that many doctors have to continue paying rent or mortgages in their former locations and took the initiative to find a solution to this added financial stress by providing a free place for them to live while studying and working in Yarmouth.

The house, just a short walk to the Yarmouth hospital, will provide three units for resident doctors to live in and also one unit with three bedrooms and a common living area for medical students who are here temporarily.

Coastal Financial Credit Union's amazing act of generosity and community spirit has inspired other businesses to donate their products and services to this house, including a free kitchen design, an offer to fill the fridge, free paint, an electrical upgrade, landscaping, and much more.

I ask this House to join me in thanking Coastal Financial Credit Unit for this truly inspiring and unprecedented act of generosity and vision and for its unwavering dedication to our community, as well as the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce, our municipal governments, and the Province for supporting doctor recruitment in our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

ST. THOS. MORE: FALL FAIR VOLUNS. - THANKS

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding volunteers who organized the St. Thomas More 2019 Fall Fair. On Saturday, October 26th, I had the opportunity to visit this Fall Fair with my family. We were treated to a great lunch and had a chance to purchase some books and arts and crafts.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Knights of Columbus and Catholic Women's League of Christ the King Parish for their support of this Fall Fair. Many residents of Dartmouth have been attending this Fall Fair for decades and look forward to it annually. Proceeds raised go to support the community and the parish.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House to acknowledge and thank the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Women's League and all the volunteers on another successful Fall Fair at St. Thomas More.

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

Before we move on to Question Period, I want to remind all members that once again we're going to continue on in our vein from Friday: there will be zero tolerance for any unsolicited remarks or comments. If I do hear any, you will be politely asked to remove yourself from the Chamber for the balance of Question Period.

[2:00 p.m.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

[2:00 p.m.]

PREM.: CRANE REMOVAL - LIABILITY

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, the PC caucus submitted a FOIPOP request to the Department of Labour and Advanced Education and to the Premier's office seeking documents and correspondence relating to the crane situation and the assumption of the liability.

The Department of Labour and Advanced Education responded, asking for 30 more days to complete their response, and the Premier's office with a redacted document that indicates no record that the Premier was consulted before the liability was assumed.

I would like to ask the Premier: Can the Premier confirm whether or not the Premier was involved in the decision to assume liability for removal of the crane?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, ultimately every decision government makes ends up on my desk but, quite frankly, I have ministers who are capable of running their portfolios and I allow them to do so.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, we've asked numerous times about the costs of the assumption of the liability. I know the Premier has indicated that it is in the interest of public safety, which everyone supports, but if it's the right thing to do, it's the right thing to do no matter the cost, and we are interested in how much this will cost taxpayers.

Part of the release from the Office of the Premier included this page which is basically all redacted except for one expression and that expression is "fingers crossed." I will table that for the benefit of the House. It's the only thing of substance left on that entire page.

I'd like to ask the Premier: Is the Premier prepared to tell the House today what the liability is that the taxpayers have assumed for the removal of the crane?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member knows, it is ongoing work that is happening on that site, and we will continue to ensure that we secure public safety.

As the honourable member would know, and as we've said in this House plenty of times, we are in the final stages, it's my understanding, of doing an ultrasound of that site. There was one at the very beginning and one at the end.

There would have been some damage associated with our work on that site, and we want to make sure all of that is repaired and that site is the way it was before Hurricane Dorian. Then we will communicate the costs associated with that.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's curious that the Premier won't share any estimate of the costs. Certainly, there will be a final tally - no question there will be a final tally at the end of all this, but at this stage the government must have some indication of the cost. They should have had that when they began the process, but it has been almost two months, presumably, to have some estimate of the cost.

When we spoke to the Office of the FOIPOP Commissioner about the non-responsible character of the disclosure, they said to just appeal. Well, we know that the appeal process is two and a half years. It seems like this government is using that as a convenient way to keep information from taxpayers.

I would like to ask the Premier one more time: Can the Premier share at least an estimate of the cost of the crane removal?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as I said in an earlier question, the fact of the matter is when that project is complete, when we have secured that, when we have seen the damage associated with it, we will communicate to Nova Scotians the exact cost associated.

Unlike being in Opposition, we cannot make things up. We have to deal with the reality of what it is, and I want to make sure it's an accurate number.

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

PREM.: EGSPA TARGETS - STATUS

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, for the last 12 years we've had in Nova Scotia an invaluable environmental road map which has legislatively required us to do some very important things. Here are three: reduce mercury emissions to no more than 35 kg by 2020; increase the amount of money spent by the people of the province on locally produced food to 20 per cent by 2020; and reduce solid waste disposal to no more than 300 kg per person per year.

With the overdue five-year review of the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act nowhere in sight, will the Premier tell the House if these targets have been met?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the round table would have that information. I can get that for the honourable member and have it presented to him.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, these targets are extraordinarily important. Nova Scotia has one of the highest mercury levels in the country, and we know that our agricultural industry is contributing a \$0.5 billion every year to our provincial economy and in a way that doesn't have the heavy environmental footprint of bringing food in from great distances.

As far as solid waste is concerned, we know we have a recent report commissioned by the government that says we have way too many landfills and that our solid waste management is not what it should be.

I would like to ask the Premier: Does the Premier support the need to have hard, strong, unmovable targets in these areas of mercury levels, local agriculture, and solid waste?

THE PREMIER: As I said, the round table would have that information, they are reviewing it, we can get it to the honourable member. To his question, absolutely, Mr. Speaker, 53 per cent GHG reductions below 2005 levels - all Nova Scotians should be proud of that work.

We're continuing to ensure that we get to net zero in this province. A piece of legislation that has been formed - we're a leader when it comes to waste diversion. We need to make sure that we continue to lead the country in many of these files, Mr. Speaker.

GARY BURRILL: Here, Mr. Speaker, is the target that is uppermost in the minds of the people of the province. We know that global warming in excess of 1.5 degrees will mean these things: greater drought; more extreme temperatures; higher sea level rise; more extreme species loss; increased ocean temperatures; increased loss of marine and coastal ecosystems; decrease in annual catch for marine fisheries; increased risk to livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth; increased impacts on human health including increased risks from diseases like malaria, among others, many of which are going to be a lot more extreme for coastal areas and coastal populations like ours.

Does the Premier grasp that it is a life and death imperative that global warming be kept within 1.5 degrees?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, that's why we have the most aggressive targets in the country. That's why we will continue to have those targets.

We also see we need economic growth and job creation. In Efficiency Nova Scotia alone there's 1,400 jobs associated with our collective march towards ensuring that we green up this province. We see more opportunities and we continue to lead the nation. It's my hope, Mr. Speaker, that other Canadian provinces will join in the fight that Nova Scotia has been in when it comes to dealing with climate change. At the same time, I hope they can catch up to us when it comes to growing the economy.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: FOIPOP REQUEST - BLANK PAGES

TIM HOUSTON: The Premier is often fond of accusing other people of making things up, but he doesn't like to be held to account on his own record. We put a FOIPOP request in for the legal fees on the Alex Cameron situation. We're not looking for the legal advice, we're not looking for the strategy, we're just purely trying to find out how much taxpayer money the Premier has spent on the Alex Cameron case.

Mr. Speaker, the response to that FOIPOP request: 41 pages of completely blank information. That's the response to a FOIPOP request.

I'd like to ask the Premier, is 41 blank pages an appropriate response to a FOIPOP request? I'll table that for the benefit of the House?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, our record is one of growth. The highest population in the history of the province, more young people choosing to live in this province, seeing an economic future for themselves.

The honourable members well laugh, but young Canadians and young Nova Scotians are taking the choice to live in this province and create good jobs, Mr. Speaker. It might be a laughing matter for the honourable members, but the fact of the matter is it is creating good opportunities for our sons and daughters to be able to see a future for themselves here.

I want to remind the honourable members that under both the Progressive Conservative and New Democratic Party, Mr. Speaker, more young people were leaving this province than were staying. We've seen them choose the opposite. More young people are living in Nova Scotia, working and creating job opportunities. That's a record young Nova Scotians are proud of.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I would love to debate the Premier on his record on the immigration file; it is horrendous when you compare it to Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island. Those are places that can claim success on what has happened. Nova Scotia's population is the highest it has ever been, despite the efforts of this government.

Returning to the matter at hand, Mr. Speaker, 41 pages withheld, 41 pages of blank information responding to a FOIPOP request. That's the question the Premier doesn't want to answer because he knows it's a question that can't properly be answered. There's no answer for something like that.

Why does the Premier continue to send cases to court after court instead of just releasing information that should be released? Even the court reminds Nova Scotia it is bound by the rule of the law in its decision on the Ombudsman's case. I'll table that for the

benefit of the Premier, too. Premier, follow the laws of the land and release the information - why won't you?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member may be against immigration, but he can dismiss all he wants. The fact is we are at an all-time high when it comes to our population, not only welcoming new (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Pictou East will excuse himself from this Chamber.

The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, he can deny the fact that we're welcoming more new Nova Scotians and new Canadians. He can deny the fact that more young people are choosing to work and live in this province. The reality of it is, our population is at an all-time high, Mr. Speaker.

I want to remind the honourable member, Mr. Speaker, when the federal Conservative Party was in power, they held us to 500 nominees. We are now at 1,400 with 2,000 inside of Atlantic Canada. That is a government, Mr. Speaker, that is changing the dial not only for this province but Atlantic Canada.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

ENVIRON.: DARTMOUTH LAKES - MONITORING

SUSAN LEBLANC: My question is for the Minister of Environment. This Summer was another Summer when Dartmouth's lakes were plagued with toxic algae blooms and clogged with invasive weeds. Investigations by our caucus have uncovered that there is not sufficient monitoring by the Department of Environment in Dartmouth's lakes, and that we desperately need more science and more co-operation at the provincial level on the problems facing urban lakes.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain what progress his department has made in improving the level of monitoring being done in Dartmouth lakes?

HON. GORDON WILSON: The member and her colleague, I was pleased to have the opportunity to sit down with them a few weeks ago and talk about that topic. I commend them for bringing it forward. The situation with these lakes is one that's complicated when you look at development within an urban rural area like that. We within the Department of Environment take that role very seriously. We would like to work with our partners there and ensure that the many people - the developers, the municipality, and the stakeholders there - are informed. We'll continue to work with them to bring them up-to-date information on the status of those lakes.

SUSAN LEBLANC: My colleague for Dartmouth South and I did meet with the Minister of Environment, and we're very pleased that he made the time for us. I'll ask him more about that in a moment.

On August 22nd, though, before that meeting, my colleague the MLA for Dartmouth South and I hosted a meeting about Dartmouth lakes. About 150 people packed the room to imagine solutions for the urban lakes. We invited local MLAs and councillors, as well as the Ministers of Lands and Forestry, Communities, Culture and Heritage, and Environment because we knew we need to work together to tackle this complex problem. After much discussion, the community has crystalized around a defined ask of this government: to convene an urban lakes commission.

At the aforementioned meeting with the minister, he indicated he was open to this solution. I would like to ask: Is the minister still open to convening an urban lakes commission, and what update can he provide on that work?

GORDON WILSON: Certainly, one of the things we need to understand in the member's question is that it is a complicated situation in the Dartmouth lakes. It's a challenging area where we're seeing development. At the same time, we're seeing these lakes being dealt with - sometimes situations that don't have to do with development, they have to do with climate change, they have to do with invasive species. I have committed to continuing the conversation with the members opposite and look forward to those conversations as we go down the road.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

SNSIS - INFO. CONTROL: MANAGEMENT - ABILITY

ALLAN MACMASTER: My question is for the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services, Mr. Speaker. We saw the Auditor General's Report released today and two things stood out. One was that Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services may not be able to prevent and detect unauthorized and fraudulent payments and also that there was an inability to ensure that departmental purchases achieve value for money.

Mr. Speaker, we'll recall the young man who had police land at his door when he was found to have changed some characters in the address box - when he was only using the internet - to gain access to the department's private information that belonged to Nova Scotians. It's the same people in the same leadership positions here.

Why is the department responsible for information and procurement controls failing to provide Nova Scotians confidence that this government has the ability to manage these important systems?

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: We have learned quite a quite a bit from the privacy breach that took place a couple of years ago and have made sure that we have practices embedded within our contracting to make sure that privacy impact assessments and threat risk assessments are being done on all contract work that's happening. We take the audit from the Auditor General and have worked with his office and came to work with his office to make sure that we are finding the deficiencies and working on them to make sure that we comply.

[2:15 p.m.]

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I want to turn now to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, also with respect to this report of the Auditor General. I think these are important questions because if we're asking them here in the Legislature, we're adding the weight of the Legislature behind them.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is responsible for some of the biggest projects in this province - hospitals, roads, contaminated site remediation - but only 11 per cent of staff have completed their fraud training. I don't want the Premier to stand up and say that we're accusing those members of the government civil service of fraud, but I think it shows that the government has not made this a priority in that department.

My question for the minister: As leader of this department, will the minister accept responsibility and what will he be doing to correct this?

HON. LLOYD HINES: I thank the member opposite for the question. The issue of integrity in the department is of highest importance to us. We have a large number of people and not all of them have access to computers or familiarity with it.

What we're doing internally is looking at where we're at right now - we're at about 19 per cent in the overall picture. We're at 47 per cent for our senior management. We will be conducting a process whereby the training will be done in a group manner, so that people can do it in a more accessible way.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

EECD - EPA DUTIES: NECESSARY INFORMATION - PROVIDE

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

As the minister is aware, the role of educational program assistants is critical to our education system. Gone are the days of an EPA supporting students solely for academics.

They serve as nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, counsellors, speech therapists, secretaries, and research experts for special needs and behaviours.

EPAs are not privy to the full medical information of the students they work with. I've heard stories from EPAs contracting ringworm, impetigo, and even pink eye. As the minister is aware, the right to know is a fundamental pillar of workplace safety.

My question is this: What steps is the department taking to ensure EPAs have the required information in order to protect themselves and the students they work with and to avoid workplace injury?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Of course, we value the role of EPAs and, depending on what region you're in, TAs, our educational assistants. That's why we have hired many more to support our students in Nova Scotia. Our priority is to make sure that our schools are safe not just for the students but for staff. We do have protocols in place from region to region to ensure that the interests of those staff are protected.

TIM HALMAN: I certainly recognize that the government has made investments with the inclusion model, Mr. Speaker, but I'm still hearing the same concerns from EPAs that I did five or six years ago. I served on an occupational health and safety committee at my local high school, and the most common issue that was brought up were injuries and workplace hazards for EPAs.

Along with those pressures, EPAs are at times assigned too many students at one time. EPAs have told me that the assignments, at times, do not match their skill set or training. My question to the minister is this: Why aren't educational program assistants or teaching assistants receiving more professional development so they can better support students with higher needs?

ZACH CHURCHILL: In fact, when it comes to the major increase in investments we've made as a government for more EAs, we have also put money aside for professional development, so there are dollars available in the system that can be accessed by our educational assistants. On top of that, we have hired close to 400 other inclusive education support staff as well, including child and youth care practitioners, behavioural experts, autism experts, more counsellors and guidance counsellors, more school psychologists.

All this is to provide the necessary wraparound support to meet the variety of needs that our students have to ensure that they're successful and that all the pressure in delivering education to our students isn't solely on the teacher and the educational assistant.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

**MUN. AFFS. & HOUSING: SACKVILLE FLOODPLAIN:
FRIIP FUNDING - RECEIVE**

STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, it was recently announced that six new projects would be added under the Flood Risk Infrastructure Investment Program, and I'll table that. As the member for Sackville-Cobequid, this announcement was of particular interest because of the Sackville and Little Sackville Rivers expanding floodplains that were recently mapped through HRM.

Stormwater management is a huge issue in Sackville, despite significant upgrades in the infrastructure by Halifax Water. When the affordable housing initiatives in the 1960s and 1970s were under way, the location for housing was often in floodplains and/or serviced with shallow stormwater systems.

My question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is: Can the minister clarify how recipients were determined and whether any parts of the Sackville floodplain area will receive any of this funding?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: It is absolutely important, when we are developing - obviously the planning has changed a great deal. Last year, we put a bill through this House of minimum-planning standards that speak to that very specific thing around our waterways, around our rivers, as the honourable member has spoken to.

Those are important for us as we go forward on how development will happen, and we'll certainly look at all those options as we move forward.

STEVE CRAIG: With the effects of climate change, areas that were built on low-lying ground such as floodplains will certainly see an increased risk related to flooding. In Nova Scotia, famously, you are never more than 67 kilometres from the ocean. That makes a lot of land that is near sea level.

When you add in more than 3,000 lakes and rivers, I am sure there are more areas that will need assistance through this program.

Mr. Speaker, would the minister please explain the department's plan for assistance to other parts of Nova Scotia that are facing increased flood risks?

CHUCK PORTER: I thank the member for the question. He does raise a very important issue again. The work we are doing with our municipal units is absolutely vital when it comes to planning and how they proceed with development right across the province. We'll be paying close attention to that, working with our municipal partners. There's lots of work to do.

Climate change - as we know, and as the member has spoken to - is an important issue for us. We have seen these changes along the rising sea levels, more so in some areas than others, and we'll continue to see that. We see how the weather is changing. We'll continue to work with our municipal partners, as I have stated.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

H&W - C.B. REG. HOSP.: DETOX PATIENTS - PROTECT

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. The only place on Cape Breton Island to get in-patient detox services is at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital. However, recent changes have made it so that while people are checked into detox, they are able to get passes to leave the program for a few hours.

Since these changes, it has been discovered that some people who have these passes are doing other drugs or consuming other substances - sometimes on hospital property, it is alleged. Detox is a voluntary program, so locking people isn't allowed, but allowing them to ingest other drugs defeats the purpose of them being in detox.

My question for the minister is: What measures is the department taking to prevent people in detox from consuming other drugs on hospital property?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for raising this important question. Certainly we speak and have spoken quite at length about mental health on this floor. It's great to have a conversation about addictions as well.

First and foremost, the operational care and delivery of our programs are delivered by our health authorities on the front line. The fact is that the guidance for program delivery in the area of addictions services is something that is evolving based on clinical research and best-practice evidence, and that's the way they deliver these programs.

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer. While there has been a shift to community-based treatment for some addictions, for others detox remains the tried-and-true solution. With only one location on Cape Breton offering in-patient detox, the options are limited for those wishing to get off opiates.

In fact, Tom Blanchard of Talbot House tells me that he is getting numerous calls from opiate addicts who want to do in-patient detox but are told that the only treatment model for opiate addicts is a harm-reduction model of methadone or Suboxone. For anyone looking to check into the abstinence-based treatment centres such as Talbot House, they have to complete detox first, and for opiate addicts there is now no place to do it. Tom Blanchard states that home-based detox is both dangerous and ineffective.

My question for the minister is: Will the minister look into restoring in-patient detox beds for opioid addicts who want this option in Cape Breton and, in fact, in the province?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I believe it's a great opportunity to draw members' attention to the extensive work that we've been doing with the department - as well as our partners in the Health Authority and community-based partners - specifically around this topic of treating and supporting Nova Scotians that have opioid-use disorder. Mr. Speaker, that is a challenge with addictions in the use of opioids.

Mr. Speaker, one of the first public announcements I did in 2017 as Health and Wellness Minister was release the framework for opioid addiction interface. There are five pillars to that; we've been addressing and investing in all of them. We've seen the wait-list reduced, Mr. Speaker, down by over 90 per cent for people looking for treatment for opioid misuse disorder in this province because of those investments, saving lives.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

MUN. AFFS. & HOUSING: CBRM STUDY RESULTS - RESPOND

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Grant Thornton's independent study on economic viability of the CBRM was released in July. It found that outward migration is largely due to the sluggish economy and higher-than-average unemployment rates, and that increased financial contributions from the federal and provincial governments will be necessary for the continued sustainability of our community.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the minister: What steps has his department taken in response to the release of that report?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. We want all communities in Nova Scotia to be healthy, thriving, and growing, including the CBRM. Lots of stuff in the report that has been written, we will continue to work with the CBRM on as we go forward in an effort to support them and all municipalities right across this province.

TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the CBRM cannot keep up with the demand for services in our communities. The Grant Thornton report found that CBRM departments are already stretching their resources to the limit. Our local infrastructure is taxed, buses are overcrowded trying to get students to CBU, and we're facing a severe housing shortage. We are on the verge of bouncing back, but we are not going to be able to take advantage of this momentum without some significant assistance from the Province.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please tell me if the Province will be providing additional financial support to the CBRM?

CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the honourable member raises a topic around investment. This government has reinvested, and one example is the revitalization of the health care projects in infrastructure in Sydney, Glace Bay, New Waterford, and North Sydney. That is a huge investment, and we will continue to invest in a fiscally responsible way, not only in the CBRM but right across Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**H&W - SUTHERLAND HARRIS HOSP.:
DIALYSIS TREATMENT - IMPROVE**

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Currently, there are four dialysis chairs at the Sutherland Harris Memorial Hospital in Pictou. Those chairs are servicing an area with a population of over 45,000 people. At this moment, there is a waiting list of 14. I know the members in this Chamber realize that that number is just going to increase.

Yes, we have heard the good news with announcements elsewhere in the province receiving chairs in Bridgewater, Digby, Glace Bay, Kentville. However, I'd like to know if the minister can please provide the House with an update on when Pictou will receive additional dialysis chairs.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for bringing the question forward. Indeed, as we've spoken previously on the floor about those Nova Scotians who require a dialysis treatment. For those of us who don't have that experience, I don't think can truly appreciate three to four days a week, upwards of four to five hours of treatment. It does take a toll just to receive the treatment.

However, Mr. Speaker, we have followed recommendations and advice to have an expansion program throughout the province. The sites that the member referenced were identified, and that work is ongoing. That's a priority space for us for expanding. We need to get those sites up and running and see how the distribution of need and supports roll out from there, going forward.

[2:30 p.m.]

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, there is a great need in Pictou County: 14 people on the waiting list and growing. That's 14 people travelling to Antigonish, travelling to Truro, and travelling to Halifax several times a week. This is simply unacceptable, and it's unfair. In order to receive treatment, these individuals are travelling on some of the most dangerous highways in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I have a friend, Bernie Clarke, who is 88 years old. He has been advised that he will have to start treatment very soon. His doctor told him to start preparing, and he said, "Do you know what preparing means, Karla? That's figuring out how I am going to make the trek to Halifax at 88 years old."

I want to know: Does the minister believe that Bernie Clarke, who is 88 years old, should have to leave his community several times a week to receive a lifesaving treatment?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, one of the things going on, as the member noted, is an expansion of dialysis seats in a number of locations based upon a review of our renal program in the province. Those seats have been identified, investments have been committed, and these projects are well under way.

As I've had discussions, as recently as last week, with representatives of the renal program - there are a number of other things ongoing, including the pursuit of the expansion of home dialysis. I encourage constituents and members to engage with their health care providers to see if home dialysis is right for them. Imagine being able to receive that treatment overnight in your own home - you don't have to travel, and you don't disrupt the bulk of your daytime. There are options, including transplant. We're taking aggressive steps to improve transplant opportunities for Nova Scotians as well.

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

COM. SERV. - CHILD PROT. CASE: RED TAPE - EXPLAIN

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, today my question is for the Minister of Community Services. I've been working on a child protection service case on behalf of a constituent of mine, Charlene Safire. My office has twice filled out the necessary forms that empower me to work on the constituent's behalf - I'll table copies of both of those. These forms are meant to allow me to receive information that would otherwise be withheld for privacy reasons, yet time and time again my attempts to receive the necessary information seem to be frustrated by bureaucratic red tape.

My question to the minister: Would the minister please explain to me why the department continues to withhold documents, or provide an update on this case?

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the honourable member has received a number of updates on this particular case. I'm not aware of any outstanding issues that have been raised.

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, just for clarification for the minister, I have not, so maybe we could do that.

Mr. Speaker, when we ask a constituent to fill out these forms, we're creating an expectation. If the forms don't create the situation where sufficient information can be shared, then all MLAs are at risk. As the MLA for Pictou East has pointed out many times, constituents don't come to us at their best time; they come to us at their worst times.

When we hand in these forms that say we can help, those forms should empower us as MLAs to help. If not, we're just creating false hope.

Has the minister considered strengthening the release forms so that more information can be shared with MLAs working on behalf of their constituents?

KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. The release form that is used is the same release form that is used all across government. I'm not exactly sure how MLAs are "at risk" from their constituents, but I want to assure the honourable member that we do respond in a timely way when calls or inquiries do come in. I do want to assure him that at our local DCS offices, every phone call is tracked.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

TIR: MEDWAY RIVER RD. - VIABILITY STUDY

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

My constituency office receives a disproportionate amount of calls about the Medway River Road in Queens County. This is a part seal coat, but mostly dirt road connecting several small communities, from Mill Village to Greenfield. The high volume of traffic on the road, including trucks, has degraded the road over time.

Year-round and seasonal residents both report that the poor state of the road is seriously impacting real estate prices, and the constant vehicle repair bills are adding up. Repeated requests to TIR haven't resulted in much more than partial gravelling in what appears to be random sections.

My question for the minister: Will he commit to having the road inspected and conduct a viability study on the potential paving of the road, or at the very least, having the length of the road seal coated.

HON. LLOYD HINES: I thank the member opposite for the question. First of all, I hope that the member is taking advantage of the opportunity to meet with our people and talk about this year's program. I would certainly point her in the direction of the Gravel Road Capital Program which has been very successful in rural Nova Scotia in terms of building the bases of these roads and getting them ready for surface preparation, if it could be paving or seal coat.

The paradox we have in Nova Scotia is that much of the economy, particularly in the member's area too, is in forestry, with heavy loads on gravel roads - which is providing jobs for areas - and putting a lot of undue pressure on our gravel road system. This limits the types of coatings that we can apply in those circumstances short of building them to a 100-Series standard.

I'd be more than happy to discuss this further with the member; no trouble.

KIM MASLAND: I thank the minister for his response. On this same road in an area called Riversdale, a section of the road has become extremely dangerous. It is so narrow that cars can't pass each other at the same time. The road section is low enough that the presence of ice or a fast and high river current poses a serious danger to motorists, particularly as there are no guard rails.

To date there has been no response from TIR following a commitment to study this section of the road.

I would like to ask the minister: When will this dangerous section of road be seriously examined and fixed?

LLOYD HINES: I thank the member for the question. An area with as pleasant a sounding name as Riversdale is worthy of another look. We will take a look at the situation there immediately and see what we can do.

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

TIR - MAJOR/MINOR RD. REPAIR: VOLUME - ACTION

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, my question as well is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

Many of us as MLAs, especially in rural areas, continuously receive calls about the condition of many of the roads in our constituencies. The calls can range from a request for paving on the higher end, but most of them are about potholes, ditching, shoulders, guardrails, washouts, and the grading of our roads. These calls seem to be increasing year after year.

I would like to ask the minister: What is his department doing to address the increasing volume of major and minor repairs in our constituencies?

HON. LLOYD HINES: I thank the member opposite for the question. I am very proud of the advancement we have made in our budget in the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal over the last several years. We are in excess of \$300 million

currently; we have put more money into mowing the 100-Series Highways, which has cascaded the money that had been spent there out to the rural areas.

In the member's constituency in particular - I think about Tarbot as an example, a beautiful area which has been done more recently - we are undertaking now to climb the big mountain of Smokey and redo that after 60 years.

So, we are very mindful of the need to expend our resources in the rural areas and will continue to do so.

KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, we all appreciate the funding increase that has gone to both maintenance paving and the Gravel Road Capital Program, and we have all benefited from both. But the minor repairs, that could be done before they become a major expense, can't be done because of lack of funding.

I am sure, if you checked with the area managers and supervisors, you'd find that many, if not all, would tell you that their budgets were spent before Summer was even over. With an increase in funding, many of these jobs could be done, but this isn't happening.

I would like to ask the minister: Will the minister commit to a significant increase in the regular maintenance budget to enable these area managers, supervisors, and employees to get their job done?

LLOYD HINES: I thank the member opposite for the question. It is always a challenge in government to balance the various departmental expenditures. I have to say again though that I am very pleased with the co-operation we have had from Treasury Board, in particular, when it comes to our maintenance budget. We were able to increase it by \$4 million over the last two years, which is the largest increase we've seen in several years in the department.

Yes, we wish we had more money. We are always looking for innovative ways to make the money we have go further, stretch the dollar, and we'll continue to search out those opportunities, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

TIR: HANTSPORT ABOITEAU REPAIRS - COST

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of TIR. In response to a question last Spring about the Halfway River aboiteau, the minister responded: "The contractor is now anticipating a very early summer completion date. The contractor has agreed to work two shifts, seven days a week to complete this important work."

He went on to say: “We believe the danger posed by the Spring runoff has passed, and we’re offering a permanent solution for the people of Hantsport.” I’ll table that.

In August, an engineer wrote a letter stating that settlement by erosion was causing issues around the culvert, structure, and embankment. I’ll table that.

My question for the minister is: We now know that the original design failed. How much will the aboiteau repairs cost, and what guarantee is there that the repairs that are nearly done now will work?

HON. LLOYD HINES: I thank the member opposite for the question. We continue to be committed to solving the issue around the aboiteau, which, of course, affects the local community in there and also threatens our own particular infrastructure in the area.

I would invite the member, if he hasn’t had an opportunity to speak to the department yet, we can include that in your consultation when you come in to talk. Thank you.

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I’d like to thank the minister for that answer. The solution to fix the erosion that was happening was to put gates on the culverts and create an aboiteau. In fact, this is exactly what the people of Hantsport had been asking for, as illustrated by a letter dated October 6, 2019, from the Aboiteau Action Committee, which I will table.

A response to the Aboiteau Action Committee states that the gates will be removed at some point in the future. I’ll table that too, actually.

My question for the minister is this: When will the minister actually listen to the residents of Hantsport and area and leave the gates on the Halfway River project, making it a permanent aboiteau, as they requested?

LLOYD HINES: I thank the member opposite for the question. In our design process, the gates are part of that design. They are in such a way that they are an option that can be used or not employed. I think that gives us the best of both worlds there as we work continuously to restore that piece of infrastructure in the area there.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

H&W - BAYVIEW NURSING HOME: BEDS - UTILIZE

TORY RUSHTON: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Advocate Harbour is a beautiful, picturesque community on the shore of the Bay of Fundy. Generations of families have called this place home and survived on the land and seas. Part of the community mindset is the spirit that created Bayview Nursing Home.

As the minister knows, we have an issue with lack of long-term beds in the province, so my question to the minister is: With low numbers of patients in this nursing home and beds open, would the minister work with me in a plan to utilize these beds and secure the sustainability for this site?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for raising the topic of long-term care services. As the member would know, we are very committed to supporting Nova Scotians who require continuing care services, whether that is to stay in their home and receive home care services and supports or in long-term care facilities.

Mr. Speaker, certainly if the member has more details of the specific site - I don't have information about it off the top of my head - I am happy to have the conversation and get him connected with the appropriate people within the department. We are certainly looking at opportunities to continue reducing wait times.

TORY RUSHTON: I thank the minister for that. Bayview is not only a nursing home to the area, Mr. Speaker, it's also a primary employer in this area. Locals have worked to see this nursing home come to reality and now work hard to secure it. Many families in the area are looking to this facility to be there when their loved ones or they themselves may need it, in time.

As Advocate Harbour is a place on the Fundy Shore, it has great lobster and great scallops, and viable long-term care beds are quite a drive from this area. Would the minister come to Advocate Harbour and visit this nursing home with me? Mr. Speaker, the seafood dinner is on me, if you will come to Advocate Harbour.

[2:45 p.m.]

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, it's always a risky proposition for members in this Legislature to raise the question of lobster. Being a representative for Antigonish on St. George's Bay in the Strait, I may have a differing opinion as to where the best lobster comes from.

Again, we'll certainly pick up this conversation outside the Chamber and see what the current status is and any outstanding requests from that particular site. We'll see how that fits in with the other work that's ongoing within the department, as we continue to strengthen the supports for our long-term care facilities really, ultimately, for those people who both work, but also reside, in these facilities, including Advocate Harbour.

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

MUN. AFFS. & HOUSING: SENIOR HOMEOWNERS - EMERG. FUNDING

LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. On September 16th, on the Moose River Road - which has seen a ton of accidents - a logging truck ended up catching hold of some power lines. It tore them down and blew out the transformer. The event even saw the mast ripped off the house of a constituent of mine. This constituent of mine is a senior on limited income and, for two days and nights, she went without power while she scrambled to come up with \$1,200 to get it repaired.

Finally, a family member assisted her, with the expectation that the money be reimbursed. My question for the minister is: Is there funding in place that could assist seniors with cases such as this?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: I thank the honourable member for the question. This is the first I've heard of that actual situation, but I am happy to work with the member to look at programs that are available. We do have a variety of programs through seniors and low income and work that can be done to their homes, so I'm more than happy to have a conversation with the honourable member about that particular incident.

LARRY HARRISON: I thank you for that answer. Normally a person would go through insurance, but the company that owned the truck did not step up to take responsibility. The driver did not stop, just kept right on going. The same constituent also had an accident a while ago that had to go through insurance, and her insurance went up. So to claim again, she just cannot afford it. Her insurance would go up so much.

My question is: Is there some kind of emergency funding anywhere in the housing - and we will talk about this - to help homeowners with these unexpected cases that occur?

CHUCK PORTER: To the honourable member, there are the low-income homeowner grants that are available that we've had for some time now, and there are other emergency repair grants that exist as well. I know from my own experience in my constituency that we've used them many times. We're happy to work with the honourable member in that situation - very unfortunate - but just contact me, and we'll check further about that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

MUN. AFFS. & HOUSING - RENT SUPPLEMENTS: TARGET NOS. - TABLE

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. While rent supplements can be effective to bridge gaps where there is a shortage of adequate social housing for particular clients, we also know that it is increasingly difficult to assign rent supplements due to the low vacancy rate and rising

rents across the province. I'll table an article about one person who refused a rent supplement because she could not find an affordable apartment even with the provincial funding. In one case last year, 30 people on the housing wait-list turned down a rent supplement offered.

Mr. Speaker, of the 500 rent supplements targeted to be assigned this year, will the minister table how many have actually been assigned to a Nova Scotian looking for housing?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: This is a very important issue for us right across the province. We have a number of rent supplements that do get assigned every year. I believe it was 500 or more last year; we're on target again for that this year. Those rent supplements are important to low-income Nova Scotians.

We have housing support workers, a great team of folks who assisted more than 1,200 folks last year in finding housing, as an example here in the HRM. We'll continue with that program. It is a good program and others, as we have all been through the first 3-Year Action Plan of the 10-year housing strategy, with hundreds of millions of dollars being invested right across the province for our affordable housing needs.

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

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Today we saw the Leader of the Official Opposition ejected for heckling - something I have seen in this Chamber many, many times, but I defer to your judgment on this matter.

I also refer to the Rules of the House. When looking at them, I was left with the question, is it necessary to create a new subsection under Clause 13 for conduct of members, since the Premier repeatedly mischaracterizes what members on the opposite side of the House say to suit his own narrative?

THE SPEAKER: I'll take it under advisement and come back to the House.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that the adjourned debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne be resumed.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today for the Address in Reply, also known as the maiden speech. I'm the last of the by-election class of 2019 to do so. I would like to congratulate the members for Northside-Westmount, Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg, and Argyle-Barrington on their maiden speeches as well.

I am here today serving at the pleasure of the voters of Sackville-Cobequid, who elected me in the by-election of June 18, 2019, to represent all the people of Sackville-Cobequid as their member of the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia. It is indeed an honour and a privilege, an awesome responsibility that I do not take lightly. I will uphold their trust placed in me to the very best of my ability.

On July 10, 2019, I was sworn in by the Chief Clerk. Since commencing this session of the House some four weeks ago, I have, like you and the other members, enjoyed the rights, privileges, and responsibilities afforded to a member of the Nova Scotia Legislature. For this, Mr. Speaker, I thank you and all members for welcoming me as a respected equal.

In my older age and after many years of drinking hot black coffee, sometimes my voice will fade. So as I'm here in this House, I have attempted to figure out the microphone system and whether I should speak loudly into the microphone, as my wife would always tell me, or just speak naturally and let the technology and the technicians take care of things.

Before I continue, I want to make mention of my immediate predecessor and long-time acquaintance, the Honourable Dave Wilson, who represented the constituents of Sackville-Cobequid very ably for some 15 years. (Applause) As just demonstrated, I believe all members of the Parties recognize Dave's contributions and what he brought to this Legislature and good government over the years.

Now I have a confession to make, a confession as a rookie, and this is absolutely new to me. On one occasion, I exited the Chamber and did not bow to the Speaker and the member who was speaking. I will tell you that in six-plus years as a city councillor, I never once bowed to His Worship Mayor Savage. The Sergeant-at-Arms brought this to my attention, and I thanked him for that. I apologize now.

On another occasion during Question Period, I was checking my mobile device and was advised by the member for Cumberland South that it was not permitted. Today the

member for Argyle-Barrington reminded me of the same thing. I assure you, Mr. Speaker, in the last 30 minutes, it has not happened. As a rookie, I am likely to make a few more faux pas. I ask for your continued patience and guidance as I become more and more familiar with the House Rules.

Mr. Speaker, I respect each and every member of this House of Assembly. Although I was elected to serve the people of Sackville-Cobequid, and you in turn represent the people in your constituencies, we're all elected as a body to serve all Nova Scotians. You have my commitment to work constructively with each and every one of you on behalf of all Nova Scotians.

In the next few minutes - I think I have 90 - I will thank some people and let you know a little bit about Steve Craig; provide some Sackville history; and mention briefly a few, not all, issues that are on my mind and other people's minds.

I first would like to thank my Leader - the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia, the Leader of the Official Opposition, the honourable member for Pictou East - and the Progressive Conservative caucus and Party. I thank you all.

I want to thank the people of Sackville-Cobequid for giving me the opportunity to serve them as their MLA. This is an honour and a privilege that I take very seriously. I will endeavour to serve to the utmost of my ability with respect and dedication to the role and responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, if I could make a few introductions, I'd ask the full front two rows to stand and I'm going to start at the left. Mr. Mike MacDonald who has been a campaign worker here, and some of you may know him as his father was the editor-publisher of a Cape Breton newspaper for many years and a long-time Liberal. It's been said that when we were working together that his father didn't roll over in his grave, he was actually attempting to claw out and get at it.

Next to him is Mrs. Karen Smith, my constituency assistant, whom I am blessed to have in my life, and she is the other woman in my life besides my wife who tells me what to do consistently and when.

Madison Richardson, a Grade 12 student who has campaigned door to door and performed a lot of great work in the constituency - Grade 11? Grade 10? Okay, the member in front of me misled me; I forgive him for that - Grade 10. Tyler Baker, classmate, and these two have been members of Sea Cadets and work greatly in the community.

Then we have Alexis Richardson who has been a family friend. So, Madison and Alexis, and next to them their mother - Karna - are like family to my wife and me, almost like a daughter and granddaughters. Karna Richardson has been with me, campaigning many, many times. In fact, I would suggest that I could take my seat now and Karna could

finish this for me; she used to mock me saying, you did this, and you could see her behind me, mocking and hurrying me up too.

Pam Osborne, a long-time friend and acquaintance - beautiful. I'm going to skip one. George and Betty Lafontaine, long-time friends. George is retired military - thank you for your service, George - and Betty is from Saulnierville. Some of you may be able to speak with Betty and have a conversation in her official first language, French - Acadian French. Going back to George, if you ever want something done right in signs, ask George. He's a retired chief in the navy and can build anything; he could do this woodwork here.

In the front row we have Brenda Hoddinott and John Percy. Brenda and John are great partners. Brenda is an accomplished artist; John, whom some of you might recognize as the former Leader of the Green Party of Nova Scotia, is also a member of the Green Party. We have developed a friendship over the many years. As John would say, he's not the guy supporting the Progressive Conservatives; he's supporting the person, and I appreciate that. (Applause)

John's best line that I recall is, when he stepped down as Leader, he had some cataract surgery, and he said the last thing we need in this province is another leader without vision.

The love of my life, my wife Shari Craig - Shari and I have been married 44 years, and I'll have more to say about that later.

Thank you to all of you for being here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that. Family and friends are extremely important to us; I will speak about my mom and dad in a little bit.

[3:00 p.m.]

A little bit on the history of Sackville. Sackville was settled around 1749 and in the 1950s had less than 1,000 people. My wife was one of them; she was born and raised in Lower Sackville. We now live in her grandparents' place that they built in the 1950s, and we've resided in that home since 1992. Around 1969, the population was about 7,000 people; in the 1980s, the population was around 35,000.

The former Progressive Conservative Robert Stanfield recognized the need way back then for affordable housing. You may or may not know it, but in Halifax-Dartmouth the vacancy rate was probably 0.4 per cent, and the government of the day decided that we required more affordable housing. They had an assembly that they called the Sackville Lakes Land Assembly. It was a planned community for about 30,000 or so people and even had church campuses. It was put on by the Nova Scotia Housing Commission.

Mom and Dad built in that, but I digress a little bit further. Successive PC and Liberal Governments, through the Nova Scotia Housing Commission, expanded the serviced land availability, and that led to very rapid growth. Sackville was one of the fastest-growing communities in all of Canada back in the late 1960s, early 1970s. Co-operatives were formed.

In particular military families, and those who were looking, George and Betty, and my parents, and others took advantage as military people to put together four, five, or six families and form co-operatives, legal entities where they would go and build. The province developed the land, they serviced the land, but the incentive was to put in their own sweat equity. So, Sackville grew immensely back in the late 1960s, early 1970s.

When we moved out there, Sackville High School was not built. C.P. Allen was in Bedford, so you had people from Hammonds Plains, Sackville, Fall River, and Waverley all going to this one high school. As part of this assembly, they built Sackville High School. The first high school opened up in 1972.

I moved out there in 1971, and along with my wife, we were the last classes of C.P. Allen. I remember walking down Glendale Avenue, which was not paved at the time, because we were protesting about the lockers in Sackville High School. As students, we wanted lockers, we wanted them available, so Sackville High School came about.

Some of you may recognize the name George Doucet. George Doucet, a former Speaker of this House, was principal of Sackville High School. It opened in 1972, and if you ever wondered when it opened, think about the Canada-Russia series. That was in the Fall of 1972.

George Doucet became the member for Halifax-Cobequid. At that time, it was the largest constituency, not in geography but in population. So, 45 years or so ago, George talked about citizens looking forward to the construction of - you may recognize this - the Bedford bypass, so some 40 or 50 years ago. Because of the growth, we are now looking forward to the construction of the Burnside-Sackville expressway.

Sackville was the fourth largest urban community with about 25,000, 30,000, 40,000 people in Nova Scotia. The talk of Sackville civic status was on everybody's tongue. Much later, under the Savage Government, we had the amalgamation of Halifax County, the Town of Bedford, the City of Halifax, and the City of Dartmouth. At the same time, there was much talk about emergency medical care being needed, as well as public transit.

We're also known - you may recognize this - for the Sackville Drive-in Theatre. Does anybody remember that? Sackville Downs, harness racing focal point of the province, that was there. But these have been replaced. They've been replaced by the Atlantic Superstore and the Downsview Mall complexes. Sackville has grown tremendously and

the population, the affordable housing experiment has grown a tremendous community here in the HRM and in Nova Scotia.

Malcolm MacKay was the next MLA. Malcolm MacKay was a Progressive Conservative MLA. He served from 1978 to 1984, and at that time the constituency was known as Sackville. Malcolm emphasized that we were the largest community. During that time the Nova Scotia Liquor Commission on Memory Lane was repurposed to the Cobequid Multi-Service Centre. That work came about from the work of the PC MLAs Malcolm MacKay, as well as PC member at that time, Ken Streach, Steve Streach's father.

Shirley Freer and Carol Crosby were two nurses who advocated for the Cobequid Multi-Service Centre. What was unique about that was it was the first freestanding emergency centre in Canada. It was very innovative at the time. It brought together imaging, lab; it brought in IWK services and some community services. All of these were very innovative back then.

Kevin McNamara was the executive director at that time. I was also at that time on the health board - every facility had its own health board. I was on that health board. Just a tremendous amount of work is being done. I'll have more to say about that in a minute.

Well, guess who came after Malcolm? It was John Holm, the New Democratic Party MLA, whom I knew and respected immensely. I've known him for many years, he lived just down the street from where my wife was born and brought up. He was a formidable person. He and Alexa McDonough were just terrific way back when and I know them, I had some work to do with them. John spoke of the tremendous strength of the community organizations that were growing.

In Sackville you had, with this rapidly growing area, people who were actually engaged in not only building their buildings, their homes, but the community. The Lions came about. Sackville Patriot Days came about. The Kinsmen, Rotarians, the Lake District Recreation Association, and many organizations all came about.

Mr. Speaker, permission to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

STEVE CRAIG: Lucille Reid, please stand up. Lucille has been my official agent in all my elections. I have to note, as with Karna, with both of these two working on my elections, I have always won. So needless to say, I have them lined up for the next one. Thanks for being here, Lucille.

These groups, coming from the military, it was very competitive but yet collaborative, a lot of fun. We had what was called the Sackville Winter Carnival. The

Sackville Winter Carnival was a week-long-plus of events - jam can curling in the arena or out on the lake, gathering of the different groups with your toques and your memorabilia to identify where you were from in the community. Great. It was modelled after *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. You had seven areas.

I was and at times am still, Bashful. I'm sure that's obvious to most of you here. Alas, Disney some time ago in the following years became aware of this and enforced its legal name rights, and over time the Winter Carnival eventually ceased. However, with the introduction in 2015 of the Nova Scotia Heritage Day on the third Monday in February, under the Sackville Business Association the Sackville Snow Days Festival was introduced. This year it is going to take place from February 14-17, 2020 - again, an effort to rejuvenate the community spirit in the community of Sackville.

The largest concern of the day was the population outgrowing school capacity. When I talked about first moving to Sackville, I went to Sidney Stephen High School, and then Sackville High School came about. As things grew, you had double classes at Sackville High School. The population was outstripping the capacity of the schools.

Then came Millwood High School, Lockview High School, the new C.P. Allen. I am fortunate to say that we have experienced a problem that many areas of Nova Scotia have not experienced, and that's positive growth. That is unfortunate. I would like to see all parts of Nova Scotia prosper and grow, not just some. We need to work on that as a Legislature, as a government.

Transportation was also a concern. Today the Beaver Bank Road still collects many people, and it's only two lanes. It goes down to what John mentioned previously, the Beaver Bank Connector and the Old Sackville Road. The Beaver Bank Connector and the Old Sackville Road have been a problem area for years. I was pleased to work with, and I am pleased to acknowledge the Minister of TIR for his work in this area with me as municipal councillor and my colleague, the member for Sackville-Beaver Bank, in making a significant improvement with traffic lights this year. They have made a difference, they really have, and I want to thank and acknowledge that, Minister.

The correctional center that is now located in Burnside was located in Sackville. You may ask why? (Interruption) We weren't all that bad. But the correctional centre has moved to Burnside, and under that period it was during the Metropolitan Authority. The correctional centre is now under the province and it's located in Burnside.

However, what it did is it freed up some land for the new Cobequid Multi-Service Centre, now called the Cobequid Community Health Centre. This is a wonderful facility.

A little bit more history. The Cobequid Community Health Centre, now - John Holm talked about it. Dave Wilson talked about it. I was on the board and chaired that board for some time. When we talk about closures of emergency rooms, of ERs - Sackville

does not have a 24-hour emergency, and it's for good reason. In my opinion, it is the best operating emergency room in the province, so much so that we take and service people from all around. With no hospital beds, you have to be very careful in how you treat the people and move them off to the QEII, the Halifax Infirmary, or the Dartmouth General. So that's causing a backlog.

When we looked at having this set up, one of the things we looked at was having a walk-in clinic. We looked at the walk-in clinics. A lot of the local physicians at that time worked in emergency rooms, and they recognized that a lot of people were coming into the emergency room who did not have to be there. They required a doctor, a physician, or they required a medication or somebody to take a quick look at them.

Dr. Jim Fitzgerald and others formed the walk-in clinic just down the road. You may recognize that because this past number of months it did close due to a lack of doctors. Now it has reopened. Thankfully, it has reopened. If you want your flu shot, they're advertising out there. You can get your flu shot.

But the idea of the emergency room is to have emergency service, not your general practitioner service. We implemented triage and gave the people coming through the door the option. You can wait. You're not high on the priority list, because you're not having a heart attack; you've got some other ailment, something that can be looked at by a general physician, your doctor.

Dr. Fitzgerald and others opened up this walk-in medical clinic. Its purpose was to keep people away from the emergency, where they ought not be, but give them an option to be serviced. That worked. That worked well for a number of years. Now we are seeing it reverse. We are seeing a reversal that need not, in my opinion, happen.

Now where you're getting people going to the ER who ought not be there, we need to be able to attract and retain new doctors. I will tell you that my physician is - if he's not the oldest, he's the second oldest in the province. I have not abandoned him. I continue to go to Dr. Tom Chui, who's been a family friend and my physician for close to 50 years now. He is going to retire soon. I haven't even put my name on the waiting list. I do know that once he goes, a lot of people in Sackville will be looking for another physician. Dr. Chui is holding on as best he can.

The Cobequid Community Health Centre is a wonderful facility. Not only do you have emergency, you have IWK mental health clinic there, and you have rehab, physio, for those who have undergone knee surgeries, and those types of things. It is a wonderful facility right in our own community. We are so blessed. I am so blessed to have so many resources in the community.

One of the things that another director and I did was advocate for, with Cancer Care Program and others, a cancer clinic located at the Cobequid Community Health Centre.

That was implemented probably about five years ago. So now rather than coming downtown to the Dickson, you can go to a much warmer, friendly place, usually to get real good news. That has been implemented, and I'm sure the minister would recognize that as well.

[3:15 p.m.]

So, Dave Wilson came onboard in about 2003, the year before I retired. Now, he is very interested in the community - he was a paramedic, well respected - had a number of medical people, paramedics and others help him in his campaigns and he was truly appreciative of that. He grew up there. He spoke of education. He spoke of community, environment and health care. Dave often spoke of the need, again, for more doctors and 24-hour emergency care at the Cobequid Community Health Centre.

So, we need to evolve. We do, indeed, have a crisis here in Nova Scotia in having doctors and we need to address that, and we are. We are talking about it and will continue to do so.

One of the neat things that Dave did was, we had Sackville Lakes Provincial Park proclaimed. So, think about this community that is building, building, building. You get people in there, and over the decades they said you know what? It's building really quick and I think we have enough - we think we have enough - we don't need any more houses.

The Sackville Lakes Provincial Park was destined to be housing; it was destined to have tens of thousands more residents there. In fact, when Karna and I and others were campaigning we'd often come by this little break in the street and you'd look at it and say, what is that? Is that a vacant lot? No, it was a street; it was destined to be a street. We do have a lot of that in Sackville.

I am very thankful to all the governments, the previous governments that eventually did away with that and said do you know what? We do need more for the environment, we need parks, we need recreation. That's something I certainly applaud, all the groups who were involved in that. I was certainly one of the people first and foremost in that organization as well.

So, what about me? Well, I'm one who believes that all are equal and deserving of respect and that people who have more ought to help those who have less. It was my parents who demonstrated that to me and really instilled it in me.

Mom, "Jo" Josephine Craig, she was a nurturer; she worked to help the less fortunate. She brought us up, and after we were old enough Mom went back to school and became a social worker. She worked in group homes and small options homes in Halifax. She also started, under the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, the food bank in Sackville, it's called Beacon House. That Beacon House has grown tremendously.

One of the people - a couple of the people who worked there as students - one was a fellow by the name of Geoff Regan. Geoff, whom you would know, is the - I guess until it gets sworn in and it's redone - Speaker of the House of Commons. Geoff and I have known each other for decades. My mother would be very proud of what Geoff has accomplished. I know he worked hard to help those less fortunate, and I cherish that. Mom did that, and it became at one point the Beacon House Interfaith Society.

I asked Mom at one time, why the change in name and the expansion of the governance? Her answer was spot on. She said, "Steven," - I usually heard that when I was in trouble, so I knew I had stepped the line somehow - "more than Catholics go hungry." More than Catholics go hungry. To feed the poor is an admirable thing. To help those who have less than you is a mission that I take on. It's one that my mother had, and it's one I will continue to do. She instilled in me a belief in God, following the example of Jesus Christ in helping others and being counselled by the Holy Spirit. So, if you want to know a little bit about me, just ask.

Dad, too, was spiritual. He was a Navy chief and he was the provider. He instilled in me discipline and love of country. He was a veteran of World War II and the Korean conflict, and he believed in not only the sovereignty of Canada but the rights and freedoms of others whom he fought for - not only Canada but to help others in other countries. He knew no bounds.

They both lost their fathers at an early age and so they supported and were supported by single moms. They were brought up around Halifax, around Cogswell Street. My great-great-grandfather used to lead the St. Paddy's Day parade. My grandmothers lived in Mulgrave Park. My maternal grandmother lived on Brunswick Street when Uniacke Square was built. These are the areas that I come from.

We lived on North Street and Young Street in the formative years. Because Dad was in the Navy, we moved around. Until we moved to Sackville, I don't really know if we moved around because they couldn't afford the rent or not. They never talked about it, but we moved around a lot. We finally got into Shannon Park/Wallace Heights and those were my formative years.

I went to Shannon Park Elementary School. I went to John Martin Junior High School in the North End, spent between-classes walking around and around and around - if you know the school, it's a round school, you can walk around - teachers chasing me until they lapped me, I don't know what happened there. Then I went to Dartmouth High School. My formative years were in the north end of Dartmouth, and I saw some things that we all talk about and maybe even participated in, but these life experiences help to form who you see before you today. We went to Sackville in 1971.

I had a 30-year career with the phone company. I started in engineering, went from engineering to sales, sales to marketing, marketing to finance, finance to sales, and at the

end of it, I was responsible for what's now Bell Aliant's business sales processes - called the business process owner. So, you'd move from engineering into sales, they'd call you an engineer. You'd move from sales into finance, they'd call you a salesman. You'd move from one to another and whatever discipline that you were in, that's what you were known as.

When I retired, there was a fellow responsible for costing - a director - and we were talking, and I was in the business sales support organization at the time. After they spoke about me a bit, he came up afterwards and said, "Damn. I never knew why somebody from sales knew so damn much," and it was because I'd done a lot. Of course, doing a lot means that you age a lot, so after 30 years I retired in 2004.

Through that, it all came back to people - managing people, working with people. Racism and sexism were alive and well, as it was in most organizations and still is. I had people who protected me because I stood up and I went so far in my career because I stood up.

As a kid, I took on the bullies. Mom would say she was the only one who would see me cry. Sometimes I came out on top, sometimes I didn't. The one thing that I did learn from my parents was to stick up for those who could not stick up for themselves, to right an injustice.

I've seen a number of things over the years and in my community work in organizations, whether it be the Canadian Cancer Society, the Rotarians, the Lake District Recreation Association, other organizations that served others and made the quality of life - it was so important. One thing's for sure, this I can tell you, I will not see somebody bullied. Depending on the situation, I will step in immediately or privately. It's not in my character to walk away or to ignore something that I feel is unjust and just not right. I do recognize respect, and I give respect, and I always will.

By the way, in case you don't know, I was elected in 2012. I was a city councillor and deputy mayor. I chaired the Police Commission and learned a little bit more there. My wife will tell you that it's usually not the task at hand that keeps me awake at night, it's the people I have to work with. It's forming those constructive relationships, keeping those constructive relationships.

Over the years, you pick up on a few things. The very first thing I learned coming from the family that I did is that not everyone likes you. Also, delegate but do not abdicate. Try to make life easier rather than tougher for people. This is a good one: understand that change and difficult choices are embraced by some and feared by others. You heard me say this earlier this week or last week - I forget, the days in this Legislature just seem to blend together. Does it need to be said? Does it need to be said now? Does it need to be said by me? I will always ask myself those questions.

I was on a sales course one time, and there was a Marines captain who was giving the course. It was all about strategy and tactics - military strategy and tactics. I was just absolutely annoyed with this guy, and I couldn't figure out why. It was about a 10-day live-in course, and he was just so good. He was excellent. I finally figured it out. The definition of annoyance is a good example. He was so good and I was so not-as-good, and that annoyed the hell out of me. So I strived to be better, knowing full well that it's an ever-learning thing, and you continue to do it.

If you are not healthy - physically, mentally, spiritually - then it is difficult to help others. In other words, you cannot help others if you cannot help yourself. That goes for each and every one of us and everybody that we look to.

There's another one. This will be the last one of the Craig-isms or whatever you want to call it. I believe in R&D - rob and duplicate - so some of these I may not give appropriate source to. The Golden Rule versus the Platinum Rule: the Golden Rule, paraphrasing, we would know as treat others the way that you would like to be treated; the Platinum Rule, to me, is treat others the way they would like to be treated - two sides of the same coin.

In business, community, and political life, there are things that you and you alone take a moment to reflect on and you feel good about. One of the most significant things to me that I have done in my political career - it may be controversial or maybe not, but it's what I feel - was my time as chair of the HRM Board of Police Commissioners. A number of years ago, I was asked to consider being a member of the commission, and some felt that it was not performing the role of civilian oversight the way it should. I talked with Mayor Savage about it at the time. I was already taking on quite a workload. However, he said to take a look and see what I thought. I agreed.

Regional council appointed me, and I found, in my opinion, that significant changes were required, both in exercising the authorities of the board and the composition of the commissioners. At the time I was elected chair, the changes started by working within the authorities and changing the look of the board of Police Commissioners.

Playing an active and deliberate role, I looked at the roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, and the make up of our citizens and I sought to make the board more reflective of our community. When I left, the seven-member board was the most diverse board in Canada, made up of three African Nova Scotians, one Indigenous member - the first for the Board of Police Commissioners - and three Caucasian Nova Scotians, five were male and two were female. Now we have four men, three women, and the chair is an African Nova Scotian woman. I am very proud of that. (Applause)

I am proud because it shows that we are, indeed, a diverse community. If you are going to serve your community, you need to reflect your community - different perspectives, different engagement is required. I want to thank the Minister of Justice for

the work that he did in helping me have the Province appoint an Indigenous member, and that was a good thing to do.

[3:30 p.m.]

There are injustices that are systemic. Systemic racism is real. We need to do better. We cannot just flip a switch and believe that things will get better. These are centuries- old issues we have, and will take many generations to move us to where we ought to be. However, I do believe that there are some things that we as government can do to set the stage to improve.

One of the advantages - I'll let you know this, too - we had a diverse Police Commission. We had a diverse selection committee and we chose the chief of police. The search committee was equally distributed male and female, we had African Nova Scotians and Indigenous people on that committee - and we chose and recommended that police chief. By having a diverse and inclusive framework within the municipality, we were able to attract potential candidates from African descent, Middle Eastern descent, male and female. As a group, we chose who we thought was the most competent person to lead us in today's time, and I think Chief Dan Kinsella is proving to be quite that person.

I just want to move on to a few issues and concerns. Housing and homelessness - we have talked about that - poverty we have to tackle to help the 1,000 or so who are under the protection of Community Services, to help those of low income, and to help with affordable housing. Health care has been talked about in this House since September 26th and on the streets and doorsteps of many residents long before that. We need doctors,.

We need to address youth mental health. The challenges that our youth have today - how do we address those, what significant steps can we take? We are legislators. We need to be able to make sure that we have people both in the government as well as organizations to step up to the many challenges that are out there for the youth of today.

We were all youths once; we will never be youths again. We are the product of our generation. The generation of youths that is here now needs our help. They need to be able to have an education, they need to be supported through bullying, they need to be given medical treatment when required, they need to be in affordable and adequate housing, and they need to be able to eat nutritious food. When we talk about poverty of youth - if youth are in poverty, that means the parents or guardians are in poverty. We need to address it now and over these next number of years.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my campaign team who worked really hard to get me elected. This was especially challenging for them because they know the way I take on a role and responsibility. As many of you know, and it has been talked about, I continue to work as an HRM councillor and chair of the police commission. When I get

into something, I see it fully through to the best of my ability. Who knew that a year ago the opportunity to run as an MLA would present itself?

I had to reflect really hard on whether I wanted to do that again. I was not reoffering in 2020 as a councillor. I thought about it, looked at it and you may have seen throughout my reply that I love people. I want to make things easier rather than tougher and, by some accounts, I have the right stuff to help do that. So here I am, although the next time there's an election - whether that be in six months, 12 months, 24 months, 30 months before the next general election - I will be pounding the pavement, as I've already started to do, with this team here. We will certainly show the ability to step up and help others.

You've all talked at one point about your constituency assistants. They are the ones who will really serve the community and they are truly under-recognized. I do want to recognize again Karen Smith for that.

I thank all my family and friends for their support, the voters who elected me to represent all of the people of Sackville-Cobequid and, through that, representation of all Nova Scotians. I want to thank my wife Shari Craig. Shari supported me through all my career, volunteer and political life. We are a great team - we love to travel, we like to entertain, we like to be entertained. My love, my life without you I just cannot imagine. I love you and I always will.

Mr. Speaker, I, like all members of this Legislature, will do my best in presenting to the government the concerns from my constituency and in my role and responsibility as Community Services, Housing, and Labour Relations Critic. Obviously being in Opposition poses some potential challenges, but my experience so far has been - in a most practical sense - a fair and mostly reasonable collaboration with all members who serve all of Nova Scotia.

It is up to all of us to do our best to serve all Nova Scotians to the best of our individual and collective ability. Whenever that election is, I hope each and every one of us will reflect back on our performance and conclude that we did our very best. And then the electorate will let us know indeed what they think. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

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

RAFAH DICONSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleagues to turn their heads to the East Gallery. We have with us an amazing co-operative education student from Halifax West. She is doing her co-op. She comes to the Liberal caucus every Tuesday to follow the legislative process, and she comes to the House as well: Mubinahon Umaroua - I hope I pronounced it correctly.

Mubina was nine years old when she came from Uzbekistan. She has interest in going into the legal field and was hoping to learn more about legislation. We welcome her in the House - I had a lovely chat with her. She's quite intelligent and dedicated - she has dreams. I'm hoping we have shown her what the Nova Scotia Legislature is like. Please welcome to the House. (Applause)

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

HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to draw the House's attention to the East Gallery where Ms. Meghan McMorris of the Ecology Action Center is with us today. Meghan is the Community Energy Coordinator, and I thought spoke very eloquently and powerfully yesterday at Law Amendments. Welcome to the House. Please join me in a round of applause. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader

KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our caucus and I hope all members of the House, I just wanted to thank the member for Sackville-Cobequid for his maiden speech this afternoon. I think it has become clear to all members of this House the dedication to community service that the member has shown through his career, through his volunteer efforts and his political career that now continues on in this House.

He's demonstrated that he is grounded with deep roots in family and friends. I think all of us know that you need those deep roots and family and friends behind you as you take on the role in the House. Again, I'm sure that all members of the House can observe, as I did today, that we have a new, excellent member of the Legislative Assembly. Congratulations. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

THE SPEAKER: The House will now recess for a few minutes while it resolves itself into the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

[3:42 p.m. The House recessed.]

[3:58 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Suzanne Lohnes-Croft in the Chair.]

[7:00 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. The Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

THE SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole House has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 183 - Digby Town and Municipal Housing Corporation in the Town of Digby.

Bill No. 195 - Union of Certain Churches Therein Named.

Bill No. 204 - Workers' Compensation Act.

Bill No. 213 - Sustainable Development Goals Act.

without amendments, and the Chair has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House.

Further, Mr. Speaker, that the committee has met and considered the following bill:

Bill No. 180 - Fatality Investigations Act.

with certain amendments, and the Chair has been instructed to recommend this bill to the favourable consideration of the House.

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

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 call Bill No. 152.

Bill No. 152 - Plastic Bags Reduction Act.

THE SPEAKER: We will go back to the honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party with 58 minutes left before we were so rudely interrupted last night.

The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party.

GARY BURRILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Really to speak precisely, the very last thing that happened before we lost the power last night is that the Minister of Health and

Wellness applauded something that I said. So, we're going to ask the member for Antigonish to maintain his cool and restrain his enthusiasm this evening while I try to get through a few words about the Plastic Bags Reduction Act.

I want to back up a half an inch to where I began to say that we do think that this a welcome piece of legislation, and we begin with that thought, with the whole complex of things about this subject that are so clearly, as background, known.

We know that marine plastic pollution has increased tenfold since 1980. We know that 80 per cent of all marine debris is composed of plastics. We know from the UN report on this subject earlier this year that marine plastic pollution is directly affecting today 267 species - that includes 44 per cent of sea birds, 43 per cent of marine animals. We know that in a province that is as defined by the ocean as Nova Scotia is, where the health of the ocean is such a determinative thing about our prospects both present and future, we know then that a ban on single-use plastic bags is something that amounts to common sense.

I said last night, and I want to say it again, this is one of those things towards which we can just turn and say, it's time. We have seen this decision made in a range of other jurisdictions - Victoria, out West, our own neighbours on P.E.I. - and it's time for us to make this same decision here in Nova Scotia.

In making it, it is perhaps a fitting moment to acknowledge the many organizations in our province that, over quite a number of years, have been working to bring about this decision. Speak about an organization like Plastic Free Lunenburg, for example, or Plastic Free St. Margarets Bay, and Clean Foundation Nova Scotia who have been working with businesses and consumers to cut down on the use of single-use plastics and have made great progress on reducing the amount of plastic that ends up in our province's ocean and also in our landfills.

Certainly, it's important to mention the effect of advocacy and education programs in this respect, the Ecology Action Centre and how instrumental that has been in beginning to curb the use and therefore the disposal of those 300 million to 500 million plastic grocery bags that are part of the picture here for us, every year, in Nova Scotia.

Certainly, a great deal of credit should be reflected also on the municipalities of our province. The Halifax Regional Municipality has worked extensively on this issue, researching and working collaboratively with other municipalities in the province to find solutions to this problem. They have been right to point out that plastic waste management represents a significant cost to municipalities and that provincial leadership on this subject is something that's called for.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities in setting out this issue as one of their core priority areas for the organization

and for the advocacy work that they've done for a provincial Extended Producer Responsibility program.

I'm also happy to point out that this particular piece of legislation is in line with the piece of legislation which had been brought forward previously by our own Party. It's called the Plastic Bag Reduction Act, which we brought forward here and introduced earlier this year.

It is true that the bill we brought forward goes farther than the current legislation in a couple of areas. One of those areas is that it provides for an education campaign around plastic bags, and it also provides for the ability to phase the ban in differentially for retailers of different sizes. It provides, too, for the promotion of locally produced alternatives to plastic bags. In saying that, it's not to take away in any way from the importance of the legislation that's before us. We also think it's worth noting in a positive and commending way that this present legislation provides exemptions for charities and food banks.

At the same time, though, in closing these few remarks, I want to say that it's important for all of us when we think about the single-use plastic bag ban and this piece of legislation, it's important not to get carried away and overstate the case. We know that plastic bags are only a portion of the comprehensive threats that are being experienced at present by our oceans, whether we're talking about overfishing or acidification or all of those warming-related dangers that are posed by melting sea ice and climate change.

It's also true that we want to acknowledge that the promise of a single-use plastic bag ban depends ultimately on there being established an Extended Producer Responsibility program and on the development of thorough and comprehensive regulations, particularly on the regulation of other types of single-use plastics.

I would also remind the government that we will need robust public education on the matter so that people are supported through this change with the information they need to make adjustments in their practices and in their lives away from single-use plastic products.

The regulations should, as quickly as is possible, continue to move in the direction of the phasing out of other single-use plastics. Regulations will also need to include a schedule for minimum fees for plastic bag alternatives to ensure that we don't end up making, in the aftermath of this bill, a wholesale switch to paper or to heavier types of plastic, neither of which would have a more beneficial impact. This is a problem that actually emerged in the U.K. after plastic bags were banned there; retailers switched to free, reusable bags, which were also made out of plastic and about a billion of them ended up in landfills. So, we can learn from the practices of other jurisdictions.

At the time this bill was at the Law Amendments committee, we learned too that municipalities such as Lunenburg are looking to the province to confirm that this legislation

isn't in any way going to tie their hands or preclude them from taking more ambitious action of their own to limit the use of single-use plastics. This is an important point that, in our view, the government ought to clarify for them. Further, it's true a great deal will depend on the details of what happens with the federal government in its own plastics legislation.

Nevertheless, all of that considered, it is a pretty commonly heard part of common sense in Nova Scotia to say, you've got to start somewhere and we in the NDP acknowledge this legislation as a sound and supportable place to start. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I won't speak at length tonight, but I want to tell you about a trip I made to South Carolina a few months back. I was noticing all the paper bags because many times we would go to the grocery store to get some food to prepare meals.

I know that in South Carolina - my colleague just spoke about learning from other jurisdictions - many of the counties along the coast have banned plastic bags because they are impacting wildlife on the coasts, whether it's sea turtles or what have you.

I guess what struck me is getting rid of plastic bags is one thing, but if they are only going to be replaced by paper bags, then of course, consumer resources create pollution. Is a difference being made? When we sit here, I think we have to be thinking about passing bills that are effective for the environment. So, that's something I'm thinking about.

I think that we should be moving towards reusable bags. I don't think it is so difficult; it is a cultural change. I know in my own case I remember shopping in Halifax here, and one of the stores had gotten away from plastic bags. I remember finding it to be quite irritating when I would shop, but that was at one point in time; I've since realized it's not such a big deal.

I know there are other countries in the world - my wife was born in Prague and they have their experience there. They use little bags called taška that are basically made out of mesh, and you can compact them into a very small piece of material that would go into a purse or other type of handbag, perhaps a briefcase or something for some of us here.

You know, there it is no big deal, it's part of the culture. I think that tells me what this bill needs to be about, which is changing the culture here or helping to lead the culture here towards a change where people use reusable bags.

If we can't all get by something or come to an agreement on that or, as a society, be able to move in such a small way towards reusable bags, it leaves me questioning how

we are going to get all the other things done that we need to do, that we can do, to help with the environment.

Before I take my place I want to speak a bit about consumption, and I believe it's not just our consumption, but our unnecessary consumption we must think about. Do we really need to be buying all the things we are buying? I know that statement may not be good for the economy, but it may be less harmful at first thought when we consider that we can buy local, we can buy quality, we can buy only what is needed, and we can take care of it.

We must change our culture of disposable consumption. It is wasteful and unnecessary. It may be making money for somebody, but it's probably far away from where we live here in Canada. A lot of these things that we are buying, I think we have to remember in some cases, are adding very little to our lives. It becomes a waste of our time to be buying these things because I'm sure we can all think of things that we've purchased that we are not using, that we have forgotten about, that we let go to waste - and sometimes we have actually even purchased it again because we forgot we had it. I would say those things are adding very little value to our lives. I know a lot of people associate their happiness with things they buy, and I think many of those things aren't really responsible for our true happiness.

Look at the marketing that is out there. I remember one day somebody said to me, Allan, all marketing is designed to make you feel bad about yourself for something you don't have; and ever since then I thought, you know what, he was right on because that is what it's all about. We need to free ourselves from this culture of disposable consumption, and I think that we could start by considering the bags we are carrying that consumption in.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I believe there are a few of us who might want to say a few words on this bill. I don't want to say a whole lot, except to say that I was very interested when I was in Law Amendments committee. I know there were a number of presenters on this bill, banning plastic bags. There was a theme that ran through the presentations which, I think, is notable for us here in this Legislature to think about.

[7:15 p.m.]

Three different groups recommended that there be a fee on paper bags or the replacement bag. That was the Ecology Action Centre, Plastic Free Lunenburg, and also the presenter who was representing the Canadian Plastics Industry Association. Three different groups recommended that whatever was used to replace plastic checkout bags, there be a fee attached to it.

All three groups were citing the same reasons: it's because of another issue, which is called human nature. Even in 2019, people throw garbage out on the road. There's one spot, when I drive to my cottage, there's regularly on the right side of the road, going up the hill, in a certain spot somebody occasionally throws their garbage out.

Human nature makes people react in a certain way, and that applies to this bag ban. Without sufficient fees, in the U.K. they found that people would just use a heavier plastic bag, which was meant to be reused. Over one billion of these heavier plastic bags were distributed every year and thrown out after one use. Unless people pay for something, they don't value it. If they receive a plastic bag, whether it's a thin checkout bag or a heavier bag, and they don't have any value attached to that replacement bag, they will throw it out.

It is likewise with paper bags. We were told in Law Amendments Committee was that in order to gain any environmental benefit, a paper bag had to be used at least four times before it was thrown out. In other words, a paper bag had four times the negative environmental impact than a thin plastic checkout bag. It's a little bit hard for me to fathom. But when I think about that, I think about the amount of fossil fuels that go into cutting a tree down, transporting it to a sawmill, wood mill, paper mill, and converting that into a paper bag, and the amount of fossil fuel involved in trucking that paper bag to the checkout store.

All of that is the life cycle of fossil fuel impacts on that paper bag. In order for it to have the same environmental impact that a single plastic bag has, you'd have to use that paper bag anywhere from 4 to 28 times, we were told. Likewise, the big heavy plastic bags that we get, you have to use that up to 50 times to achieve the environmental benefit that you would've had from the impact of one small plastic bag. What these three different groups were saying was that there should be a fee attached to the replacement bag simply because of human nature. People don't value things they don't pay for. If you pay for it, you'll tend to take care of it and reuse it.

I found it very interesting to know that there is this issue of what is the true cost of the alternatives and the true environmental impact. We are supporting this bill, but I don't feel that that has really been looked at. I think it would behoove the government to take a little bit of time to try to do some investigation on the true life-cycle cost of these plastics and how we can do a better job. I know that the guy from the plastics industry, Joe Hruska, who presented, said that he believed his industry would actually produce and sell more plastic in Nova Scotia because of this ban than it would have otherwise because the replacement bags will get used up. Without a cost associated with the replacement bag, he believed that would be the case.

Plastic Free Lunenburg said the same thing happened in the U.K. They believed there needed to be a ban, a disincentive built in, or an incentive to maintain or keep that plastic bag. In fact, the Ecology Action Centre said the same thing. Three very different groups telling us the same thing.

The question is, what is the right answer? Part of that answer may be - and I realize we're going to pass this bill tonight - to take a little bit of time to think about what the lifecycle impacts are. I think we could do a better job working with the plastics industry on that. They have some concerns, concerns very much mirrored by the Ecology Action Centre.

What is the right thing to do? In fact, to quote Joe Hruska of the Canadian Plastics Industry Association at Law Amendments committee, he said that in his opinion, the bill was virtue signalling. I was thinking about that term. In fact, I do believe that if there is virtue to be signalled, it's worthwhile signalling it. It's not always a bad thing. But if the bill is actually negative for the environment, then it's probably not a good thing to be signalling virtue when you're putting out a bill that actually has the opposite effect than is intended.

I know that in my many years of farming, I had a rule in my head and that was the rule of unintended consequences. Any change that we make in our lives, any change we make anywhere is always going to have unintended consequences. Actually, I came to realize that sometimes those unintended consequences were positive too. We tend to look at the negative a lot, and say, okay, because I did this, we did this change and this change - but sometimes there are positive unintended consequences, too, so it's not always bad.

We've been warned about an unintended consequence, because of human nature, about this bill, and I think it would behoove the government to take a little bit of time once this bill passes and try to look at what the true cost is here, what is really happening in our province with human nature as it is. We know that people still throw garbage out the window of the car. Unfortunately, it's still going on. I'd like to see it come to a stop, and hopefully it will someday.

Anyway, I wanted to make that point, that I think the government needs to consider its actions on this bill. It's the right thing to do in one sense; in another sense, I think we've been warned about unintended consequences, and I think we should take that warning seriously. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

LISA ROBERTS: I wasn't going to speak because I know that everyone in this Chamber is tired. But if there's a lineup, I'll get in it, I guess.

I just want to speak very briefly and say that I think there are many different ways of reducing the amount of plastic that we're using and that we're generating. One of the ways that may be outside the scope of this legislation but is certainly not outside the scope of this government, is to actually encourage more local food consumption.

I notice in my own life that when we are organized and we are eating the way that we want to eat, and supporting the local farmers who we have had relationships with for many years, we actually generate very little waste in acquiring our food. That's because you can go to a market and pretty much stuff isn't packaged at all.

For years my partner and I have been on the list - the long and lucky list - of consumers who get vegetables from Ted Hutten in the Valley. Like many other consumer-supported agriculture operations, it comes every week in a reusable tote. There are still some small plastic bags that have fresh greens in them, understandably, because they wilt; I would love if somebody could come up with a solution for wilting greens. That would be great.

We've been returning bins for eight years to Ted Hutten, and when we're organized and not so crazy-busy and we get down to the Seaport Market on Saturday mornings and get our favourite meat from Vance at Windy View Farm, it comes in butcher paper, and that goes in the compost afterwards.

That is an incredible privilege. It's an incredible privilege to have the option, to have the income, to be able to spend and buy that kind of quality local food, and I wish that across Nova Scotia. This is one of those goals that has disappeared from the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act. We were looking at how we could actually open up that possibility for many more people. Part of that is about adequate wages, and part of that is about less-precarious employment so that people actually have time to enjoy and think about how they're going to shop and have the time to prepare food from scratch.

I think there are many different ways to work on this problem, and banning plastic bags is certainly only one of them. I would say that so long as we're not really prioritizing and supporting Nova Scotians to support local farmers, and so long as they are shopping in the larger chains, you can get food there that has more plastic for the one item than you get at the checkout in a grocery bag at the end. Sometimes, my partner brings those ones home, the ones on a Styrofoam tray shrink-wrapped in plastic within an inch of its life.

Anyhow, I welcome this. I hope we do more. I hope that we recognize that doing more actually can't just rely on individuals. One of the great comments that was made at the Law Amendments committee yesterday was from one of the young climate activists. I asked her what sustainable prosperity would look like. She said that government would have done its job and all the choices that were available would be good ones. You would be getting to make choices between various good options. I think that is something that pertains to this bill as well.

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

BARBARA ADAMS: When I was in Grade 9, my geography professor told us that by the time I was in my forties, we were going to have the weather of Florida and we were

going to have palm trees. I was excited and looking forward to that. If you turn on CNN right now or Google “California wildfires,” you’ll see that what he predicted was not exactly what we were hoping for.

Why it’s relevant to me is that my son Christopher lives in Pasadena, California. Every time there’s a new fire that lights up on there, I immediately Google Map it to see exactly how close he is. Frankly, right at the moment, he’s home, and I thank God for that. Right now, he would be about 20 minutes away from where the devastation is going on. I know people don’t like the words “health crisis” or “environmental emergency,” but he’s living surrounded by that very situation.

When I was 10 years old, we were one of the first people to have composting in the backyard. My friends thought we were a little crazy. Then when we were 20, I remember getting seatbelts. I hated them because they wrinkled my dress. Of course, that seems silly now. Then when I was in my thirties, 650 of us got sick at Camp Hill Hospital from the environment inside a building. It was one of the worst disasters in occupational history.

I watched a movement going on to get our first environmental health centre and to get the province to go scent free. Now no one thinks about it. It’s everywhere. Kids aren’t to wear scented products. Teachers can send a kid out of the classroom for wearing that. Who would have thought that 35 to 50 years ago?

When we turned forty, then I suddenly wasn’t allowed to send my kids to school with peanut butter because one kid might get sick. We adapt to our changing environment, so this bill is a good step in the right direction.

It was about eight years ago, around when I turned fifty, when we started seeing commercials of animals on beaches being trapped in the six-pack plastic wrap that beer cans come in and animals getting cut open on the beach, and there’s just plastic flowing everywhere out of their guts. Things have changed, and times have changed.

One of the movements that happened last year was something called Break Free from Plastic. It was an initiative started by a young gentleman who went to school with my sons. It was called “proud to be straw-free.” If you have ever been in a restaurant in HRM where they don’t offer straws automatically, this young gentleman - through working with Greenpeace Halifax - gets to take the credit for that. There’re over 140 restaurants in this area that will not automatically offer you a straw. These are small steps in the right direction.

I’ve already spoken about how I feel about this bill personally, and you know how our Party feels about it on a caucus level, but I wanted to share with you a few of the thoughts of my constituents because they are the ones whose voice I really want you to hear.

[7:30 p.m.]

The first is: Barb, do you really think this will make that much of a difference in the scheme of things? There are a lot of people who are skeptical about this because they see this as a very small step in the right direction.

Others have said: I like that we can all make a little difference if we all move in the same direction. The worst thing that can happen is that we'll have less garbage on the streets and a greener planet as a result.

A lot of people had a very similar concept in terms of who was ultimately responsible for this. It says: I am not so naïve as to believe that persons in business will follow this, but at least it will get people talking about it. So, they are putting a lot of the emphasis on the businesses that are wrapping things in plastic.

Others have said: My fear is that politicians will use this, "well, done that," when it comes to addressing the problems of plastic pollution and that they'll just see this as a very small step; and we don't want the government to become complacent afterwards.

Others are not so sure that this is the right step: Taking away multi-use bags we get when we purchase an item but continuing to sell single-use plastics seems like an oxymoron or an ironic choice; if we're going to ban them, ban them outright.

Others have said: It's a very small step but it has to start at the manufacturing level. People can use reusable bags and bring them home full of everything encased in plastic, which seems to defeat the purpose. Some are afraid that if you bring in the plastic bag ban that it will increase the number of products that are actually wrapped in plastic. So we want to ensure that the manufacturers are consulted properly and that they are encouraged to reduce their production of plastic as well.

Of course, others have said: I'm hoping this is a start, with more to come. They want the government to do more and we encourage them to do that.

It has made people wonder: What is going to be an alternative. We're hoping that necessity is the mother of invention, and we've already seen that. Again, many people keep saying that it's the manufacturers who, unnecessarily, use too much plastic in their packaging in order to promote things.

As the honourable member for Inverness said, sometimes there are things that we don't really need but when you put it in the right plastic packaging it can make it very attractive, especially to children.

Others are worried: This is just such a small step that it is merely the appearance of doing something that the government can take credit for, and so we want the government to take a stronger step than what they've done now.

Mr. Speaker, I'll end this by saying that we all want to improve the environment; we all want to take steps. I'd love to be able to say that when the Friends of McNabs Island Society go out to do a cleanup, there's nothing to clean up; or when my community goes out to take their environment days to clean up, they might be able to use their energy for other things. But until such time, we'll encourage this government to continue to take strong steps in the future. With that I'll take my seat.

THE SPEAKER: I'll ask the member to table that correspondence with the sources clearly identified on each one of the quotes that you read.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I stand to speak to Bill No. 152: An Act to Reduce the Use of Plastic Bags and Other Single-use Plastics. I believe this is a step in the right direction for putting forth legislation to remove single-use plastic bags. I believe it will promote changing of habits and encourage consumers to start reusing and using recycle bags as well.

While I am happy that this legislation is coming forward, we are certainly not leaders - many jurisdictions are much further ahead of us. For example, Vermont passed legislation last year, which comes into effect in July 2020, that put forth a ban on plastic bags, Styrofoam food trays, and plastic straws.

These changes that we're putting forth will not come easy, I know first hand. Back in 2013, I opened an organic local food store in downtown Amherst called Manasseh Local Food. I made a decision before I opened the store not to bring in single-use plastic bags. I had brown paper bags available for my customers and cotton, reusable bags. Over a period of months, I received numerous complaints daily from customers who were unhappy that I did not provide a plastic bag, and some actually refused to shop at my store unless I started providing single-use plastic bags. It is going to take time for consumers to adjust to our legislation, but I believe it is a positive step forward.

A couple of positives, also, that I believe about this bill are that the private sector actually wants this bill. Large retail stores have been asking for this legislation for some time. Secondly, I also believe this was the right step in making it a provincial bill. There was some discussion before this session that the provincial government was going to leave it up to individual municipalities to put forth their own legislation. I do believe the provincial bill is the right decision to make.

I think future consultations with our private sector will be important, including the Canadian Plastics Industry Association - I was happy to see that they came to Law Amendments Committee and shared their view. I do have a very large plastics industry leader in Amherst. They're actually the largest employer in Cumberland North outside of our health care industry. They employ over 400 people. I've had several meetings with the CEO of that company and they're doing amazing work. The plastics that they are making are efficient; they're leaders in the industry.

I do believe it's important that we include industry and private sector in our work going forward with future legislation. We all know the Ivany report spoke of how important it is that we engage private sector and that all our decisions should make sure that government and private sector are working together.

Here's an example of their industry leadership: in the document that they provided at Law Amendments, it shared that their association - the Canadian Plastics Industry Association - has a sustainability goal that by 2040, 100 per cent of their plastics packaging will be reused, recycled, or recovered. Two recommendations that the plastics industry expert made that I support are: creating an all-party committee on climate change, and reviewing the carbon impact of Bill No. 152.

My colleague for Sackville-Cobequid was sharing earlier about the differences between municipal government and this Legislature. Two weeks ago I had the honour of attending a Canadian Parliamentary Association meeting in Victoria, B.C. and it was encouraging to learn how other Legislatures across the country are working together. I was enlightened to know that not all Legislatures are quite as combative, for lack of a better word, as ours can sometimes get. P.E.I., for example, Mr. Speaker, are very collaborative and, in fact, the Opposition have a majority vote in all of their committees, so I thought that was really interesting how their Legislature works.

I do support more collaboration in our work, and even the plastics industry is recommending an all-party committee on climate change, and I support that recommendation. Another recommendation they made was to introduce a 100 per cent locally made recyclable/reusable bag, with 40 per cent recycled content that can be recycled locally. I thought that also was a really good idea that they put forth.

I believe also, Mr. Speaker, there are potential opportunities for our forestry industry, as wood and paper could take the place of plastic forks, plastic bags, plastic straws. So there are opportunities. I would like to table a document that CBC put out in June of 2019 that talked about how the ban on single-use plastics could actually be a boon for the forestry industry.

Some people will be upset about this bill, and some people whom I know well, because of the inconvenience. But I believe that some of my colleagues have already talked about the importance of reducing our waste as one of the solutions that we must be looking

at when we're addressing climate change. It kept coming up in my mind - I do want to mention that one of my first, if not my first mentor in living green and with environmentalism was actually my grandmother. She was born in 1920, she lived through the post-Depression era, and she wasted nothing. She did not have garbage.

I remember helping her with bringing in the produce in the Fall. I remember that she got milk in bags, and that all of the plastic milk bags, she would wash and hang to dry. Then in the Fall, when it was time to freeze the green beans and other vegetables, she used all those plastic bags that she had saved all year, and that's what she used to freeze her vegetables. She wasted nothing. I think we have a lot to learn from our elders. (Applause)

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will sit, and I do want to say that I support Bill No. 152.

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

The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to start off by thanking all my colleagues. This bill is a step forward, but your voices and the comments around changing the culture plays as big a role in what we're going to do today as just what this bill is. I really do want to thank everybody for their comments.

I won't be too lengthy here, but I'd certainly like to say that this is, as most have said, a very important first step. It is going to change the way that we think. It's a very important day for Nova Scotians today. It certainly will help reduce what we need to do in what goes into our landfills. Millions of plastic bags are going to be taken out of circulation and that's an important feat.

More importantly, it's going to change the way that we shop. I would challenge any person in this room already to think that they will walk into a grocery store the same way they did a month ago. I think we all have different ways to think now and that's important. Nova Scotians told us it's time to make change and that's what we're doing. We are taking that step. We agreed with them and this is an important day. We also heard from Plastic Free Lunenburg as was noted, and they've asked us to ban other items such as plastic items like cutlery, straws, lids, cups - single-use items.

I will say to the House here today that we are ready when the time is to move to that next step. There are some Nova Scotians who have already asked to take that next step and I applaud them. For others, simply eliminating single use plastic bags will be a major challenge, we know that. We left the door open in this legislation, Mr. Speaker, to regulate distribution of other single-use items down the road.

Mr. Speaker, we've also heard about the need to charge for alternatives; I think that's one of the biggest speaking points that we've heard on this bill. I put thought into

that, our staff has, our caucus has. This bill does not include a minimum charge for alternative bags, and we did that purposely and thoughtfully I believe. But let's be firm on this - many businesses will do that, and that's important to know. Many may choose not to offer bags at all and that's a choice for them to make. We're going to encourage all Nova Scotians to bring reusable bags when they shop and to let retailers know what their preferences are.

Just a few points that I would like to make in that regard is that, myself, I think we shouldn't use bags period. I think we should take it to the next level. When I walk out of a grocery store, I try to go right from the checkout, into my cart, out to my vehicle, and into the trunk. What's wrong with going bag free? I would challenge everybody to do that. Keep a little cardboard box in the back of you truck if you want to carry them in. Again, we need to move to the next step. I agree with some of the debatable parts of this bill are around the differences between plastic and paper. We do not want to see paper bags used to the extent that plastic is, by no means, but we will keep an eye on that.

[7:45 p.m.]

On another point, with the consistency that we see between this bill - which is the second bill in Canada; P.E.I. was the first - it was an important thing to listen to the industry, to what they had to say.

When P.E.I. set their bill, they did have fees in it. Now, let's be clear, right now they are actually doing consultation on those fees. Those fees might change, they might go away, we don't know. But one thing we heard from the industry is they wanted consistency across Atlantic Canada, that was the most important thing for them. So, for us to set a fee today and P.E.I. to change theirs tomorrow, I think it is important for us to listen and say, industry, we'll let you regulate the price on the bags, we'll let you be consistent. It's an important part of this whole thing, and I think that's something that shouldn't be lost in this bill. This bill is very consistent with P.E.I., with the exception of that.

This legislation is one of the actions that we are going to take to protect the environment, but it also helps us to continue to amplify a very important conversation that some Nova Scotians have been having for years about reducing the ways and the amounts of plastics that get into our landfills and waterways. It will help us move forward to keep this province as a national leader in reducing waste.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I move that Bill No. 152 - An Act to Reduce the Use of Plastic Bags and Other Single-use Products, do pass.

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

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 189.

Bill No. 189 - House of Assembly Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 189 - An Act to Amend Chapter 1 (1992 Supplement) of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the House of Assembly Act, be now read a third time.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise and speak briefly to third reading of Bill No. 189. As I stated at second reading, this bill is the right thing to do.

The amendments to this bill provide clarity, clarity to members of the Legislative Assembly who wish to run for the House of Commons, the Legislature of another province or territory, or a municipal office in Nova Scotia, that they must resign their seat in the provincial House of Assembly and provide notice of their resignation immediately after being selected in a nomination contest or otherwise chosen.

These amendments will also serve to protect members of the Legislative Assembly, who choose to seek office for another level of government, from perceived or potential conflicts of interest and allow them to focus on the work they have chosen to do.

Citizens expect clear rules enshrined in law and they expect us as members of this Legislative Assembly to do the job that we were elected to do and that is to serve and represent them. They deserve to be represented, and I'll take that a step further in saying I feel that when an MLA steps down to seek election to a different level of government, a by-election should be called within 30 days, so constituents do not go without representation. It is not fair to the constituents in that constituency to go unrepresented.

These amendments level the playing field, and they create a path of expectations going forth for the members of this House and the electorate.

The Progressive Conservative caucus supports these amendments and will be voting yes for the bill.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I am pleased to rise and register the New Democratic Party's support for this bill.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I just want to echo the comments of my colleague from Queens-Shelburne.

I think it is important to recognize the spirit of this bill is saying the right thing, but we all know that there is a by-election that has not been called for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River and it is not fair to the people in that constituency. While we stand and support this bill, it is important to recognize that the people of that area are still not represented in this House.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 189, an Act to Amend Chapter 1 (1992 Supplement) of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the House of Assembly Act, do pass.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 189. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 192.

Bill No. 192 - Municipal Elections Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

HON. CHUCK PORTER: I move that Bill No. 192, the Municipal Elections Act, be now read for a third time.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill No. 192, an Act to Amend Chapter 300 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Municipal Elections Act. The Progressive Conservative caucus supports the bill, which makes several amendments to the Municipal Elections Act. It is our understanding that these changes are supported by the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities and were changes recommended by the Municipal Elections Officer after a review. We support Bill No. 192. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

LISA ROBERTS: We are in favour of any legislative move to increase the transparency and accessibility of our electoral processes. However, we're disappointed that the government did not take this opportunity to extend the right to vote to permanent residents of this province.

The Mayor of the Halifax Regional Municipality and his colleagues at the NSFM and HRM Council have asked for this change for a number of years and this was an opportunity, given that the government was already looking at the Act, to make that change.

Each year almost 6,000 new permanent residents come to Nova Scotia and they may remain permanent residents and not Canadian citizens for many years. In fact, I was out supporting a federal campaign recently and I talked to someone who had been living in the building I was canvassing for more than 20 years and he was a permanent resident. That is permanent. So there is no good reason, given that people work and pay taxes and contribute significantly to our communities, that we not include them as electors at the municipal level where we know that the work of that level of government is quite specifically around the governing and funding of our municipalities.

With those few words I'll take my seat.

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

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

HON. CHUCK PORTER: I appreciate the comments from members opposite. I move to close debate on Bill No. 192 and that it do pass.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 192. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

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 Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 193.

Bill No. 193 - Massage Therapist Titles Protection Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 193 be now read a third time.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I have about an hour's speech - just kidding. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill No. 193, the Massage Therapist Titles Protection Act. Registered massage therapists are important members of the health care team. Registered massage therapists assess, plan, treat, and evaluate acute, chronic, rehabilitative disease and illness, preventive and holistic measures that address our physical, mental, and spiritual needs and promote wellness. Registered massage therapists provide ethical and respectful care. For over 20 years, I employed numerous RMTs and can attest to the clinical and professional skills they provide.

The Progressive Conservative caucus supports Bill No. 193, the Massage Therapist Titles Protection Act. I encourage everyone here in this House to call and book yourself a therapeutic massage.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

TAMMY MARTIN: I, too, am happy to rise to say to the other side of the House that the NDP caucus also supports this bill (Interruption) I know. Thank you. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: What a difference a couple of days makes here, eh?

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

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I appreciate my colleagues' comments. I think most people will be surprised at the level of unanimity - support here on the topic of health care. That's important, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue forward tomorrow in the same vein.

With that, I move to close third reading on Bill No. 193.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 193. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

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 Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 197.

Bill No. 197 - Companies Act and Co-operative Associations Act and Corporations Registration Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 197 be read a third time.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

LISA ROBERTS: I rise to congratulate the minister on shepherding through this bill.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: I appreciate the support from my colleagues opposite. With that, I move to close third reading of Bill No. 197.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 197. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

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 Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 201.

Bill No. 201 - Municipal Government Act and Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

HON. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill No. 201.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill No. 201, An Act to Amend Chapter 18 of the Acts of 1998, the Municipal Government Act, and Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008, the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Respecting On-site Sewage Disposal Equipment.

This bill allows municipal councils to make bylaws charging for financing and installation of on-site sewage disposal equipment on private property. The PC caucus supports this bill. Health and environmental concerns can occur from septic system failures. The PC caucus supports effective wastewater treatment. Health and environmental concerns can occur from septic system failures, and wastewater can back up into your yard and contaminate water sources with heavy metals, nutrients, and/or pathogens.

[8:00 p.m.]

The federal Fisheries Act includes the water systems effluent regulations that have goals for 2020, 2030, and 2040 deadlines based on criteria. This work was a result of the federal commitment in 2009 of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment Canada-wide Strategy for Municipal Wastewater Effluent. The Progressive Conservative caucus supports healthy and up-to-date, modern, effective septic and wastewater treatment systems.

This bill allows for non-traditional financing. This did raise a few questions. Is it municipal government's role and responsibility to finance private infrastructure on private property? Historically, when a private homeowner is making home improvements such as a septic system, financing is obtained through a bank. A bank determines risk. A bank assumes liability.

This bill now allows municipalities to be a lending agency. Some questions include: What will the interest rate be? Will it be consistent, or will it change based on credit risk scores? How will these borrowed costs be accounted for in the books of municipalities? Municipalities technically can only borrow from the Municipal Financial Corporation, so

will the Municipal Financial Corporation be the lending agency in these instances? Will the municipality be only a lender of last resort?

I do have lots of questions; however, our Progressive Conservative caucus supports this bill because we support up-to-date, modern, effective septic and wastewater treatment systems. We support this bill if it permits some homeowners to improve their private septic systems. It will improve public health, population health, and the health of individual families. We support this bill.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, we are glad to support this bill, but we will again register concerns that we strongly feel should be considered by the government moving forward to support local communities and municipalities when fighting climate change.

The reason that that is relevant to this bill is that PACE programs were designed to allow municipalities to finance investments in clean energy at the level of households. Everyone in this Chamber, I think, is aware of Bridgewater as an example of a municipality showing great leadership on climate change.

The NDP caucus has a bill on the order paper to support local action on climate change that would give clear and broad authority to municipalities to address climate change, including by creating a local action on climate change fund to make money available to municipalities to access climate change-related projects. Our bill would also commit to expanding municipalities' ability to support climate change adaptation and mitigation through PACE programs, making setup and administration easier and addressing issues like the accounting impact on municipal debt. Of course, Nova Scotians need to be supported to upgrade septic systems on their property, and paying back a loan through property tax makes a lot of sense.

We're concerned about the lack of consultation with municipalities. We're concerned about the ability of smaller municipal units to administer this program. Rightly, there are restrictions on the size of PACE programs, so taking PACE programs into the area of sewage treatment, when they were designed for clean energy, could potentially limit deep retrofits of people's homes and installation of clean energy projects.

Municipalities are limited in how much debt they can raise - which is good - but that potentially limits their ability to finance decarbonization through these programs at this moment of a climate emergency. What we don't want to end up with is sewage competing with clean energy. Both are necessary and good. For the Province to download responsibility for helping to finance sewage programs without actually providing the assistance to municipalities to go full steam ahead on local action on climate change mitigation would be a real mistake.

With all that said, we do support this legislation. I guess we will just look to the government to demonstrate its leadership by working with municipalities to make sure that there are not unintended consequences as a result of this bill.

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

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

HON. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues in the House for their comments. With that, I move to close third reading of Bill No. 201.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 201. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

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 Deputy Government House Leader.

KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow, Wednesday, October 30th, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. Following the daily routine and Question Period, we'll move to Opposition Business, which will be provided by the Official Opposition House Leader momentarily. Following that, Government Business will include Public Bills for Third Reading on Bill Nos. 180, 204, and 213; and Private and Local Bills for Third Reading, Bill Nos. 183 and 195.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we'll be calling Resolution Nos. 18 and 853. We'll also be calling Bill No. 217, an Act to Amend the Liquor Control Act. For clarification, the two resolutions will be debated for 15 minutes each and the bill debated for 10 minutes.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for the House to adjourn to rise again tomorrow, Wednesday, October 30th, between the hours of 9:00 a.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 now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.

[The House rose at 8:07 p.m.]

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS**Given on October 29, 2019****(Pursuant to Rule 30)****QUESTION NO. 10**

By: Claudia Chender

To: Hon. Zach Churchill (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development)

The IBM Tech Advantage program will cost \$8 million over six years for about 140 students. At this time, the P-TECH program has only graduated 185 students globally and there have been no evaluation studies published to validate the effectiveness of the program.

- (1) The department has indicated that this will not result in additional teaching positions. What specific costs make up the \$8 million?
- (2) How, specifically, will the department be evaluating the impact of the program?
- (3) Does the agreement with IBM allow the company to access student data including, but not limited to: demographic information and/or student performance information?

QUESTION NO. 11

By: Susan Leblanc (Dartmouth North)

To: Hon. Kelly Regan (Minister of Community Services)

Nova Scotia is facing a crisis in supported community housing capacity for persons with intellectual disabilities and ASD. The current government adopted the roadmap report and a 10-year time frame for significantly increasing community-based supported living options, while decreasing reliance on large institutions.

Instead, wait-lists for services have continued to grow - from 1,100 in 2015 to 1,300 in 2017 to nearly 1,500 last year. The bulk of the wait-list is made up of those seeking a small-option home (four or fewer residents) or independent living support. In response to the need for hundreds of small option (community) placements, the government has so far only committed to eight new homes since 2016. The budget of 2019 included no money for new small option homes.

- (1) What is the status of the eight new homes? How many are in operation and how many individuals are being served as of now?
- (2) Will this government make a significant financial commitment to create substantially more small option homes in our province for persons with disabilities in the upcoming 2020 budget?
- (3) What are the targets and timelines being used to alleviate these wait-lists by 2023?

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1431**

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas after qualifying at the regional FireFit held in August in Truro, Guy Gallant, Deputy Chief of the North River Fire Brigade, participated in FireFit Canadian and World Championships in Oshawa, Ontario, along with 400 firefighters from across Canada, the USA, Kuwait, England and Germany; and

Whereas at the competition, Guy formed an over-50 hybrid relay team with three other firefighters from Atlantic Canada, beating the Canadian All-Star Team, advancing to the gold-medal race against Team Germany and beating them by 17 one-hundredths of a second to become the gold medalists of the over-50 hybrid relay division; and

Whereas another highlight for Gallant this year was racing with his son Kent Gallant, a native of North River but now lives in King City, Ontario, in a tandem relay race in August;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulates Guy Gallant for such an impressive showing and for serving as such an excellent example to his fellow firefighters.

RESOLUTION NO. 1432

By: Hon. Karen Casey (Colchester North)

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

Whereas 50 years ago, 12 individuals including Margaret Colburn, her two sisters, and her brother each donated \$1 000 to help get Willow Lodge in Tatamagouche, Colchester North, up and running; and

Whereas on August 22, 2019, an anniversary celebration was held and Alan Lockerby - Margaret's brother and the sole remaining donor - was able to attend along with residents of the Lodge, staff, volunteers, family members and members of the public; and

Whereas Alan Lockerby planted a memory tree, a magnolia, chosen because it matures in roughly 50 years and Doris Langille, a resident of the Lodge, placed a time capsule into the same hole;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulates the Willow Lodge on their 50th anniversary and wishes them many more years of taking care of those who need them.

RESOLUTION NO. 1433

By: Kim Masland (Queens-Shelburne)

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

Whereas the Grade 9 students from Matt Sheffield's class at Liverpool Regional High School have worked with the Queens Manor Community Connections program; and

Whereas this has created many smiles and friendships between the students and the residents at the Manor through visits to play cards or board games, share memories and tell stories;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulates the Grade 9 students from Liverpool Regional High School and their teacher Matt Sheffield on this wonderful example of community outreach to enrich the lives of both students and the residents at Queens Manor.

RESOLUTION NO. 1434

By: Kim Masland (Queens-Shelburne)

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

Whereas no visit to Liverpool is complete without a visit to Memories Café on the waterfront; and

Whereas after Linda Smith returned to her home town and opened the café in 2012 with her mother-in-law Shirley, Memories quickly became a popular gathering place for locals and visitors alike, enjoying tasty homemade treats and meals lovingly prepared from scratch; and

Whereas she credits much of the success to her team led by Jeffrey Whynot, who provide a warm welcome every day;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulates Linda and the team at Memories Café on being recipients of the Outstanding Service Award at the Lunenburg Queens Business Excellence Awards earlier this year - a well-deserved accolade.

RESOLUTION NO. 1435

By: Kim Masland (Queens-Shelburne)

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

Whereas the Region of Queens Municipality is committed to improving the health of its employees and elected officials; and

Whereas Norm Amirault, Wendy Connors and Mallory Plummer have organized ‘Workplace Wellness Week’ activities over the past two years; and

Whereas Kaylee Oickle inspires and motivates everyone with her dedication to promoting health and wellness amongst staff and Council;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulates the Region of Queens Municipality on being presented with the Workplace for Wellness Silver Award during the Fall AMANS Conference in Digby earlier this month.

RESOLUTION NO. 1436

By: Kim Masland (Queens-Shelburne)

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

Whereas three inspirational Syrian brothers - Said (age 20), Mohamad (19) and Ahmad (17) - worked hard to learn a new language and make up 3 years of missed schooling after the family fled war-torn Aleppo.; and

Whereas they walked the stage to receive their Grade 12 diplomas from Shelburne Regional High School in June 2019; and

Whereas this was a first for the school and a proud and joyful moment for the Hedawi family, the school and the community who had made them so welcome when they arrived nearly four years ago;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulates the three brothers on their motivation, energy, commitment and positivity and wishes them every success for the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 1437

By: Hon. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

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

Whereas the Town of Digby recognizes exceptional contributions of volunteer work in the Digby area annually with the Joe Casey Humanitarian Award: and

Whereas the Joe Casey Humanitarian Award is presented to a person who has made a significant contribution to the betterment of the Town of Digby; and

Whereas Charles Haliburton is the recipient of the 2019 Joe Casey Humanitarian Award, presented at a ceremony on June 21, 2019 by Mayor Ben Cleveland;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Charles Haliburton for receiving the 2019 Joe Casey Humanitarian Award for his outstanding contributions to his town.

RESOLUTION NO. 1438

By: Hon. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

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

Whereas the 2019 Junior Karate Championships were held in Edmonton from May 3rd to May 5th, 2019; and

Whereas Riley Deveau from Church Point competed in the Kumite Individual Male - Junior -61kg division in this tournament; and

Whereas Riley's hard work and dedication earned him a silver medal in his division;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Riley Deveau for his silver medal at the 2019 Junior Karate Championships and wish him continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 1439

By: Hon. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

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

Whereas the 2018 North American Cup took place in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico this past December; and

Whereas Trysten Deveau from Church Point won bronze in the Individual Female Kumite -55kg category; and

Whereas Trysten qualified to represent Canada at the 2019 Senior Pan American Championships in Lima, Peru;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Trysten Deveau for winning a bronze medal at the 2018 North American Cup and wish her all the best in the upcoming 2019 Senior Pan American Championships in Lima, Peru.

RESOLUTION NO. 1440

By: Hon. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

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

Whereas the 2019 Senior National Karate Championships were held in Gatineau, Québec from January 19th to 21st, 2019; and

Whereas Trysten Deveau from Church Point competed in the Kumite Individual Female - Senior -55kg division in this tournament; and

Whereas Trysten's hard work and dedication earned her a gold medal in her division;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Trysten Deveau for her gold medal at the 2019 Senior National Karate Championships and wish her continued success.