



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Second Session

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2020

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2020

Sixty-third General Assembly

Second Session

9:00 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, Brendan Maguire

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 1686

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

Whereas for more than 10 years the Medway River Salmon Association has been receiving up to 60,000 sea trout eggs and 10,000 fingerlings from McGowan Lake Hatchery to raise each year; and

Whereas the association introduced fry and fingerlings in the best pH-balanced brooks in the Medway watershed; and

Whereas these projects have resulted in a great increase in the wild trout stock and has made the Medway River an important angling destination for recreation on the South Shore;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House congratulate the Medway River Salmon Association for its enthusiasm for making trout fishing on the Medway River what it is today.

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 African Nova Scotian Affairs.

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, before I begin, may I give an introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

TONY INCE: Joining us in your gallery today are members from the Canadian Congress of Black Parliamentarians. I would ask them to rise as I call their name, please: Ms. Audrey Gordon, MLA for the electoral district of Southdale in Manitoba, the first black woman to be elected in 150 years. (Applause) Also with us from P.E.I. is Gord McNeilly, who is the Speaker in P.E.I. No? Not yet. (Laughter)

Lastly, Mr. Martin Morrison from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is with us as well. (Applause)

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

RESOLUTION NO. 1687

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

Whereas Nova Scotia is honoured to host the Canadian Congress of Black Parliamentarians' Black Leader's Summit 2020; and

Whereas the Canadian Congress of Black Parliamentarians is an independent, non-partisan group of government parliamentary leaders of African descent who work together to provide workable solutions for issues relating to African Canadians; and

Whereas Nova Scotia looks to the Canadian Congress of Black Parliamentarians as leaders of positive change and equity representing Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in welcoming the Canadian Congress of Black Parliamentarians and thanking them for the important work they do to create racial equity and access to equitable delivery of government services for people of African descent living across the country.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

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

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 236 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 11 of the Acts of 1993. The Railways Act. (Hon. Lloyd Hines)

Bill No. 237 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 4 of the Acts of 1995. The Highway 104 Western Alignment Act. (Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin)

Bill No. 238 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 231 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Insurance Act. (Hon. Karen Casey)

Bill No. 239 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 5 of the Acts of 2011. The Elections Act. (Alana Paon)

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

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, may I make an introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

RANDY DELOREY: I would like to direct my colleagues' attention to the East Gallery. With us are Paula Langille, the Director of Continuing Care, and Vicki Elliott-Lopez, the Senior Executive Director of Continuing Care. They, along with the whole team in the Continuing Care Branch, work hard every day with our partners in the continuing care sector. Would you please give them the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

Bill No. 240 - Entitled an Act Respecting Life Partners in Long-term Care. (Hon. Randy Delorey)

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

[9:15 a.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

LANDRY, JANET: RETIREMENT - BEST WISHES

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the career and life of an amazing Nova Scotian nurse who is retiring after a lifetime of dedication to Nova Scotians. I met Janet Landry at the age of 12 when I started volunteering with her organization that she started while still a nursing student. She started a unique program at the Dartmouth YMCA called Upward Bound.

This group was made up with over 60 teenagers, over the years, who were paired with children with special needs. We did arts and crafts, a gym class, and pool therapy every Saturday morning for years. Not only did Janet provide support for these children, she was also a mentor to all of us teenagers who learned compassion, leadership skills, and the need to generously give back to your community through the years.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to say that after all of those decades, we are all still friends. Janet is now retiring after a lifelong commitment to her work and to her community. Although I know that she deserves this well-earned rest, everyone she has ever worked with will miss her greatly.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in celebrating and thanking Janet Landry for her commitment to Nova Scotians.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

GETSON, KEITH: ATHLETE OF THE WEEK - CONGRATS.

HON. MARK FUREY: I rise to congratulate Keith Getson of Bridgewater on his recognition as Athlete of the Week at Saint Mary's University for the week ending January 12th.

Keith is a former Halifax Moosehead and former assistant captain of the Charlottetown Islanders. He had a four-point weekend for the Huskies as they picked up two wins over Dalhousie University and St. Francis Xavier University. Keith scored two goals in each game, improving his goal totals to 10 goals and 18 points for the season.

I'd ask the members of the House of Assembly to please join me in congratulating Keith Getson on his continued athletic and academic success.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

Oakey, Howard: Com. Serv. - Thanks

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Howard Oakey on his many volunteer contributions over the years. Most recently, Howard has been deeply involved with the Bedford Lawn Bowls Club. He's been volunteering there for more than eight years, serving as social chair, vice-president, president, and treasurer.

Folks describe him as a natural leader who is eager to bring his knowledge and high standards to the club, so it's no surprise he often takes on leadership roles when he gets involved in an organization.

Howard is currently the past president of Lawn Bowls Nova Scotia. He has also volunteered with a Real Estate Commission of Nova Scotia and served as national president of the Real Estate Commission of Canada. He's treasurer of his condo corporation. He has served as president and treasurer of the CFB Halifax Curling Club and volunteered there with countless curling events from Olympic curling trials to the Brier Cup and the world championship to name a few.

I'd like to thank Howard Oakey for his many contributions to sporting life in Bedford and beyond. He rocks.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

QASL: HELPING PEOPLE TO THRIVE - THANKS

KIM MASLAND: In recognition of Social Enterprise Week, I rise to celebrate an organization in Queens County that exemplifies what it means to support adults with diverse abilities as they strive to reach their full potential.

For over 50 years, Queens Association for Supported Living, affectionately known as QASL, has been an advocate and support leader for people of all abilities, helping them to reach for their dreams and to make decisions about their own lives, and offering innovative programming and employment opportunities at Penny Lane Woodworking & Enterprises and the very popular River Bank General Store & Café. QASL is truly a model for helping people to thrive and reach their potential.

Mr. Speaker, I thank QASL for all they do for residents of Queens and look forward to watching as they continue to grow and make Queens County an inclusive and supportive environment for all.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston Dartmouth.

DIXON, CAROLANN: COM. SERV. - CONGRATS.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: I would like to recognize Ms. Carolann Dixon of North Preston on operating her own business, CA Nature of Things, for eight years on Portland Street in Dartmouth, selling Celtic sea salt, herbal products, and bath sea salts.

She now sells some wonderful products from her home which affords her the time to work on her next project, opening a seniors' residence in North Preston.

She is an active member of the Saint Thomas Baptist Church where she sings in the choir and conducts some sermons. She also attended Emmanuel Baptist Church in Hammonds Plains from 2012-15 to study to become a lay pastor.

I recognize and congratulate Ms. Carolann Dixon for her contributions to the business community and her church.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

MCCLELLAND, JONATHAN - CEO: BUS. MENTOR - THANKS

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Jonathan McClelland. Jonathan is the CEO of the Cumberland Business Connector.

Jonathan is committed to the economic growth and development of Cumberland North and has a lot of experience working with agriculture, forestry, fishery, renewable energy and in the manufacturing sectors.

He has been investing in Cumberland North since 2016. He has encouraged young people to become interested in businesses as new entrepreneurs with things like the Cumberland Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge.

Jonathan has put in hard work to help businesses in Cumberland North start and succeed so that Cumberland North's economy can thrive. He is a valued member of the community and today I would like to thank him for his continued efforts in Cumberland North.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

LENA METLEGE DIAB: With us today in the gallery, we're joined by two talented Armdale residents: Krista Dunn, housing manager at the YWCA Halifax, and Brigid Langill, the YWCA's director of philanthropy and communications. The YWCA does so much important work in our communities. I'd ask both Krista and Brigid to stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

DUNN, KRISTA: QUEEN PIN AWARD - CONGRATS.

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Krista Dunn of Halifax Armdale. Krista, originally from Yarmouth, has a passion for helping others. Through her studies in psychology and addictions counselling, she discovered how much difference one person can make.

During a student placement at Phoenix, Krista worked closely with at-risk and homeless youth, developing a deep appreciation of the struggles that young people face when they lack adequate supports. Through her work, Krista learned valuable skills that she brought back to her hometown, where she helped launch Yarmouth's first emergency youth shelter.

After starting her own family and moving to Halifax, Krista jumped at the opportunity to take on the role of housing manager at the YWCA. Today she plays a big role on a team that provides invaluable support to young and single mothers and women experiencing homelessness every day.

For her community service, Krista received the third annual Queen Pin Award at a ceremony in November. Congratulations to Krista, her husband Eddie, and her family. Thank you for helping those who need it most. (Applause)

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

KENNEDY, BERNICE: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

BRIAN COMER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay my respect and send some condolences to the family of the late Bernice Kennedy of Donkin.

Bernice left us on February 6th at the young age of 67 after a brief illness. She spent a lot of time working in her yard and garden and was a wonderful volunteer on my recent campaign.

Bernice was known as an inspirational soul who dedicated her life to her family, especially her husband Hugh, and her many friends. She will be deeply missed by all who were fortunate to have known her.

I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in sending sincere condolences to the family and friends of Dorothy Bernice Kennedy, a special woman who will never be forgotten.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

BOWIE, CHRISTINE: FOSTERING CNIB GUIDE DOG - THANKS

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Christine Bowie, a resident of Hatchet Lake. Christine opened her home to raise a puppy for the CNIB guide dog program. Her puppy was one of 25 canines who graduated from this program in November 2019.

Volunteers who raise these puppies foster dogs from eight weeks until they are about 12 to 16 months old. The puppies have to learn to behave in a certain way before they can go into the harness work, which is the professional part of the training to learn how to wear a harness and actually guide a person. The dogs have to be trained to walk properly, sit properly, and be exposed to different environments in a variety of different situations so that they are prepared to be guide dogs.

I'd like the members of the House of Assembly to join me in thanking Christine for her volunteer work to raise a puppy to this important milestone and make a difference in the life of a Canadian who lives without their sight. These exceptional dogs are so special because of the passion and dedication of the volunteers who raise the puppies.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

SACKVILLE BUS. ASSOC.: 6TH ANN. SNOW DAYS - THANKS

STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Sackville Business Association, members of the organizing team, and volunteers of the Sackville Snow Days in Lower Sackville.

The 6th Annual Sackville Snow Days took place from February 14th - 17th this year. There was something for everyone going on each day, such as activities and contests for the kids, East Coast music concerts, a parade, a starlight walk followed by fireworks at the Kinsmen Community Centre, and many other free events each and every day.

I would like to ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating the Sackville Business Association, the organizing team and volunteers of the Sackville Snow Days. Without their support and commitment, this Winter festival would not be possible.

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

BRAR, GUNNY - CBUSU PRES.: STUDENT ADVOCATE - CONGRATS.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Parteek "Gunny" Brar, a student from India who studied at Cape Breton University over the last number of years. Gunny had the honour of being the Students' Union president at CBU over the last two years and really played a very significant role as CBU made the transition to see many international students now on their campus and within the community. Gunny has been a leader in the community for a number of years. I'm sure he will be as he graduates and moves on to his profession in the community.

I stand in my place today as a former Students' Union president at CBU to congratulate him on his work, advocating for students in our community. I ask all members of the House to congratulate Gunny on two very successful years as president of the Students' Union at Cape Breton University.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

GOVRC: SPECIAL OLYMPICS FLOOR HOCKEY GOLD - CONGRATS.

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the participants in the Special Olympics Floor Hockey Tournament in January. GOVRC is an enterprise in Springhill and area where Terry Black, Brad Coady, Jonathan Dauphinee, and their teammates won the gold medal in the Cobequid Floor Hockey Tournament hosted by the Special Olympics at the Truro NSCC. Terry, Brad and Jonathan are just a few of the players who were very proud to represent their area and agreed it was amazing to taste the gold.

Please join me in congratulating Terry, Brad, Jonathan, and all their teammates in representing their team well and bringing home the gold.

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

CARITAS DAY: MSVU STUDENTS GIVE BACK - COMMEND

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize an important day for the Mount Saint Vincent University community. Every year on the last Wednesday of January, MSVU celebrates Caritas or “charity” Day. This day promotes and encourages random acts of kindness or giving time and talent to others.

Caritas Day dates back to January 1951 when a devastating fire destroyed the university’s only building. Since students no longer had a place to continue their learning, residents and businesses of Halifax opened their doors and provided students with this much-needed space. As a result of the community’s generosity, MSVU created Caritas Day - a day for students to give back.

In the past few years, some of the student- and faculty-led initiatives included knitting toques for Syrian refugees, organizing food drives, and raising money for local shelter programs. Caritas Day isn’t limited to current students. The school highly encourages alumni and the general public to stay involved.

As a proud alumna of MSVU, I hope to encourage the members of this House to do random acts of kindness with me, not just on Caritas Day but every day.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**HUOT, MARIE-CLAUDE - PRÉSIDENTE DE SECTEUR:
ÉPELLE-MOI CANADA - BONNE CHANCE**

TIM HALMAN: Je me lève aujourd’hui pour reconnaître Marie-Claude Huot, la présidente de secteur de la Nouvelle-Ecosse pour l’organisme éducationnel Épelle-Moi Canada.

Épelle-moi Canada est un organisme éducationnel qui vise à la valorisation et la promotion de la langue française chez les jeunes francophones de six à quatorze ans. Demain, le 29 février, 52 jeunes de notre province vont rassembler à l'École du Carrefour à Dartmouth Est pour le concours régional d'épellation en français. J'aimerais souhaiter bonne chance à tous les participants.

M. le Président, la promotion de la langue française grâce à des événements comme celle organisés par Marie-Claude est essentielle à la création d'un Canada et d'une Nouvelle Ecosse bilingue ainsi qu'un monde où nos jeunes peuvent vivre dans la fierté de leurs identités francophones.

[9:30 a.m.]

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

**LEAMAN, DOMINICK - WINNER:
GRAPHIC NOVEL CONTEST - CONGRATS.**

BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate 10-year-old Dominick Leaman of Beaver Bank-Monarch Drive Elementary who was the grand prize winner of a Scholastic Canadian graphic novel contest. Dominick says he was excited to win because he worked hard on his story, which he says is jammed-packed full of action and adventure.

While the contest asked the students to write as if they were a buddy of the main character, Dominick created a whole graphic novel. Dominick's mother, Trish Leaman, says that because of his autism, some things can be more challenging, but comics have always been an outlet for him and a chance to foster his creativity.

I request that members of the Legislature join me in congratulating Dominick on his grand prize win and wish him continued success.

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

SACKVILLE LIONS CLUB: 50TH CHARTER ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

BRAD JOHNS: I rise today to acknowledge the Sackville Lions Club, who are celebrating their 50th charter anniversary this year.

The Sackville Lions Club is part of the Lions Club International, a non-profit organization that consists of volunteers who work together to help organizations in our community. The Sackville Lions Club works with and donates to the IWK Children's Hospital, Kids Help Phone, Millwood High School sports, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Beacon House Food Bank, and the Sackville Schools Breakfast Program, to name just a few of the organizations.

On April 18th, Sackville Lions Club will be celebrating their 50th charter anniversary by holding a dinner and dance. I'd like to take an opportunity to thank the Sackville Lions Club and all their volunteers for the continued support in the community over the last 50 years, and here's to many more years to come.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

TAYLOR, TARA: BRAIDED COUTURE ART SHOW - CONGRATS.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I rise today to congratulate Tara Taylor and the team of African Nova Scotian women and girls that organized and took part in the second annual Braided Couture Arts Show last weekend at the Bus Stop Theatre.

The show, held in celebration of African Heritage Month, featured emerging talent in hair, makeup and fashion. Artists and art included Tara Taylor, whose skin line Carmalina Naturals was also used for the show; Tasha Dawn, whose beautiful braiding work was featured; Martina Brooks of Hologram Designs; Hilary Sears of [hil] designs; and the clothing line Scotian 2 Da Bone. Braid artists as young as 12 years old also showcased their talents. The night also featured performances by Tyrone "Tachichi" Thompson, and the Unique Four dance troupe. Tara Taylor debuted a theatrical performance entitled *Hair Today, Slammin' Tomorrow*.

The Braided Couture Arts Show was a wonderful celebration of black hair and fashion and of truly excellent emerging artists in our community. I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating everyone involved in this show and encourage everyone to check out the work of the artists when they have the opportunity.

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

JOY, MACKENZIE: FUNDRAISING FOR IWK - CONGRATS.

BEN JESSOME: Today I'll recognize a fine young lady from Hammonds Plains, Mackenzie Joy. She's done a tremendous job fundraising for the IWK. She was born with a chromosomal abnormality that causes her to have ADHD and epilepsy. Over the years, she's spent quite a significant amount of time at the IWK, so she's decided to give back.

She began taking pictures and turning them into cards, which she sells at the different craft fairs and markets around the community. She's raised more than \$13,000 for the IWK. She's given so much back, and now she and her family are trying to raise the funds to provide her with a service dog to help her through her life.

I ask all members of the House to join me in thanking her for all the work that she's done to fundraise for the IWK and wish her well.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

WEDGEPORT LEGION: 75TH ANNIV., ITALIAN CAMPAIGN - HONOUR

COLTON LEBLANC: I rise today to honour our nation's heroes, those who have fought for our rights and freedoms and those of many around the world - our veterans.

Today, the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 155 in Wedgeport is holding a commemoration ceremony for the 75th anniversary of the withdrawal of Canadian soldiers who fought in Italy during the Second World War, before being deployed to fight in northwest Europe. The battles in northwest Europe overshadow the accomplishments of the soldiers who fought in Italy. The brave soldiers became the forgotten soldiers, never receiving the praise they deserved and often referred to as the "D-Day Dodgers." The Wedgeport Legion is honoured to have as its members two veterans of the Italian campaign, Charlie Muise and Henry "Miff" O'Connell.

I would ask all members of the House of Assembly to join me in thanking the members of the Wedgeport Legion, and other Legions around our province, for their commitment in ensuring we honour and remember with gratitude all of those who have served as well as our veterans, including Charlie and Miff, for their selfless service.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

ROSE, REBECCA: BOOK, *BEFORE THE PARADE* - CONGRATS.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I rise today to congratulate Dartmouth writer and queer activist Rebecca Rose on the publication of her first book, *Before the Parade: A History of Halifax's Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Communities from 1972-1984*. In writing the book, Rose conducted countless interviews with queer community elders, who generously shared stories of struggle, of fear, and also of great solidarity and joy.

The book was launched at a standing-room-only celebration at the Halifax Central Library where 300 people gathered to hear excerpts of the book, hear from some of the LGBTQ2S and queer elders mentioned in the book, including a number of founding members of the Halifax Women's Housing Co-op, and of course to buy copies of the book.

Mr. Speaker, in many ways things have come a long way for the LGBTQ+ community in Nova Scotia since 1984, and yet it is important to know the history of the communities to understand the work and struggle that folk endured in the early years and upon whose shoulders the queer community stands today. Rebecca's book gives us that history in a truly wonderful work.

Fun fact: Rebecca Rose is also the constituency assistant in the Dartmouth North MLA's office and she brings the same intelligence and generosity that she brought to her book to the people we serve in our office.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

FRASER, MEAGHAN: TOP-NOTCH TEACHER - THANKS

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to recognize an incredible individual in my community, Meaghan Fraser. Ms. Fraser, as she is known to her Grade 1/2 class at William King Elementary is a top-notch teacher and friend to her students. Meaghan is always there for the students and parents. Meaghan helps grow the minds of our youth, brings them out of their shells, and goes above and beyond the duties of a teacher.

Meaghan is always there to also give advice to the parents to show them how to build on her teaching, including her famous apple and onion game. Meaghan, my apple is that I get to watch as you help my son grow; my onion is that you won't be his teacher next year.

To Meaghan and all the educators at William King Elementary and the entire community, thank you for all you do.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

OICKLE, KEEGAN: DUKE OF ED., SILVER AWARD - CONGRATS.

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to congratulate Liverpool Regional High School student Keegan Oickle on his achievements in the prestigious Duke of Edinburgh Program. Keegan recently completed his Silver Award level, which required 26 weeks in the four criteria of skill, physical recreation, service, and adventurous journey.

Keegan's activities included skiing, skating, cycling, playing guitar, volunteering at local radio station QCCR, producing and recording 57 weekly episodes of his on-air program "Tapped," and he is completing a three-day, two-night canoeing and camping expedition in Kejimikujik National Park. Of special note, Mr. Speaker, he was asked to offer the official thanks to our Lieutenant Governor at the ceremony.

Mr. Speaker, I ask members to join me in applauding Keegan on this very impressive accomplishment. He is a wonderful role model for Nova Scotian youth, and I wish him the best as he works to achieve his Gold Level.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

FOXY MOON HAIR GALLERY: SERVICE TO ADSUM - THANKS

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge a special, longstanding relationship between Foxy Moon Hair Gallery and Adsum for Women and Children, the former a business and the latter a charity. Both are located in Halifax Needham.

For the past eight years Foxy Moon Hair Gallery has offered pro bono hair services to clients of Adsum for Women and Children. Adsum shelters, houses, and provides services and programs to women, families, youth and trans people facing poverty, homelessness, systemic discrimination, gender inequality, and violence.

Each month, a different hair stylist from Foxy Moon will offer an afternoon of their services to the Adsum shelter. Adsum's Twitter page recently pictured photos of happy clients with fresh haircuts, sharing that they felt a boost in confidence.

Mr. Speaker, Foxy Moon's collaboration with Adsum reminds us of the importance of relationship building, community care, and connectivity and that simple gestures can go a long way.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

SITEMAN, ELLIOTT - PASTOR: COM. SERV. - THANKS

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Pastor Elliott Siteman of St. Peter's Anglican Church in Clayton Park West. In 2004, Father Elliott became an ordained deacon and priest.

Under Father Elliott's leadership, St. Peter's Anglican Church has been a cornerstone in our community. The church is host to several events throughout the year, including the annual Christmas Craft and Fair; pancake supper, which we had just last week; and brunch with Santa and Mrs. Clause. The parish also participates in many outreach programs, including St. George's Soup Kitchen, the Anchorage Recovery Program, Halifax West Ecumenical Food Bank and the Mission to Seafarers.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Father Elliott for his service to our community. It is his kindness and sense of humour that I enjoy the most.

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

ZERO DISCRIM. DAY: FOSTERING EQUITY - RECOG.

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge March 1st as Zero Discrimination Day. This day brings awareness to discriminatory provisions in law and

policies and encourages people to make positive changes to ensure equality, inclusion, and protection.

Mr. Speaker, discriminatory laws and practices can create a significant barrier to access health and other services and undermines efforts to achieve a more just and equitable world. From race to religion, gender to sexual orientation, age to income, we all need to commit to bringing the world closer to zero discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, I call upon the members of this House to speak up and prevent discrimination and to work toward eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices in their communities.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

CARTER'S SPORTS CRESTING: 20TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate Mark Carter and Carter's Sports Cresting on their 20th business anniversary.

Carter's Sports Cresting was opened on June 1st, 1999, and has been serving our community by printing signs, embroidery, and other promotional items with an in-house production facility. Mark employs 10 full-time staff in his business. He's located in downtown Amherst.

I wish Mark and his staff the best on this significant milestone and hope Carter's Sports Cresting continues for many more successful years.

Mr. Speaker, another successful business in Cumberland North.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

CHURCH BREWING CO.: COM. HUB - CONGRATS.

KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, in the last few years our province has welcomed more and more young entrepreneurs returning home to build businesses, families, and community.

Matthew and Steve Haysom, both geologists, returned from western Canada to start a family business in Wolfville known as the Church Brewing Company. Matthew and Steve renovated and repurposed the former Main Street Anglican Church, designed by renowned architect Andrew Cobb, to a restaurant and brewery.

Since opening in January 2019, the church has become Wolfville's second largest employer, with over 90 local staff. Once a destination enjoyed on Sunday mornings, it is

now seven days a week, enjoyed by locals and tourists who congregate among its flowing taps, stained glass, and church bells.

I invite all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Matthew and Steve Haysom on their successful business, thank them for preserving an important community building, and welcome them home to Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

**SACKVILLE AREA WARMING CTR.:
CARING FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS - THANKS**

STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mike Poworoznyk and the team of volunteers of the Sackville Area Warming Centre in Lower Sackville.

Mike and many others realized the need in our community to provide a safe place for citizens who are experiencing homelessness. Mike is the catalyst who brings everything and everyone together. The Sackville Area Warming Centre provides an opportunity to get a break from the cold temperatures and offers dry socks, a warm drink, a bowl of soup, and conversation.

With tremendous support from stakeholders in the community, and dedicated volunteers who sacrifice sleep to be on duty all night, the centre is able to open four nights a week - which is twice as much as it was last year.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Mike and his team for caring so much for their neighbours in need.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

PATE, BARB: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Ms. Barb Pate, a graduate of Mount Allison University with a bachelor's degree, majoring in music. She served as the Terry Fox Foundation's provincial director for more than 14 years.

She directs the church choir at Hope United Church in Halifax, as well as being active in the Rotary Club of Halifax, where she participates in a harmony group. She and her husband Glen own and operate Red Mahone Bay Bed & Breakfast.

I recognize and congratulate Ms. Barb Pate for her valued contribution to the community as a Terry Fox Foundation provincial director and wish her every success in the future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

THE LIVING CHRISTMAS TREE: OUTSTANDING EVENT - CONGRATS.

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the 30th anniversary of an outstanding performance of *The Living Christmas Tree* in Port Greville, Nova Scotia, directed by Judy Wheaton this past December.

The Living Christmas Tree has been entertaining the holiday crowds for 30 years and those who have seen it once want to experience it every year. The beautifully decorated Grace United Church hosts this performance year after year. Everyone does an amazing job at decorating and preparing for this event.

[9:45 a.m.]

The Living Christmas Tree was started as a Sunday school Christmas concert and some of the original participants are still performing.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all to join me in congratulating *The Living Christmas Tree* performers on another outstanding performance, and I look forward to celebrating next year with them for the 31st anniversary.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

DEMPSEY, DOROTHY & DONALD: 66TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to congratulate Dorothy and Donald Dempsey for 66 years of marriage. The Dempseys are a corner store family of Herring Cove, and Dorothy and Donald are two of the family's most respected individuals.

Dorothy and Donald have many children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, including their neighbours, their son and daughter-in-law, Terry and Darlene. Terry and Darlene had a huge impact on me as a youth, including feeding me and giving me a roof over my head.

Dorothy and Donald should be proud of the family they raised and the lives they have created. Happy 66th to both of you and here's to many more.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HAFEY, ART - INDUCTEE: BOXING HALL OF FAME - CONGRATS.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, another Hall of Fame induction awaits Art Hafey. The former top featherweight contender of the professional boxing world will be inducted in the Fall into the West Coast Boxing Hall of Fame. Technique and tenacity were the characteristics of this great boxer. Art's induction will take place on October 4th in Hollywood, California. Hafey is already in the Pictou County Sports Heritage Hall of Fame as well as the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame.

Hafey was a rising star in Canada's boxing circles when he went to California in 1972 to pursue the world featherweight championship. His overall record shows he won 53 bouts, lost 8 and had 4 draws. He scored 36 knockouts during his career.

I would ask the members of this Legislature to join me today in congratulating boxing great Art Hafey on his induction into the West Coast Boxing Hall of Fame.

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

GUYSBOROUGH ACAD.: MUSICAL, GREASE - CONGRATS.

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the vocal and theatrical talent of the Guysborough Academy high school drama program and their excellent production of the hit musical, *Grease*. Wowing the audience with their excellent effort and outstanding performance, the drama program certainly put in the hard work and brought an incredible amount of creativity to the stage to make their production of *Grease* the success that delighted the community.

With their first show on the 14th of February quickly selling out, the drama program had to put on a second performance for the 28th of February by popular demand. Hosted in the amazing Chedabucto Performance Centre, a 300-seat theatre located in the heart of Guysborough, people came from far and wide to enjoy a night of musical theatre.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Guysborough Academy high school drama program on their musical theatre production of *Grease* and wish them all the best in their future performances. I am sure they will continue to shine on the theatre stage.

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

**ISLAND VIEW HS ENHANCEMENT SOC.:
GRANT AWARDED - RECOG.**

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Island View High School Enhancement Society for recently becoming a Southeastern Community Health

Board grant recipient. This committee gains funds through donations, grants and fundraising throughout the year.

The committee is in place to help fund items for sports teams, like the mascot's costume and a new scoreboard for the school, new technological devices, a camera for the photo club, science kits and art supplies, to name just a few. Although it is a small group, the hard work and continued dedication from this group of volunteers does not go unnoticed.

I would like to recognize the chair and former candidate of record, Nancy Jakeman, Michelle Myers, Christa Shannon and former MLA Kevin Deveaux. This group volunteers on so many things that I could be doing Member's Statements about them almost on a daily basis. It is a pleasure to work with them.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in thanking all the members of the Island View High School Enhancement Society for their tireless effort in generously giving back to their community, especially the students of Eastern Passage.

[10:15 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

**MCKEAGE, DAVID: POSTHUMOUS AWARD,
ORDER OF N.S. - RECOG.**

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, at the end of November I was honoured to attend the annual Order of Nova Scotia induction ceremony, where a posthumous award was given to David Mathew McKeage of Halifax Armdale.

David was a father, husband, dreamer, optimist and a four-time cancer survivor, whose tireless work brought about Brigadoon Village in the Annapolis Valley. Today, Brigadoon Village is Canada's largest pediatric illness camp program where children can be children, regardless of their illnesses and challenges, and where no child is defined by their diagnosis.

He also brought together stakeholders from across the health, academic, not-for-profit and public sectors to form lasting partnerships that would help to transform our health system far beyond the walls of Brigadoon Village.

David's life was defined by his optimism and resilience. His biggest joy in life was being a dad to his son, Bennett.

He made Nova Scotia a better place for all. I ask everyone to join me in thanking him for that. Rest in Peace, David.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

GOREHAM, ETHEREN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay homage to Etheren Goreham who passed away on November 29, 2019, at the age of 78, after a courageous battle with cancer.

Etheren was long involved in his community of Woods Harbour. He was a dedicated educator, having had the opportunity to positively impact the lives of so many. He served in the Woods Harbour Fire Department for 20 years, as a councillor for the Municipality of Barrington for 9 years, and as a deacon at the Calvary United Baptist Church. He was dedicated to serving numerous community organizations throughout his lifetime. As a strong supporter of the Progressive Conservative Party, Etheren ran as a candidate in Shelburne in 1978 and 1984.

I ask that all members of the Legislature join me in extending condolences to Etheren's wife, Helen, and his daughters, Jane and JoAnne, and to celebrate the life of a man who gave so much of himself for the betterment of his community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

BORKOWSKI, SUZANNE: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Suzanne Borkowski as she steps down as chair for the Lake of the Woods Homeowners Association.

Suzanne was elected to this role in February 2015. In addition to her regular duties as chair over the past five years, Suzanne has been instrumental on a number of major neighbourhood projects. She has dedicated endless hours to addressing concerns and looking after interests and infrastructure for the neighbourhood.

She worked with various levels of government to reduce the speed limit in the neighbourhood, install a new playground, arrange an emergency fire exit between abutting subdivisions, organized the annual fun day events, and launched the annual Christmas light competition. She was also the coordinator of the Tantallon Citizens on Patrol and worked closely with the RCMP to patrol the area and report suspicious activity.

Notably, Suzanne facilitated the sale of a parcel of land near Lake of the Woods subdivision to the Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust for the preservation and protection of 50 acres of undeveloped land. The beautifully forested area next to the BLT and Bluff Trails has wetlands like Cranberry Bog, wildlife habitat, and increasingly rare flora and fauna.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of the House of Assembly to join me in thanking Suzanne for volunteerism and commitment to the Lake of the Woods subdivision.

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

WORLD READ ALOUD DAY: 11TH ANNIV. - RECOG.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, on February 5th, I had the opportunity to participate in World Read Aloud Day and read to two classes at Fairview Heights Elementary. As a former teacher, this day is always special for me because it raises awareness about the importance of literacy and encourages parents and their kids to spend time and read a good book together.

Many reports and studies indicate that reading aloud to children is the single most important activity for building their knowledge for eventual success in reading. According to Scholastic, more than 80 per cent of both kids and parents love read aloud time because they consider it a very special time together. I know when I was a child, reading with my mom and dad was probably the best part of the day.

World Read Aloud Day is now in its 11th year and is celebrated in over 173 countries. I would say that's a huge success.

Mr. Speaker, I want to extend my thanks to Fairview Heights Elementary for allowing me to read to their students and for encouraging literacy at both school and home.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

BUTTLE, WAYNE - MGR.: THORBURN RINK - THANKS

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Wayne Buttle, the rink manager at the Thorburn rink.

When young people from Pictou East were being bused to Trenton for ice time, Wayne was instrumental in ensuring the children of Pictou East had access to a rink. Wayne made many applications for federal and provincial grants and approached community members for contributions. Finally, his dream of opening a rink in such a rural location became a reality 45 years ago. The first official game included a team with the Nova Scotia Legislature versus the Thorburn Terrors.

I want to thank Wayne for all the time and effort he has dedicated to keeping the rink operating for all these years - the people of Pictou East are forever grateful.

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

KELLN, BRAD: BOOK, *THE RUSSIAN* - CONGRATS.

BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the author, Brad Kelln, of Fall River on his newest release, *The Russian*.

Brad Kelln is the author of the Blake Waiter mystery series, which is set in Halifax. This is the second book in his series, with the first being released in 2018 titled *Tell Me More*.

Dr. Brad Kelln is a clinical and forensic psychologist based in Halifax, as well as special consultant to both the Halifax Regional Police and the Nova Scotia RCMP on hostage negotiation and criminal investigations.

Kelln's books are filled with action, humour, and psychology.

Please join me in congratulating Brad on his new release and wish him much success with the Blake Waiter mysteries.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**SOC. ENTERPRISE NETWORK:
BUILDING WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES - RECOG.**

LISA ROBERTS: As we conclude Social Enterprise Week in Nova Scotia, I want to shout out the Social Enterprise Network of Nova Scotia, a non-profit, member-led society that is building this important sector which contributes to the social, cultural, economic, and environmental well-being of our province.

The Social Enterprise Network of Nova Scotia is hosted at Common Good Solutions, based in Halifax Needham. Common Good Solutions also deserves a huge shout-out; it will be hosting the Social Enterprise World Forum in Halifax in September.

This annual event was first held in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 2008, and has since been held on six continents. Nova Scotia has about 1,000 purpose-led businesses that are creating job opportunities and other economic benefits, particularly in rural Nova Scotia, while accomplishing social, environmental, and cultural objectives. They deserve this government's support all year round.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

MANNING, SUSAN: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. KELLY REGAN: I'd like to say a big thank you to a woman who has been volunteering with the Bedford District Girl Guides for more than nine years. Susan

Manning's involvement with the Girl Guides shows she's committed, serious, and ambitious for our Guides.

She's described as a strong and intentional leader who puts thought into every decision she makes. She brings real life experience to the meetings she runs for her Guides.

Susan has held many positions locally as well as nationally. She has been the guider and unit treasurer for the 1st Bedford Rangers, the Bedford District cookie manager, the Girls First steering committee member, and the Girls First champion member. Susan was a program intern at Our Chalet World Centre in Switzerland, a Girls First Nations steering committee member, and a diversity and inclusion action group member.

Susan has guided and influenced the lives of many young people through her work with the Guides, and I want to commend her for the profound impact she's had on so many. Well done.

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

DEMENTIA CAREGIVER SUPPORT GRP.: MEETING A NEED - COMMEND

HON. LLOYD HINES: I rise today to talk about a difficult subject that touches too many lives, the diseases of dementia and Alzheimer's. These diseases are terrible, and those suffering from them aren't the only ones impacted by the awfulness of the diagnosis.

Recently in Guysborough, a Dementia/Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group meeting was set up under the dedicated and compassionate leadership of Ursula Ryan. They are working to establish a dementia caregivers support group in Guysborough and surrounding areas to help provide support and information.

The efforts under way to establish a Guysborough Dementia/Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group have been warmly received by the community as it is seen as an important and pressing need for those impacted as caregivers.

It is encouraging to see how many positive efforts are under way to support those in our community providing care for those in need. I'd like to commend Ursula for her efforts and offer my well wishes to caregivers and the Guysborough Dementia/Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group.

[10:00 a.m.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - NORTHERN PULP FUND: ALLOCATION AMOUNT - EXPLAIN

TIM HOUSTON: Following the closure of Northern Pulp, the Province projected a \$400 million decrease in our forestry industry. That's a \$400 million hit to our economy that will impact thousands of families across the entire province, and they are working in many different fields, as we all know. That's \$400 million this year, \$400 million next year, and so and so on. With that in mind, I wonder if the Premier can explain how he was able to calculate the \$50 million that he initially allocated for the transition fund?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (THE PREMIER): Mr. Speaker, the honourable member is referring to a number that would be real. The entire sector disappeared across the province. He's very right, this hits every community from one end of Nova Scotia to the other. We knew there would be a transition when it came, particularly the ecosystem of our forestry sector, when we look at the men and women who were out in the woods each and every day. Some of them would have to transition, they would still be working; some may not be. The \$50 million was part of an analysis that we did to say: How can we best provide programming and support? Is there more money required? We as a government will continue to support that sector.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I hope the Premier will be willing to table that analysis. For clarity, the \$400 million is what the hit to the overall industry was. The overall industry, for the Premier's information, was in the range of \$2 billion. It's not completely disappearing, that's not a number that's at the high end. That's the number that the Premier's economists and his department has come up with. That's the hit.

We know that a transition team was put in place to oversee this fund. But it remains unclear how often that team is meeting, what their goal lines are. The funds have been allocated but as far as we can tell, there's been no measurement, nothing put in place to measure what success of that transition team would look like. Given the government's history on this file, it is critical that there be planning and some thoughtful analysis into what success looks like.

I'd ask the Premier, in light of the \$400 million hit that's projected, what is the target that the Premier would use to determine whether or not the transition has been successful?

THE PREMIER: It will be the men and women in the industry who will determine that and benefit from the commitments that the transition team is doing. He would know we've already committed more money to silviculture, roads being built. He would also know we just recently announced a new capital tax investment specifically for the forestry sector, that we believe the private sector will add investment into their equipment to do value added, which will deal with some of the chips and residuals that are there.

Those are ideas that have come from the transition team that have been communicated out in policy. We have set aside that \$50 million that will continue to work with good ideas about how we can best support everyone in this industry.

TIM HOUSTON: The Premier's already demonstrated that he was completely unclear as to the size of the forestry industry, the potential impact that this would have. When government allocates money, when government allocates \$50 million to something, or whatever number it will end up being, it's very useful if they have some idea of what success looks like. Will it be effective? Will it not be effective?

Time and time again, we see that this government is not really that thoughtful about why they are doing certain things. I would ask the Premier a very specific question: In light of a projected \$400 million hit to our economy, what does success look like? Is it a return of that \$400 million? Is it better than that \$400 million? Is it something less than that \$400 million?

Has the Premier given any thought to what this industry will look like if his transition team and taxpayer investment is successful? What is successful, Mr. Premier?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Success is continuing to grow the economy of this province, continuing to ensure that people are working. The lowest unemployment rate in the history of our province - that's success - also continuing that young people see a future for themselves here. This sector is transitioning to a new tomorrow. As you know, the Lahey report was transitioning it, as well, in the next ten years. We will continue to transition that.

The honourable member knows that this sector had a hit when it came to the pulp mill. There are environmental obligations that the mill was unable to meet. I don't believe the honourable member is suggesting we should continue to pollute, or I hope he isn't. The reality of it is, there's a process for that mill to go forward. They're going to do, hopefully, an environmental assessment to determine whether they want to make the capital investment to reopen that mill. We're working with them to put it on a hot idle. But we are going to deal with the issue of Boat Harbour.

We're going to protect the environment of this province and we are going to continue to grow good jobs and good opportunities for Nova Scotians here.

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

**PREM. - HEALTH CARE RESTRUCTURE:
NEGATIVE EFFECTS - COMMENT**

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Premier about the Nova Scotia Health Authority. In November, the then-interim CEO of the authority, Janet Davidson, described the NSHA this way: ". . . overly complex and bureaucratic, confusing and does not allow us to easily address challenges that may be unique to individual zones . . ."

Does the Premier agree with Ms. Davidson about the negative consequences of his government's focus on centralizing health services in Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question; it's a very good question. I want to thank Ms. Davidson for her work as the interim CEO, which he clearly highlighted, and she articulated that one health authority is an important thing for Nova Scotia. What she was referring to was that some decisions need to be made out in parts of the province in zones and areas.

We agree with that, the health authorities agree with that, and action is being taken to provide more site-based decision making.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, the province's key health indicators have continued to worsen since the establishment of the NSHA. The percentage of people in the province with regular access to a health care provider has decreased. The percentage of people in the province who believe they are in good health has declined and the number of people in the province reporting mental health problems has increased. I'll table this data.

Does the Premier acknowledge that while his government has been focused on centralizing health care services, actual key health indicators have worsened in Nova Scotia?

THE PREMEIR: Mr. Speaker, we've seen over the last number of years the number of people who are looking for primary care is going down. More people are being attached to primary care teams across the province. We have the fourth-best record in the entire country when it comes to attaching our citizens to primary care givers.

The honourable member highlights a real issue and part of that has been in the infrastructure inside our province, not only in the massive investments we're making in our regional hospitals but in collaborative care models that health care providers are telling us today - doctors, nurse practitioners are all telling us they want to work in a collaborative team. That's why we've continued to invest, to ensure that we provide a collaborative care model around the province.

By doing so, Mr. Speaker, we are attracting more people who provide the very care the honourable member is referring to.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, despite centralization, health disparities between the regional zones are key characteristics of the period since the inauguration of the Nova Scotia Health Authority. For example, life expectancy is almost three years lower in the Eastern Zone than it is in the Central Zone. Diabetes is nearly twice as prevalent in the Eastern Zone as it is in the Central Zone.

I want to ask the Premier: Can he point to any evidence that this whole centralization project has done anything to significantly address geographic disparities and key health outcomes in Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what he is highlighting is the very fact that some of the numbers he's quoting were part of the fractured health care system we had in this province. Under one health authority, we recognized that with cancer rates in Cape Breton, we needed to make a substantial investment in cancer care in Cape Breton Island. That's what we're continuing to do to respond.

Under the old system, where it was fractured, they were looking at it in nine different ways and nine different lenses. This is one lens; but I will give the honourable member this - and we know this as we go through this - we are allowing more site-based management to continue but we will continue to have an overarching umbrella for how we deliver primary health care and acute care to our citizens in this province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: MENTAL HEALTH WAIT TIMES - PLAN TO SHORTEN

TIM HOUSTON: The wait times in industrial Cape Breton for mental health services are the highest in the province at nearly 300 days. Rob Murphy wrote a song about the wait times. It's called Three Hundred Days. It is a painful song. There's one line in there that says, "You could have helped her, but she was easier to ignore for 300 days." No one should have to wait 300 days for help. This is a song about somebody who couldn't. In this budget for mental health services the budget was increased by just \$550,000.

I'd like the Premier to explain what his plan is to shorten wait times for mental health services across the province, particularly in industrial Cape Breton.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member would know, the new health agreement out of the national government dedicates funding directly towards mental health. We'll make those investments.

He also would know, if he followed the last number of budgets, the investments we're making in our education system around SchoolsPlus, with wraparound supports and systems to help identify the issue of mental health early and then provide those initiatives. We're listening to the mental health professionals. Both Dr. Stan Kutcher and Starr Dobson have provided support and input, and we'll continue to make those investments.

The honourable members are raising a very important issue for those families and those individuals who are suffering, who need our support today. It's why we continue to make the investment in every one of our budgets. It's also important, and I think everyone would identify, that the earlier we can identify the issues of adolescent mental health, the easier it is for us to provide those supports.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I do agree that when it's obvious to everyone around that somebody is struggling with mental health, it is good when we acknowledge that and try to reach out with help.

The actual dollars spent on addictions and mental health in this province are somewhere in the range of \$176 million. If we looked at mental health spending on its own, there are only eight departments of government that have larger budgets. I'd like the Premier to address the fact - the Premier has been Premier for two consecutive governments - that wait times continue to increase. Things are not getting better in health care. Things are not getting better for those seeking mental health services.

Does the Premier agree that addictions and mental health are such a significant issue in this province that they warrant a dedicated department with a dedicated minister who would be responsible and accountable for making sure that people get the help they need when they need it, and not 300 days later? (Applause)

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. The reality of it is we continue to make investments in mental health, and every year it's the largest investment in the history of our province. In this current budget, we're going to continue to make those investments, continue to provide supports for families, and we're going to continue to listen to the clinicians, the professionals, who tell us that you need to do this on the evidence base.

You need to make sure these decisions are being made because, in some cases, decisions governments have made in the past have actually not helped. They've actually made the issue worse. Psychiatrists are telling you, make those investments based on evidence. That's what we're working to do, and I don't believe creating more bureaucracy around the issue is going to help those families who require support.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

H&W: ACCESS TO RARE DRUGS - INCREASE

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Last week, 23-year-old Chantelle Lindsay of Truro died after a lifelong battle with CF. I know all MLAs in the Chamber join me in sending condolences to her family and friends. She truly was an incredible person.

In the final months of her life, Lindsay's family and health care team fought for access to a breakthrough medication for the disease called Trikafta, a drug available in the U.S. but not yet in Canada. Lindsay's team applied for compassionate coverage to obtain this drug, but they were denied.

My question is: Has the minister contacted his federal counterparts to make sure Trikafta and other life-saving drugs are available when Nova Scotians need them?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: As the member highlighted, many Nova Scotians are aware of the tragic events that have taken place.

One of the priorities within Health and Wellness right now is pharmaceutical services, and that's an agenda item that we continue to engage in with our federal government. We know that they are moving forward with work on a national pharmacare plan. In this particular case, the manufacturer has not reached out to provide that particular drug in Canada, although I certainly know that the federal government and Health Canada are prepared to move forward with approval in an expedited way.

KARLA MACFARLANE: We have all heard of sad stories like Chantelle's where an expensive drug could have saved a life. It's gut-wrenching for families to know that a parent or a child needs a drug that exists and works, but they can't afford it. To know that as hard as you work to provide for the ones you love, it might not be enough to get them the thing they need the most to live.

So, my question is: Will the minister tell the House how much money is in this budget to help Nova Scotians with the cost of expensive rare-disease drugs?

[10:15 a.m.]

RANDY DELOREY: What we have is continued investment and expanded investment in our Pharmacare Programs, both within our Seniors' Pharmacare as well as our Family Pharmacare.

In addition, I'd like to remind the member that just a couple of years ago, in my first year as Minister of Health and Wellness, we brought in a new program for expensive cancer take-home drugs, the first of its kind here in the province - a start-up program to provide that.

We've been responsive, we'll continue to be responsive, but we will follow the advice and the clinical recommendations when it comes to the pharmaceutical drugs within the Formulary.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

L&F - CDN. BIODIVERSITY: 2020 GOALS/TARGETS - COMMIT

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, the industry of forestry in Nova Scotia is in a state of transition. On top of all that uncertainty, the viability of their future, another topic remains on the mind of many harvesters. In 2015, the deputy ministers meeting in Nova Scotia committed to 2020 biodiversity goals and targets.

My question for the minister is: Is Nova Scotia still committed to the 2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada set in 2015?

HON. IAIN RANKIN: We worked with the federal government on the international agreements that went through. We continue to work with our partners in the industry and the environmental groups across the province to ensure that we look at ways that we can improve the biodiversity. Along with climate change, it is one of the most pressing issues of our time, biodiversity loss not only in Nova Scotia but across the country and across the international community.

TORY RUSHTON: In 2017, the mandate letter to the then Minister of Natural Resources said that a biodiversity council was to be established. That was accomplished in May 2018 with four prominent members. This council lost a member shortly thereafter. That person took a position within the department.

My question for the minister is: Does the council have a full complement of members, and how many times did they meet in 2019?

IAIN RANKIN: I don't have the exact number of how many times they meet, but they meet regularly. This is a group of people who are focused on the science; they're from the academia community. We value the input but, of course, when there was an opportunity for one of those members to actually work with the department with the expertise that they have - the person is actually from the Mi'kmaw community - we welcomed her into the department. We are looking to fill that position currently.

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

TIR - MEAGHERS GRANT: DILLMANS BRIDGE - REPLACE

LARRY HARRISON: Last November, there was a significant accident that took out the Dillmans Bridge in Meaghers Grant. No one was hurt, but the bridge is deemed

irreparable and unsafe; it was removed in December. A detour was created, but this detour adds a significant amount of time to go anywhere from that area.

I've been informed that TIR determined that a temporary structure was not feasible. Could the minister provide an explanation of why it was not feasible?

HON. LLOYD HINES: We understand that many in the community are anxious to have the bridge replaced. As the member pointed out, this was the result of an accident. Regular inspections on the bridge found it to be fine, but it encountered a collision with a truck.

Our staff have been conducting the geotechnical and preliminary design work as to what we're planning on doing there, and it is actually due for replacement in 2021.

LARRY HARRISON: Well, that partially answers the question. It is an important connection and a lot of people are concerned that emergency services may not be able to get through at the proper time.

My next question is: For their peace of mind, is there an actual date in which that bridge may be replaced so that the folks will know what is happening?

LLOYD HINES: As I indicated, the capital plan would see the bridge replaced in 2021. We are aware of the six-kilometre detour that is currently in place, and we're also understanding that folks are taking the Cole Road, which cuts that detour down to 1.5 kilometres.

We have this in our design process and hope to have it completed as quickly as we physically can.

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

JUSTICE - STREET CHECKS/RACIAL PROFILING: CESSATION - CONFIRM

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Justice. My office was contacted by a constituent, whom I personally know. On Saturday, February 15th, at approximately 10:00 p.m., this person was a passenger in a vehicle that was stopped by the Halifax Regional Police. When the officer was asked for the reason for the stop, he explained that he was checking for impaired drivers. The officer was informed that no one in the vehicle had alcohol that night or drank at all. The officer then informed the occupants of the vehicle - all of whom were Black - that in Nova Scotia a vehicle can be stopped for any reason.

My question to the minister is, would he please clarify whether the statement that “in Nova Scotia a vehicle can be stopped for any reason” is true?

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, the way it’s worded brings complexity to the comment and the circumstances, but I’ll say this: law enforcement officers in the province of Nova Scotia have the authority to stop a motor vehicle and ask the operator for a driver’s licence, registration for the vehicle, and insurance. That’s embedded in provincial statute and common law. That’s what gives the police the authority to stop vehicles.

What takes place after that initial stop is based on the authority that the police officer possesses. At no time should police be going beyond their authority when they engage operators or passengers of vehicles.

BRAD JOHNS: After we made some inquiries with the Halifax Regional Police, my office was told that there were actually two stops that were conducted that evening between 9:00 p.m. and 12:00 midnight. It was confirmed that in both cases, the drivers of those vehicles were individuals of colour. Can the minister confirm that racial profiling and street checks have ceased in the province of Nova Scotia?

MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, my colleague would well know that we have banned street checks in the province of Nova Scotia. The law enforcement community are aware of that ban, and there is an expectation among our police community that they respect that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

ENVIRON. - EFFICIENCY N.S.: MERCURY RECYCLING - DISCONTINUED

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. For several months, our caucus has been pressing this government on progress towards the overdue targets in the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act. Recently, we were delivered a rude update when we learned that Efficiency Nova Scotia has cancelled its mercury recycling program; mercury-filled light bulbs will now head to the landfill instead. The reason given is that legislated targets have been met by Nova Scotia Power, and there are no new targets in sight.

Mr. Speaker, what other programs are headed to the landfill now that we are several months and counting without new environmental goals on the books?

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment.

HON. GORDON WILSON: Any time we talk about what gets into the environment, it’s important for Nova Scotians to realize that there are substances out there that we need to protect the environment from, mercury being one of them. There are programs out there now, certainly through our municipal HHW sites, where residents can

take their mercury. Also, there are some private-sector initiatives where we see that thermostats can actually also be recycled.

It's surprising to a lot of Nova Scotians, when you raise the topic, that there even still is mercury out there. It is being banned in CFLs, and with time it will be part of a stream that will eventually disappear. I appreciate the opportunity to express that if anybody does have mercury, go to their HHW sites at their municipal offices.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, in the last session, our caucus submitted a comprehensive list of amendments to the Sustainable Development Goals Act, asking for measurable targets for renewable energy, local food procurement, green job creation, electric transportation, among others. They were all rejected.

This week in the Committee of the Whole on Supply, we learned that the government cannot report on its local food procurement and local farm production goals because it hasn't really been keeping that information and has no baseline data to use.

These are targets that were written into law. Why can't this government give us basic updates on our progress toward addressing the climate crisis and environmental sustainability?

GORDON WILSON: I think at this point in time we should stand here very proud that we have some of the most aggressive targets in greenhouse gas emissions. (Applause) We lead the country in waste diversion. We've just banned plastics. We have one of the most aggressive pieces of legislation in our Sustainable Development Goals Act, and around that, the points that she's making are very valid.

We are working very aggressively at this point in time preparing for consultation. What we want to do is hear from Nova Scotians on what they feel is important that should go into that legislation.

We will continue to lead the country. We are being seen by people like the Suzuki Foundation as leaders in this country in what we are doing, and we will continue as Nova Scotians to set that goal and keep that bar high for other provinces to follow. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

H&W - CANCER SERV. (SW N.S.): RPT. RECOMMEND. - IMPLEMENT

COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, in 2017 a review was initiated of the Yarmouth area cancer services. The report was completed in 2018 and it concluded at that time not to build and operate a radiation therapy unit in Yarmouth. The report recommended by a majority to support the delivery of equity-enhancing measures to

enhance care for residents of southwest Nova Scotia such as travel support, improved appointment coordination, and more.

I would like to table an article from December 2019 with the title “Recommendations to enhance cancer services in southwest N.S. expected in new year.”

My question for the minister is: What is the timetable for these recommendations to be presented to government, and when can residents of southwest Nova Scotia expect their implementation?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: The work - both the review and the continued work - is being led predominantly by Dr. Bethune and his team with Cancer Care Nova Scotia. That work is under way already, aspects such as the workaround being more efficient with the scheduling. I think in the past there were times where you might have multiple appointments for the same condition in the city that would require people to spend an extra night in the city. They are working to coordinate the health care needs so that people can do it in one visit that may not require a night.

All that work is actually under way, and some aspects that are able to be implemented are being implemented as soon as they are. Some of the work has already been done, but there is still more work to be done, and the committee is active at that.

COLTON LEBLANC: As more time passes before all these recommendations are implemented, Nova Scotians are suffering. This lengthens the burden on Nova Scotians and my constituents, particularly a financial burden, compounded by the impacts of cancer. I am concerned that these delays are costly not only to my constituents but right across the health care system.

My question for the Minister of Health and Wellness is: What are the costs associated with delaying these services to the people of southwest Nova Scotia?

RANDY DELOREY: We certainly recognize the importance of providing cancer care services to all Nova Scotians. We recognize the burden in part based upon the advocacy of residents within southwest Nova Scotia and the Yarmouth area. The member for Yarmouth certainly brought these concerns forward, including, as I mentioned in a previous response, introducing a coverage program, the Take-Home Cancer Drug Fund, which I know constituents of the member for Yarmouth brought forward.

Again, we know the advocacy, the recognition, and the awareness of cancer treatment services and supports. We recognize them, and we’ve been investing to support them and all Nova Scotians.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

H&W - ABERDEEN HOSP. (PICTOU CO.): BED CLOSURES - CONSULT.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. I received a letter from two doctors from Pictou County with concerns about a recent bed closure at the Aberdeen Hospital. Last month, they lost four of their ten ICU beds. The doctors and staff affected by these changes were not involved in any discussions about these cuts.

Over the past three years, the occupancy rate far exceeded the recommendation of 85 per cent, with an average of 97 per cent they needed these beds for. To not consult staff about changes that affect their ability to provide health care is simply not fair.

[10:30 a.m.]

I'd like the minister to let us know why people who are affected the most by these cuts are not being consulted.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of any bed closures at the facility. I believe there have been some reclassification adjustment of the beds, beds being targeted to the areas in need. That work is undertaken in reviews and analysis completed by the Nova Scotia Health Authority responsible for administering and managing our hospitals.

My expectation, obviously, is that when they are making these site-based decisions, that they are engaged with the clinical experts to help inform and advise the optimum use of those resources and make sure the beds are allocated where they are most in need.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I received the same letter the minister did last week, and I will make sure I table that later or provide it to him.

At the Aberdeen, in the operating room, every single morning starts with a negotiation between doctors for beds. This is unacceptable. On a site where there are not enough beds, four of the ten ICU beds were cut.

In 2019, 23 orthopaedic surgeries were cancelled; this past January alone, 24 elective surgeries were cancelled due to the lack of beds. Outpatient care was compromised by moving ER-admitted patients into outpatient clinic space. The inability to deliver health care compromises the relationship with patients and health care workers.

My question for the Minister of Health and Wellness: Why were cuts made to a hospital that was already struggling to provide health care?

RANDY DELOREY: As I stated in my previous response, Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of any cuts being made at that facility. All of the resources within the facility, in terms of bed counts are, as far as I am aware, still within the facility.

The allocation or the distribution of beds for the purposes for which they are being allocated towards may shift but that is not bed closures, Mr. Speaker, that is realignment. When the Nova Scotia Health Authority is making those operational decisions within individual sites of hospitals, I expect those recommendations to be following the best clinical delivery of service models, to ensure that the patients and the residents of the community get the best care possible.

That's the expectation and I'll certainly follow up on the specific site and beds allocated, as noted in the letter the member has tabled.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

LAE - N. PULP: DISPLACED WORKERS - ASSISTANCE

HON. PAT DUNN: My question is for the Minister of LAE. Nova Scotians and former employees in Pictou County are already feeling the impact from the shutdown of Northern Pulp. I have recently had three separate displaced workers come to my office requesting direction with respect to children they have at various universities across the province.

The problem, Mr. Speaker, the eligibility and the amount of student loan is based on the previous years' incomes of parents and legal guardians. This will be a further burden on this particular group of now unemployed mill workers.

My question to the minister: Has the minister and his department given any thought to this aspect of further hardship that this group of displaced workers will be dealing with?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: I thank the member for the very important question. Mr. Speaker, our student loan program already has in place that if a parent loses a job or loses an income, that will be a factor in their future student loans. So, for the individuals who are applying coming up this Summer for next year's school, that will definitely be a factor.

Even if their income shows as too high for the previous year, the student loan department will look at what their current situation is, factor that in and at that point most likely the individual would qualify for a student loan.

PAT DUNN; I thank the minister for that answer. In one particular case, one family said if things aren't adjusted, their child will not be able to attend the fourth year of university and finish off their undergrad.

My question to the minister is, there is a little bit of confusion from the end of the parents and the information they are getting, so I guess my question would be: Is there any particular process that they should go through and how soon can they go through it, getting that type of advice?

LABI KOUSOULIS: I would encourage any individual in that situation to reach out to the student loan department and just inquire. Every situation is different. In the calculation, they look at not only the income of the household but how many dependants there are, if there are any other dependants, such as if you're taking care of parents. That factors in, as well, in terms of what student loans are.

One thing I will say about the student loan program, especially this year: I encourage all families to apply for it because the Nova Scotia portion, starting this year and moving forward, will not only be forgivable for university students getting a Nova Scotia student loan, but in this budget it will also be forgiven for all community college students getting a Nova Scotia student loan.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

**H&W - BRIDGEWATER HEART CLINIC:
CLOSURE - LACK OF NOTICE**

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Nova Scotians expect the health system to be there when they need it, but for the people on the South Shore who attend the cardiovascular health clinic in Bridgewater the service they relied on closed without any warning at the end of January. There was no notice, no communication with patients, no warning.

Actually, Mr. Speaker, some patients found out by calling the clinic and hearing from a voicemail message.

While it's true that the nurse practitioner at the clinic moved on to another job, the Nova Scotia Health Authority had more than ample time to find a replacement. Can the minister explain why these patients were given no warning that the heart clinic would no longer be open to treat them?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as the member rightly indicated, the NSHA is actively recruiting to fill the position. As we've discussed in numerous different types of questions on the floor here over the past number of sittings, the member would know that one of the challenges with filling vacant positions is the supply of qualified health care professionals.

That's why we've expanded the number of nurse practitioner seats at Dalhousie Medical School to have more nurse practitioners available. We've provided an incentive

program that will actually support those nurses in training, who will sign a return of service in areas of high need. And we've expanded physician training opportunities, both medical seats and residents. We're building the supply so that the NSHA will be able to more successfully recruit to communities in need.

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for the response. Without this critical program running, constituents on the South Shore with heart disease will no longer have access to a key part of their recovery journey. I will note that as of this week, there was still no posting to replace this position on the NSHA website.

Research in the *Heart & Stroke 2018 Ms. Understood* report indicates that attendance at the typical 12- to 24-week cardiac rehabilitation program can result in a 31 per cent reduction in hospital readmissions and a 25 per cent reduction in mortality. I'll table that document.

My question to the minister is: What is the minister's plan for reopening the heart clinic and giving cardiac patients on the South Shore the support they need for better health outcomes?

RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, again, I want to state clearly that the residents and the patients receiving care do continue to receive care. That clinic is recognized as an important, valuable part of the Health Authority's operations. That's why they're working to get the appropriate qualified health care professionals to continue to provide that service.

That work is ongoing, and I look forward to having it established once the appropriate qualified personnel are made available.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

L&F - PROV. PARKS: WINTER ACTIVITIES - SERV.

MURRAY RYAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Lands and Forestry. Nova Scotia provincial parks offer wonderful trails and beautiful views of our great province for all to enjoy. If you're looking to get some fresh air or peace and quiet, provincial parks are the place to go, no matter what time of year.

Since provincial parks are becoming more and more popular during the Winter months for activities like snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, challenges exist for government to provide services and facilities for the public to use.

My question to the minister: What is the department's policy related to services such as snow removal in facilities such as washrooms during the Winter months?

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I can get the exact policy for the member opposite. We continue to make sure that all the parks across the province have a safe environment for those who are going into our parks, but there are months of the year when unfortunately we do have to close down those parks. There is snow removal for those ones that are open and not for those ones that are closed.

MURRAY RYAN: I thank the minister for the answer. Petersfield Provincial Park, in Westmount, is a great place to escape the hustle and bustle and enjoy the great outdoors no matter what time of year. I have received numerous calls this past Winter from my constituents expressing the need for Petersfield Park to be plowed to allow for parking. As it stands now, residents cannot access the unplowed parking lot unless they're in a 4x4 or SUV. This is causing residents to park alongside the highway, which raises safety concerns. This park is open year-round.

So, my question: Will the minister commit to providing services and facilities at Petersfield Provincial Park?

IAIN RANKIN: What I can commit to is looking at this park, along with others, and look at all balance of considerations in terms of our budget, what we deliver at the parks across the province, ensuring that we do have a consistent approach and give due consideration to what the member is asking.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader for the Official Opposition.

JUSTICE: MAINTENANCE ENFORCEMENT - PROBLEMS

ALLAN MACMASTER: My question is for the Minister of Justice. In 2016, this government passed maintenance enforcement legislation to improve the system. I recall the Premier felt this issue was so important that he raised it with the Council of the Federation as a matter affecting all provinces, and something that all provinces needed to be working on together.

One in four cases at the time was cited as problematic because either the payer or the payee had moved to another province. The intentions were good - we supported the legislation here in the Opposition - but sadly I can cite two recent cases where moms are not getting the money they are entitled to from their children's fathers. The fathers are living in other provinces.

Can the minister explain why these problems persist three years later?

HON. MARK FUREY: I want to thank my colleague for the question. This is a very important issue on our agenda within the Department of Justice.

Just recently I had the opportunity to be in Victoria with federal, provincial, and territorial ministers, and this issue of interjurisdictional support was top of the agenda. It's a matter that we continue to pursue. As we speak, in Nova Scotia now we have the lowest amount of arrears in 10 years. We committed in a previous budget to increase the resources in New Waterford in the MEP division by five personnel. That has had a significant impact and will continue to drive that down.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Improvements are good but, ideally, there would be zero arrears because there are people being affected. In one case, over \$26,000 is owed. Garnishments are in place, but the province attempting to collect from him cannot find him, yet he is employed there and I'm sure his employer will be sending his T4s to his address and Revenue Canada will know where that is.

In the other, the father has actually been paying, but in that province he is listed as having previously overpaid while Nova Scotia has him in arrears for over \$10,000. If he pays within the system, his money is trapped. If he pays outside, he will show as delinquent.

These are process issues. I reached out to Maintenance Enforcement here - I've even contacted an MP in the province in that case. The problem persists.

Is it time to raise this matter again at the Council of the Federation because these interjurisdictional corridors do not seem to be working and children are going without the funds they deserve?

MARK FUREY: The council themselves have instructed federal, provincial, and territorial justice ministers to continue this work. As I said, it was on the agenda just recently in Victoria. I had the opportunity while in Victoria to engage the premier directly on this subject matter because it is of critical importance to this government. I want to give my colleague the opportunity, the circumstances that he's speaking to, to share directly with my office, and we can advance that further.

These very same circumstances arose with a surviving parent and a single parent in Queens County, and through the collective work of our office we were able to secure \$80,000 in payment that was owed to that individual. That individual is now able to support her children and her community. That's the work we will continue to do.

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

AGRI.: FOOD PRODUCTION - KICK START

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, a household is considered food-secure if the household has access at all times throughout the year to food for an active, healthy life for all household members.

According to the February 18, 2020 article published by the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, Nova Scotia households are the least food-secure in all of Canada, at 84.7 per cent. Those are not statistics that we should be proud of.

I understand that there are all kinds of factors that affect food security, but in our province in particular, we don't produce very much food that Nova Scotians actually produce. I ask the Minister of Agriculture, what bold plans are in place in his department to be able to kick-start food production in this province?

[10:45 a.m.]

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, last Saturday, we announced our new Buy Local campaign, under Taste of Nova Scotia. It's a program about raising awareness of food that's produced in Nova Scotia. As we move to complete food security in the province, it's going to take us some time.

There were goals set in the past, but the goals were set for the number of farms, not the amount of food we were producing. There was no way of measuring it, so we're going to put a new system in to measure what kind of results we're getting. Indeed, we want to become 100 per cent self-sufficient in the province.

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, according to the Department of Finance and Treasury Board's article dated January 6, 2020, on Nova Scotia's total trade for 2018, Nova Scotia imports amounted to \$29 billion.

Nova Scotia is heavily reliant upon others to provide us with food, fuel and supplies. We saw with recent protests and blockades and with Hurricane Dorian, that we're really exposed with regard to food and fuel insecurities in this province. I ask the Minister responsible for the Emergency Management Office: What do we have in place to ensure that Nova Scotians are prepared in the event that a supply system is cut off or interrupted?

HON. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. In this most recent example with regards to the blockades, I'll speak to that. We are twice weekly checking in with our provincial and municipal and critical infrastructure partners to see what the status of supply is. We have a relationship with all of those folks and we'll continue to do so.

We will work with our federal partners, as well, to ensure that supply chain is open and how we do alter when we need to make sure that we have the necessary supplies, such as food and other things, like propane - that has been an issue that we've heard about.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

EECD - SPRINGHILL: PROMISED ELEM. SCHOOL - UPDATE

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I spoke in the House a fair amount of times about the promised elementary school that was announced two years ago for Springhill. At that time, the minister stated that he was waiting for a technical evaluation of the property. I spoke several times to the minister and we continue to have open dialogue. I've invited him to Springhill to tour the facilities and also tour the area to look at possible sites.

Will the minister be announcing the site any time soon? What date would he expect the construction to start?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, there have been some reasons that have delayed the site selection. One, there is a tremendous amount of under-mining in the Springhill community, with both legal and illegal mines that evidently exist.

Also, as the member would know, we did find a suitable location at the current high school to expand that facility. We could have done that on an expedited process but, in fact, we did listen to the member's feedback as well as feedback from municipal officials, who said that was not the preferred site for the community. That has also delayed site selection.

We're currently in the process of doing a technical evaluation of sites that the member himself and municipal officials have provided us. We hope that those technical evaluations can happen and be completed soon. We hope that one of those sites works so that we can get on with this important project.

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that update. The capital plan caused quite a stir in Springhill when it was announced last year. The school that had been talked about for 2020-21 was moved to 2023-24.

The minister has spoken in local media lately that he is still committed to that September 2021. Will the minister reassure residents that he is still committed to the 2021 opening?

ZACH CHURCHILL: We're absolutely committed to getting that school built as quickly as possible. There have been reasons that I think the community can understand that have impacted the site selection process and that may result in delays. If the school community does like a current design that exists in the system, that will expedite the design process and that will shave months off construction at the end of the day.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me and a pleasure to speak going into Supply and add in a few comments on the budget that we have just seen tabled - a budget that in my seven years here is, I believe, the earliest budget we've ever had delivered. We normally have budgets in April and here we have a February budget. That's an interesting observation for which we really don't know the reason. One of the impacts is that since the government year end is March 31st, for many of the items in the budget we don't know the actual number. We have only a forecast.

One of the things the budget does give us is a \$55-million surplus, and of course Nova Scotians hear that number and think, wow, we have a surplus. However, there are a few caveats to that \$55-million surplus that I do want to raise - things that are of concern.

I know we've heard the message about how great things are in the province and how well the province is doing and how we have a record number of people in the province. However, at the same time that we have those good messages, we also know that we are the only province in Canada to see an increase in child poverty. We are the province in Canada that has the lowest median income of any province. We see the economic prosperity of the country somewhat passing us by and that is a very great concern.

One issue that we can say is, well, we see in the budget that we have an additional \$395 million in transfer payments from Ottawa. I believe approximately \$3.6 billion of our \$11.5-billion budget is transfer payments from Ottawa - \$3.6 billion of money coming to Nova Scotia which effectively comes from other provinces. Other provinces are paying into the national kitty and when you look at the federal government that has a formula - I am not privy to the formula, I'm sure it's out there in the public domain. Whatever that formula is, our per capita share, we're not a contributor but a receiver of that. We receive \$3.6 billion, and this year, as I mentioned, \$395 million more from the federal government. So in some way our economy has continued to falter vis-à-vis the rest of the country.

If you think about what I've mentioned - the fact that we are the only province to have had an increase in child poverty and we have the lowest median family income of any province - we can see that the seven years of this Liberal government have not allowed us to keep pace with the rest of Canada.

While it is true that our economy has grown, it has not grown at the same pace as the rest of the country. While it is true that our population has grown, I would say - and I don't have those statistics right in front of me, but I am sure it is correct to say that our population increase hasn't maintained pace with the rest of the country either. While we are happy to have a population increase, we want to meet the Canadian average. We want to be part of the Canadian model. We want to be a net contributor to the economy of Canada.

The goal would be to see the transfer payments going down. The goal would be that someday we could be a contributor to the economy of Canada, in the sense that we are one of the provinces that is paying in and not taking back. I believe that is a worthy goal and should be a goal of ours, not to see the steady erosion of our economy compared to the rest of the country. While there are good news stories in the budget, there are also very troubling indicators.

Another troubling indicator to me with the \$55-million surplus is that we are adding \$1 billion to our debt. Now, I know the minister has said that there is good debt and bad debt. I am sure that the ordinary consumer can understand that. There is debt for consumer goods and there is debt for property, for instance, and long-term debt for property is not seen in the same way that consumer debt is.

However, when we look at things like what are we spending our money on - we are spending our money on hospitals, in large measure, and I know the public goes, yes, that's good. If we look at the budget that we have before us, the estimated spending on hospital infrastructure last year was \$185 million. The projected actual is \$124 million. In other words, there was \$60 million less than projected spending on hospital infrastructure. I don't know if many of you go into hospitals, but if you do you will see that there are broken tiles on the floors and there are holes in the walls. Our hospitals are very, very heavily used; they have a lot of use and abuse and they need maintenance.

I can tell you as a farmer that we repaired our barns. It would save us money. If I was farming and I had a barn that was slowly breaking down, I wouldn't build a new one just so I didn't have to show it in my current operational costs. Rather than build a new barn, I would fix the old one and keep using it. It's penny wise and pound foolish. You're spending billions so it shows up in another part of a budget line when you should maintain the infrastructure you have.

How many times did my previous colleague for Northside-Westmount bring up the stairs on the Northside General - how many times did he ask a question about that? It took

a long time to get those repaired. I question the logic of that. I question the logic of not fixing up and repairing the infrastructure we have but rather building the shiny new hospital and saying this is going to solve all our problems. If we don't maintain the new one, we'll rapidly be in the same situation.

We see, in other parts of the world, buildings that are hundreds of years old continue to be used, continue to be cherished. I can tell you in the Annapolis Valley many farmers use barns that are hundreds of years old that you would go into and think they look like a new barn. It's new on the outside but not new under the skin, so to speak - post and beam barns that have been renovated to have modern, cleanable surfaces on the inside and outside.

It's always better to maintain what you have than simply let it fall into disrepair and then build something new. It's always less money in the long run unless there's some overriding reason. I can tell you that when there are equipment changes - for instance, we in the agricultural world went from doing everything by hand to doing things with forklifts, and barns had to be rebuilt to accommodate that. But that hasn't happened in the medical world. We're still walking around on two feet. We still go into the hospitals. We've still got to go through the front doors.

We need to do the maintenance in our hospitals. When I look at that \$185 million budget last year and I see that there was \$60 million unspent in maintenance but we're going to build a new hospital, I think about the hospitals where I've been in visiting constituents in the city and in the Valley and the obvious, obvious maintenance issues in those hospitals. I say to the government: shame on you.

On roads - another big issue for us - we see the government building a new interchange. Everybody likes the new interchange. I have people asking me, John how come we're building a new interchange when we can't take care of the roads we have? We have serious, serious issues with the roads in Kings North and in the Annapolis Valley in general - mostly in general, I would say.

Parts of the Annapolis Valley seem to be very well looked after. Further west, Annapolis County, 130 kilometres of new paving in the last couple years. In Kings North, not so much. Nothing near that. We are very concerned about that - and I can tell you that what tears up our roads in Kings County is economic activity. It's 18-wheelers. It's tractors. It's heavy equipment. That is contributing to the economy of Nova Scotia. To turn your backs on that and let those roads fall into disrepair is a detriment to the owners of these trucks and vehicles.

I've had truck owners say John, we're not repairing. My trucks are trimming the trees - the 18-wheelers - that hang over the road. The trucks are the ones that are trimming those trees. The damage to those trucks is significant to the owners. A light gets smashed

off on the top of the truck and they get stopped by maintenance enforcement, the vehicle enforcement.

[11:00 a.m.]

So, we are not doing the maintenance on our roads, we are not doing the maintenance on our hospitals, and we have a \$55 million surplus. Hurrah. Then we are going to add another \$1 billion this year, a record investment. Another \$1 billion to our debt to build things when we could have repaired what we had for a tenth of the money.

We could have repaired what we had for a tenth of the money; maybe 20 per cent of the cost. We could have kept maintenance up on what we have and been better ahead in the long run. If we don't maintain what we have, we will never get out of this cycle of building new and ignoring the things that we have.

What we have, the projection is \$2.7 billion added to our debt by 2024 for the new infrastructure. Everybody loves new infrastructure. I can tell you that the public - well they say, yes, we're going to have new hospitals, that's going to solve our problem.

The second fundamental problem we have in our hospitals besides maintenance - lack of maintenance, not keeping up with maintenance - is human resources. How is a new building going to help if we are not able to hire the doctors and nurses? We are short of those skilled professionals now in our province, and we are short the family doctors. So, we will have a new hospital somewhere, but we are falling behind now on hiring those people. Building a new building is not necessarily the solution.

I can tell you that, again, in farming we would plant the crop first and then build the barn; that is what I see the apple growers doing. They know that if they plant apples three years out, they are going to need a new building and they build the building three years from now. But they take care of the crop first.

We need to have the human resources looked after in the buildings we have right now, rather than offer to the public there will be a new hospital a couple of years from now, don't worry; everything will be okay.

If we can't solve our human resource issues right now, if we can't get it right, right now, with doctors and nurses, how are we going to do it three years from now? What changed?

We're looking at a government that came in with a platform, probably if you ask people what is the one thing that people remember about your 2013 platform, it was a doctor for every Nova Scotian. That was probably the singular platform piece, there were other pieces in that platform. You were going to keep the film tax credit for five years was

in your platform; you were going to break the monopoly of Nova Scotia Power (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order please. I would like to remind the honourable member to keep his comments directed through the Chair instead of referring to the members opposite directly.

The honourable member for Kings North.

JOHN LOHR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't hold you personally responsible though. (Laughter). Now you made me lose my train of thought. I'll keep going. Let me regroup.

Mr. Speaker, let me say something about agriculture and go on to another topic in the minute and 57 seconds I have left. My farmers, the farm community, is very concerned about an over \$10 million drop in the agriculture budget; we have a \$55 million surplus this year. We have huge issues in agriculture but huge potential.

I know there was a frost payout plan on an AgriRecovery that was engaged due to the frost of June 2018. It was a once in a - more than once in a lifetime - frost, it was a once in 200 years frost at least, and maybe a once in 1,000-year frost. But last year we had a tough year too in agriculture.

It was a tough year in a couple of different ways. We had a very cold, wet Spring; we had Hurricane Dorian and record rainfall around the time of Hurricane Dorian, and it severely impacted agriculture.

For agriculture to have a more than \$10 million drop from actual to budgeted this year, when we have a \$55 million surplus - it seems like when almost every other department is seeing increases - I can tell you that and yes, we talk about food security, the minister talks about food security, and I appreciate that he sees it as a concern, but I'm concerned that his colleagues don't.

I want to help the minister in putting forward to that group - to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board - agriculture is important to our province. I want you to listen to your own minister. I am sure he asked for more money. He didn't get it. We got a more than \$10 million drop in the budget. He is disappointed, I am sure - I am disappointed. We need to have the basic pieces of our economy supported.

I'll circle back to what I said in the beginning - we are not keeping up with the Canadian model, we are increasing our transfer payments, we see the highest level of child poverty in the country and . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for the member's comments has expired.

The honourable member for Inverness.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, two things struck me about this budget. The first is the economy - how is our economy doing? I wouldn't go so far as to say it's doing terrible, but if we look at the fact that federal transfer payments are up 10 per cent, year after year, estimate to estimate in this budget, that is an indication that our economy is not doing as well as other parts of the country. Otherwise, we wouldn't be getting those transfer payments.

The other thing that struck me about this budget - this government has, I would say, been fiscally conservative when it comes to the debt up this point, but we see in this budget a significant departure from that. We know when the NDP were in power they added \$3 billion, or a 25 per cent increase, to the provincial debt, moving up from \$12 billion to \$15 billion.

With this budget, Mr. Speaker, if we look ahead in the projections over the next four years, this government will be adding almost another \$3 billion, about \$2.7 billion to the debt. So, the economy and the debt are the two things that strike me about this budget.

If we look a little more at the debt, we've been experiencing pretty good financial times around the world. We're seeing stock market activity the last 10 days that is quite significant, Mr. Speaker, really the biggest drops we've seen since the stock market crash in 2008. That concerns me because if the economy starts to fall off that's going to affect tax revenues for the government.

Mr. Speaker, I think about the debt - and no one seems to want to pay it down during good economic times. We're not in really bad economic times at this moment. I think we've been in a period around the world of some growth. The economy is always cyclical; we're always taught that. Just when we think everything is great, sometimes things turn the other way, and vice versa.

Mr. Speaker, I remember when I was first running for office 10 years ago, in our debate in Inverness, the price of oil was rising significantly at the time and people were talking about a price of oil at \$200 a barrel. I recall saying at the time - because I spent a lot of time learning about this - that I didn't think that was going to be the case. Oil will often choke itself off because as its price rises it gets harder and harder for people to purchase it and that helps the economy to contract back down.

My point here, Mr. Speaker, is we've gone through a period around the world of economic growth. Our economy has not been too bad here. It is not as great as other parts of the country, that's for sure, as evidenced by the transfer payments - a 10 per cent increase

year over year here. Now the government is looking at spending a significant amount of money and putting the province into debt by another \$2.7 billion.

Mr. Speaker, what happens if we do enter a period of time where the economy contracts? That's my concern. Our debt is going to be that much higher. Now it's possible if this coronavirus plunges the world economy in chaos, as may be being predicted by the stock market in the last number of days, the province will need economic stimulus, and infrastructure development will help. But I think these decisions were made well before the coronavirus hit. This budget didn't happen last week or even at the start of the year. These plans were happening last Fall, as every government does their budget planning for the year to come.

On a bright note, there is some luck here for us right now - I guess I shouldn't say luck, but we are lucky that we're living in times of very low interest rates. While the debt is going to be significantly growing over the next four years, the interest costs - the same as if we have a loan for a car or a mortgage on a house - are low right now. I understand the province is going to save about \$85 million this coming year because debt is maturing. It had an interest rate of about almost 10 per cent. This was related to bonds that were issued, I think, back to the 1990s.

That debt is going to be repurchased at a rate of much less than that, probably around, I think it was, 2.25 per cent - maybe 2.5 per cent. So, there's significant reduction in interest costs for taxpayers for that debt. I don't think because debt is cheap should be the prime consideration for acquiring more debt. We do have to pay the debt down. We've just gone through a period of good economic times where, if we were thinking really long term, we'd be thinking about trying to retire some of that debt.

I think back to Dr. John Hamm when he was Premier of the province and when there was a boon from royalties. Some of that money actually went onto the debt. He didn't get much credit for that because nobody really sees that and nobody really cares, but it has tremendous impact on the future of the province. If you want to look at how much it costs, we're looking at, in this budget for the coming year, the cost of servicing the debt is almost \$760 million. That is essentially thrown out the window because it's gone with no value other than the value that has previously been extracted from the money that had been borrowed in the past.

What is the impetus for this debt addition? According to the documents, it's building new hospitals and building roads, which are good pieces of infrastructure. I think a point that my colleague from Northside-Westmount made, if I may repeat the message he delivered, was that in health care, which is the largest budget item in this budget at 42 per cent, the challenges we're seeing in health care have nothing to do with the need to specifically build a new hospital. What I'm seeing is a lot of human resource issues in health care that are causing problems for people who need health care. Spending \$2.7 billion on hospitals and roads is not going to fix those issues.

I've talked about low interest rates. Consider, right now, if you're investing money or if you have pension plans which government is responsible for. I think about the teachers' pension plan - it is significantly below its 100 per cent solvency rate. The investments that are being made with the funds that are in that plan are also living in a world of low interest rates, which means it's harder to generate returns safely for the teachers and their pension fund. That's a liability for the government.

Government borrowing a lot of money to spend in the next four years, and possibly more - we don't know the projections beyond that, that's just what's in this budget - borrowing a lot of money, adding to the debt. Meanwhile, we're in an environment where it's hard to reduce the future cost to the government for pension plans it has liabilities under because the low interest rate environment that we're living in presents a problem. I just want to state that over the next number of years, the debt is going to grow by almost 18 per cent. If you just average that without any compounding over four years, that's about a 4.5 per cent per year increase in the debt.

[11:15 a.m.]

This budget is balanced, but if you look at it, it is balanced because of more federal sources of revenue that are coming in. That's a sign that our province is not able to do this without that support. That goes back to our economy. The economy this coming year - it's admitted right in the budget here that it is going to be rather flat because the economy is going to be declining because of Northern Pulp.

We don't have any projections which may become very real, and we may know that over the next couple of months about the coronavirus. We see the chaos that it's plunging other parts of the world into. How will it be any different here when it hits our shores? I've heard that it's in Canada now and it's affecting the economy. The stock market is a leading indicator, which means it is a predictor. If you want to know what's going to happen in the economy, the stock market is often a good place to look. We've seen a significant drop in the stock market. That could present problems for this budget and whether or not it's going to actually be balanced come the end of the year.

I'm concerned about the fishery in my area. Prices of lobster have dropped significantly. For our fishers in the southern parts of this province, our fishing season opens in May. We provide a lot of lobster and crab. We export a lot of lobster and crab around the world and, because of this significant demand for it, it's raised prices; but if the coronavirus has its way, we're probably looking at lower returns for the fishers this coming season.

Tourism? I don't know what's going to happen with tourism. Maybe our tourism will be just fine. Maybe people will travel domestically instead of internationally. Maybe that will help us. But that's an unknown, and that's a big industry in my constituency of Inverness.

The economy is contracting this year because of those issues. The government's suggested economic fix is government spending. These have been good economic times. We can understand government spending to lift the economy in bad economic times, but we've been in good economic times. We shouldn't just be looking to the government to fix the economy in relatively good economic times, but that's what this government is doing. That, I think, is an admission of failure, that the private sector of the economy has not had any tremendous benefit under their tenure over the last six years.

Something else I've noticed in the budget is the fact that if you look at our economy - there was a point I was going to mention. I know it's here. Let me see. I have it in the document here. I'm going to move on from that. I think it's in my notes here somewhere.

If we look at the trade in our province, we've seen international trade grow, which could be a good thing because it means diversification, but in a way it's actually become more risky. We're doing more trade with China, which is a communist country. I'm going to cite the coronavirus as a prime example of why it's risky to do business with a communist country. The culture in the leadership in China has probably led to a delay in the world's ability to address the coronavirus. We know there is a culture in the government of that country that leads people to want to please their superiors and tell them what they want to hear.

I think of the poor physician who has since passed away who made that comment about how the government should have been acting on this and was essentially, in the early stages, seeming to hide it. I don't want to quote him because I can't speak word for word what he said, but that was his message. He was brave, and he has since passed away from the coronavirus.

In Nova Scotia our trade with the United States has gone down on a percentage basis and it has gone up with China. We're seeing the risks of that.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I wish I had more time. Perhaps I will get to continue this at some point, but that's a good start.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

[11:20 a.m. The House resolved itself into a CW on Supply with Deputy Speaker Brendan Maguire in the Chair.]

[3:32 p.m. CW on Supply rose and the House reconvened. The Speaker, Hon. Kevin Murphy, resumed the Chair.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The Committee of the Whole on Supply reports:

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole on Supply has met and made some progress and begs leave to sit again.

THE SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise to meet again on Monday, March 2, 2020, between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.

Following the daily routine, business will include continuation of the Committee of the Whole on Supply and, with time permitting, second reading of Bill Nos. 233, 234, 236, 238, and 240.

I would also note that the Law Amendments Committee will commence at 12:00 noon.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for the House to adjourn, to meet again on Monday, March 2nd, between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 11:00 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 Monday, March 2nd at 4:00 p.m.

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

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1688**

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 Kinsmen Club are this year celebrating their 100th anniversary in Canada and 75th in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Liverpool Chapter President Gary Levy was the recipient of the Kinsmen Lifetime Achievement Award on February 15, 2020, following 45 years of service; and

Whereas the Lifetime Achievement Award is the highest level of recognition given for years of service, leadership and commitment to the club and community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulates and thanks Gary Levy for his selfless and invaluable service to the Kinsmen and dedication to his fellow residents of Queens County.

RESOLUTION NO. 1689

By: Hon. Kevin Murphy (Eastern Shore)

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

Whereas Marine Communities Food Bank operates through the dedicated support of communities volunteers ensuring all local residents have access to the food they need, recently discovered structural issues with their building; and

Whereas Laurie Ward became aware of the issues and committed her time and skills in order to ensure the building was safe and functioned in a effective manner for the local volunteers; and

Whereas this act by local citizen shows a high level of integrity and dedication to the people of the Eastern Shore that the Food Banks serve;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me thanking Laurie Ward for her dedication to the people of the Eastern Shore.

RESOLUTION NO. 1690

By: Hon. Geoff MacLellan (Glace Bay)

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

Whereas a staff member of the Nova Scotia Legislature has recently retired since the last sitting of the House; and

Whereas our former Committees Clerk, Shirley (Darlene) Henry, dedicated herself for many years to the successful operation of the House of Assembly; and

Whereas this professional civil servant has concluded her exemplary service to the House of Assembly;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Shirley (Darlene) Henry on her retirement from the Nova Scotia Legislature and the Province of Nova Scotia in recognition of her outstanding and dedicated service to the province.

RESOLUTION NO. 1691

By: Hon. Geoff MacLellan (Glace Bay)

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

Whereas a senior staff member of the Nova Scotia Legislature has recently retired since the last sitting of the House; and

Whereas our former Chief Clerk of the House of Assembly, Neil Ferguson, QC, dedicated himself for many years to the successful operation of the House of Assembly; and

Whereas this professional civil servant has concluded his exemplary service to the House of Assembly;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Neil Ferguson on his retirement from the Nova Scotia Legislature and the Province of Nova Scotia in recognition of his outstanding and dedicated service to the province.

RESOLUTION NO. 1692

By: Hon. Geoff MacLellan (Glace Bay)

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

Whereas a long-serving staff member of the Nova Scotia Legislature has recently retired since the last sitting of the House; and

Whereas our former Manager of House of Assembly Operations, Peter Theriault, dedicated himself for many years to the successful operation of the House of Assembly; and

Whereas this professional civil servant has concluded his exemplary service to the House of Assembly;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Peter Theriault on his retirement from the Nova Scotia Legislature and the Province of Nova Scotia in recognition of his outstanding and dedicated service to the province.