



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Third Session

TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
[PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS:]	
Govt. (N.S.): VON Client Serv. Assocs., Bonus Eligibility - Extend, J. Lohr	816
GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 315, School Community: Promoting Inclusivity: - Recog., Hon. D. Mombourquette	816
Vote - Affirmative.....	817
Res. 316, Seafood Alliance: Fostering Innovation - Recog., Hon. K. Colwell	817
Vote - Affirmative.....	818
Res. 317, Ntl. Caregiver Day: Compassion, Dedication - Thanks, Hon. Z. Churchill	818
Vote - Affirmative.....	819
Res. 318, Tartan Day: Celebrating Gaelic Heritage - Recog., Hon. S. Lohnes-Croft	819
Vote - Affirmative.....	819
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:	

No. 85, Securities Act (amended), Hon. L. Kousoulis	820
No. 86, Efficient Operating Rooms Act, T. Houston.....	820
No. 87, Pension Benefits Act (amended), Hon. L. Kousoulis	820
No. 88, School Supplies Tax Credit Act (amended), T. Halman	820
No. 89, Educ. Act (amended) and Educ. (CSAP) Act (amended), T. Halman	820
No. 90, Educ. Act (amended) and Educ. (CSAP) Act (amended), K. MacFarlane.....	820
No. 91, Educ. Act (amended), A. MacMaster	820
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS:	
Prince, Clarence: Retirement - Congrats., M. Ryan.....	820
BEC Students: St. Vincent de Paul Food Drive - Thanks, K. Coombes.....	821
Barteaux, Bruce/Barteaux, Bonnie - Runners: 100-km Fundraiser - Thanks, Hon. B. Jessome.....	821
Tartan Day: Declaration of Arbroath - Recog., H. MacKay	822
White, Charlotte: Retirement - Congrats., K. Masland.....	822
Chapman, David: Bursary for Astrophysics - Thanks, Susan Leblanc	823
Rolfe, Murray - Photographer: Com. Serv. - Thanks, Hon. L. Glavine.....	823
Sackawa Canoe Club: New Facility - Congrats., S. Craig	823
Adsum House: \$50K to House Homeless in Hotels - Investment Needed, L. Roberts.....	824
Hudson, Karen: Representation in Culture and Curriculum - Recog., B. Adams.....	824
Mulock, Ed/Mulock, Mike - Firefighters: Com. Serv. - Recog., Hon. M. Furey.....	825
Jones, Glenda: Supporting African Nova Scotian Students - Recog., Hon. P. Dunn.....	825
Campbell, Linda: Outdoor Line Dancing - Thanks, K. Coombes.....	826
Billard, Andrew - Paddler: Olympic Hopes Intl. Regatta - Congrats., R. DiCostanzo	826
Bay CoC Awards - Recipients: Bus. Achievements - Congrats., H. MacKay	827
Laven, Iris: Zumba Fitness for All Levels - Commend,	

T. Halman	827
Gushue, Chantel - Artist: <i>What Remains</i> - Recog., Susan Leblanc	828
Lewis, Abby - Runner: Promising Track Career - Congrats., B. Horne	828
Caribou Fire Dept.: Fundraising for Equipment - Thanks, K. MacFarlane	829
Northwood Staff: Serv. During Pandemic - Thanks, L. Roberts	829
Eldridge, Mary/Eldridge, Peter: Yarmouth Area Com. Fund - Thanks, Hon. Z. Churchill	829
MacIsaac Kiltmakers: Impeccable Cust. Serv. - Recog., A. Paon	830
CCS Daffodil Campaign: Remembering Those Affected - Support, L. Harrison	830
Brooks, Will: Meritorious Serv. Decoration - Congrats., Hon. S. Lohnes-Croft	831
Johns, Mike/Moore-Johns, Amanda: 9 th Wedding Anniv. - Congrats., B. Johns	831
Sobeys, N. Minas: Com. Serv. During Pandemic - Recog., Hon. K. Irving	832
CCS Daffodil Campaign: Symbol of Hope - Support, Colton LeBlanc	832
Swindells, Irene - Administrator: Retirement - Congrats., Hon. L. Metlege Diab	833
Isaac-Gloade, Cheyenne/Gloade, Garrett: Fundraiser, First Nations Youth - Thanks, D. Ritcey	833
Tolliver, Tyson: African Nova Scotian Directory - Recog., Hon. K. Colwell	834
Linloff, Taylor - Filmmaker: <i>A Strong Name</i> - Honour, A. Paon	834
Maple Inn: Re-opening - Congrats., T. Rushton	835
Mombourquette, Doug/Mombourquette, Margaret: 45 th Anniv. - Best Wishes, Hon. D. Mombourquette	835
Ratchford, Dave/Ratchford, Marguerite: Harness Racing Awards - Recog., M. Ryan	836
DeCoste, Shirley - Recipient: LG's Com. Spirit Award - Thanks, Hon. L. Hines	836
Queens Com. Health Bd. - Voluns.: Health Podcast - Recog., K. Masland	837
Damini Creatives: Bus. Venture - Recog., Hon. B. Jessome	837
Sackville Bus. Awards - Recipients: Bus. Achievements - Congrats., S. Craig	838
Buck's Home Hardware: Owner, Young Retailer of the Yr. - Congrats.,	

Hon. M. Furey.....	838
Son, Michael - Birthday Wishes, Hon. P. Dunn.....	839
Grasshoppers Martial Arts: 20 Yrs. of Com. Serv. - Thanks, T. Halman	839
ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS:	
No. 134, Prem. - Vaccine Rollout: Last Place - Satisfied, T. Houston.....	840
No. 135, Prem. - Species at Risk: Judicial Review - Respond, G. Burrill	841
No. 136, H&W: Fitch Recommendations - Update, Colton LeBlanc	843
No. 137, H&W: Vaccine Availability for Seniors - Concerns, E. Smith-McCrossin.....	844
No. 138, H&W: Cumb. South COVID-19 Vaccinations - Availability, T. Rushton.....	846
No. 139, H&W: Emerg. Response System - Breaking Point, Susan Leblanc	847
No. 140, H&W - Emergency Dept. Overcrowding - Concern, K. MacFarlane.....	849
No. 141, H&W - Cataract Surgery: Antigonish Wait Times - Concern, K. MacFarlane.....	850
No. 142, H&W - Cataract Surgery: HRM Wait Times - Concern, T. Halman	851
No. 143, EECD: Early Childhood Educators - Pay Equity, C. Chender	852
No. 144, H&W: EIBI Programming for Autistic Children - Cuts, T. Halman	854
No. 145, H&W: Aberdeen Hospital Short-stay Unit - Closure, T. Houston.....	855
No. 146, ECC: Climate Change - Importance, H. MacKay	856
No. 147, TAAT: Parrsboro Aboiteau Bridge - Reintroduction, T. Rushton.....	857
POINT OF ORDER	
T. Houston.....	858
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:	
GOVERNMENT MOTIONS:	
ON MOTION FOR SUPPLY:	
T. Halman	859
Susan Leblanc	864
S. Craig	868
HOUSE RESOLVED INTO CW ON SUPPLY AT 4:03 P.M.	873
HOUSE RECONVENED AT 9:06 P.M.	873
HOUSE RESOLVED INTO CWH ON BILLS AT 9:22 P.M.	873
HOUSE RECONVENED AT 9:37 P.M.	873

CWH REPORTS.....	873
ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Wed., Apr. 7 th at 12:00 noon	874
NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):	
Res. 319, Brown, Courtney - Families Plus Program: Com. Serv. - Congrats, Hon. I. Rankin.....	875
Res. 320, Tasco, Keith - Sackville High School Mural: Com. Serv. - Thanks, Hon. I. Rankin.....	875
Res. 321, Tupper, Bruce - Annap. Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn!: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	876
Res. 322, Raine, Ed - Annap. Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn!: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	876
Res. 323, Coldwell, Greg - Annap. Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn!: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	877
Res. 324, Lohr, John - Annap. Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn!: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	877
Res. 325, Smith, John - Annap. Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn!: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	878
Res. 326, Watson, Jon - Annap. Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn!: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	878
Res. 327, Landry, Mike - Annap. Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn!: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	879
Res. 328, MacNamara, Robert - Annap. Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn!: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	879
Res. 329, Fraser, Sandy - Annap. Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn!: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	880
Res. 330, Morse, Zachary - Annap. Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn!: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	880
Res. 331, School Com. - Aldershot Elementary School: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	881
Res. 332, Volunteers - Canning Baptist Church: Monthly Breakfast - Thanks, J. Lohr	881
Res. 333, Smith, Eldon - Port Williams Lions Club: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	882
Res. 334, Bolland, Eric - Kentville Town Councillor: Pub. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	882
Res. 335, Hovell, Ernie - Port Williams Lions Club Member: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	883
Res. 336, School Com. - Glooscap Elementary School: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	883
Res. 337, Andrew, John - Kentville Town Councillor: Pub. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	884
Res. 338, Jenner, Karen - Black Rock Beach: Cleanup - Congrats, J. Lohr	884
Res. 339, School Com. - Kings County Academy: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	885
Res. 340, Hennigar, Laurie - NS Apple Industry: Com. Serv. - Thanks,	

J. Lohr	885
Res. 341, School Com. - Northeast Kings Educational Ctr.: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	886
Res. 342, School Com. - Port Williams Elementary School: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	886
Res. 343, Staff - Valley Regional Hospital: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	887
Res. 344, Stoddart, Joel - Annap. Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn!: Com. Serv. - Thanks, J. Lohr	887



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 2021

Sixty-third General Assembly

Third Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Keith Bain, Susan Leblanc

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

THE SPEAKER: With the consent of the House - we missed a petition - can we revert to Presenting and Reading Petitions?

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition entitled:

“Whereas, on May 7, 2020, Premier Stephen McNeil, announced a new program that would give front line health care workers a bonus of up to \$2000 for working during this Global Pandemic and on July 9 2020, he announced a more detailed plan with a list of those eligible; and

“Whereas, VON Canada, Client Service Associates were not given the option to work from home like the other office staff unless you had a medical need or child care issues; and

“Whereas, Premier McNeil has listed 811 tele-health associates, nurses and counsellors as eligible staff. Therefore,

We the undersigned, request that Client Service Associates of VON be made eligible to receive the bonus for the front line health care workers.”

Mr. Speaker, I have signed my name to the original copy, which should be tabled soon. There are 333 signatures. I beg leave to table this petition.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

RESOLUTION NO. 315

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

Whereas government’s Inclusive Education Policy establishes guiding principles and directives to ensure that all students receive a high-quality, culturally- and linguistically-responsive, and equitable education; and

Whereas initiatives such as the anti-racism and discrimination leadership module, a commitment to culturally-responsive pedagogy, and the more than 450 new specialized

staff hired to support student learning and well-being are helping to ensure that opportunity and learning gaps are narrowing and that students, families, educators, and administrators have the resources and support they need to succeed; and

Whereas these efforts are working, since students and teachers are noticing the difference and students are feeling more connected and committed to their studies and their schools;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature recognize the important work of our teachers, education workers, parents, and communities for doing more to ensure that all students are able to experience an inclusive education and achieve better education outcomes.

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.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 316

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance represents its member companies and the fish and seafood processing businesses in Nova Scotia, providing them with services including information sharing, industry advocacy on matters of labour, international trade, market access, and industry development; and

Whereas the alliance has recently been approved for an Atlantic Fisheries Fund project to support modernization of equipment and processes among the association's membership by improving live lobster holding, automation for grading and handling lobsters, and automation traceability systems and temperature sensors and reporting systems for other seafood species; and

Whereas the adaptation of specialized processing and equipment in Nova Scotia's fish and seafood sectors to this project will enable the industry to become more competitive and maximize the economic value of our seafood resources;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance for its continued commitment to foster a culture of industry development and innovation with Nova Scotia's seafood sector.

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.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 317

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

Whereas caregivers are people of all ages who provide care to family members, friends, and neighbours; and

Whereas caregivers selflessly devote their time and energy to the well-being of their loved ones who are aging, have a disability, have a chronic illness, or could be at the end of their life; and

Whereas caregiving is both rewarding and sometimes difficult and the COVID-19 pandemic has made the efforts of our caregivers more challenging;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House show our great appreciation for the compassion and dedication that many Nova Scotians demonstrate each and every day and recognize today, April 6th, as National Caregiver Day.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 318

HON. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas today, April 6th, people around the world celebrate Tartan Day; and

Whereas Tartan Day is an opportunity to acknowledge and recognize the heritage of Scottish Gaels from whom the wearing of tartan in the form of the kilt, mantle, and cloak originates, and where in early Gaelic society there were Gaelic language terms for the types of tartan dress worn by both women and men; and

Whereas our Gaelic language and cultural heritage and identity remain strong in Nova Scotia, I and we are committed to making sure they thrive in our province;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing today, April 6th as Tartan Day in the province of Nova Scotia.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 85 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 418 of the Revised Statutes, 1989. The Securities Act. (Hon. Labi Kousoulis)

Bill No. 86 - Entitled an Act to Provide for Efficient Operating Rooms. (Tim Houston)

Bill No. 87 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2011. The Pension Benefits Act. (Hon. Labi Kousoulis)

Bill No. 88 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 217 of the Revised Statutes 1989. The Income Tax Act to Provide a School Supplies Tax Credit for Parents. (Tim Halman)

Bill No. 89 - Entitled an Act to Amend Schedule A of Chapter 1 of the Acts of 2018. The Education Act, and Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1995-96. The Education (CSAP) Act. (Tim Halman)

Bill No. 90 - Entitled an Act to Amend Schedule A of Chapter 1 of the Acts of 2018, the Education Act, and Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1995-96, the Education (CSAP) Act. (Karla MacFarlane)

Bill No. 91 - Entitled an Act to Amend Schedule A of Chapter 1 of the Acts of 2018, the Education Act, Respecting a Council on Gaelic Education. (Allan MacMaster)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

PRINCE, CLARENCE: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

MURRAY RYAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my friend, former CBRM councillor Clarence Prince, on his retirement. Clarence retired this past Fall after 37 years of public service. During Clarence's first 12 years of service, he served as councillor and then mayor of the former Town of Sydney Mines. He then continued on for the next 25 years, serving as councillor for District 1 of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

Clarence has been a tireless advocate representing all of the Northside and now while he is retired, he isn't going anywhere and he will continue to be a voice for the community.

I would like to wish Clarence all the best in his retirement.

[1:15 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

BEC STUDENTS: ST. VINCENT DE PAUL FOOD DRIVE - THANKS

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Breton Education Centre Rotary Interact Club and Grade 9 students, who organized and participated in a food drive for the New Waterford St. Vincent de Paul food bank on Sunday, March 28th.

In Cape Breton Centre one in two families lives in poverty and in Cape Breton one in five seniors lives in poverty. Mr. Speaker, these numbers are disgraceful, and government needs to work towards poverty elimination by implementing policies set out by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives over the past 30 years.

The BEC students volunteered their Sunday to help individuals in the community who are food insecure. I want to thank the students from BEC who participated in this very-needed food drive.

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

**BARTEAUX, BRUCE/BARTEAUX, BONNIE - RUNNERS:
100-KM FUNDRAISER - THANKS**

HON. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to recognize Bruce and Bonnie Barteaux - Bruce an avid runner and Bonnie an avid cyclist, and community volunteers in Hammonds Plains-Lucasville.

This awesome couple can often be seen on their runs and bike rides throughout our community.

Bruce served 42 years in the Armed Forces before moving back to Nova Scotia. He represented Canada in many world and Commonwealth championships and continues with the cadet program as the commanding officer of the Army Cadet Corps in the South Shore.

They are passionate about the battle to defeat cancer, which is why for the past 22 years, Bruce has participated in his annual one-day solo run for at least 100 kilometres in commemoration of the Terry Fox Run. This year, he and his wife commemorated the 40th

anniversary of the Terry Fox Run by running throughout HRM in a race they called the Stay the Blazes Home Run for Terry Fox.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House join me in thanking Bruce and Bonnie for their dedication to cancer research and commitment to volunteerism in our community.

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

TARTAN DAY: DECLARATION OF ARBROATH - RECOG.

HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, like many of my colleagues today, I rise to recognize Tartan Day, the day when the Gaels and their descendants honour the signing of the Declaration of Arbroath on this date in 1320. The Declaration asserted the independence of the kingdom of Scotland, denouncing English attempts to subjugate it.

Mr. Speaker, it is well known that the Scots invented just about everything, including the great Highland bagpipes, generally recognized as the finest musical instrument the world has ever known. I invite all members of the House to join me in recognizing Tartan Day.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelbourne.

WHITE, CHARLOTTE: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, Charlotte White is a well-known volunteer in Queens County, and today I acknowledge her retirement from the Queens County Food Bank after many years of dedicated service.

Charlotte became involved with the food bank back in 2008 as a director on the volunteer board. At a special meeting in 2013, Charlotte was named co-chair and tasked with managing the day-to-day operations of this essential service.

When the food bank needed a new home, she was instrumental in finding a site on Main Street in Liverpool. She supervised its relocation and continued to serve as chair until her retirement in September 2020. She continues to serve as a volunteer director.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Charlotte on her well-earned retirement and in thanking her for her years of service and dedication to the Queens County Food Bank.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

CHAPMAN, DAVID: BURSARY FOR ASTROPHYSICS - THANKS

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this moment to honour and thank Dartmouth North resident David Chapman. When David and his wife, Christine, were deciding to whom to leave money in their will, Christine suggested: why wait, let's do good with it now. This is how the David M.F. Chapman Bursary for Astrophysics at Saint Mary's University came to be.

David, a resident of Crichton Park, is passionate about astronomy. A retired acoustics research scientist and a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, David has also been an amateur astronomer for the past 57 years.

Created in 2020, David's bursary will be given each year to a full-time undergraduate student at Saint Mary's who is in financial need and has completed two years of study in astrophysics. David himself would not have been able to complete his studies in physics without financial support and wanted to extend that support to others.

I ask the House to join me in thanking David for his contributions to astronomy and for ensuring that future generations will be able to pursue their passion for our vast and wondrous universe.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

ROLFE, MURRAY - PHOTOGRAPHER: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and recognize the photographic work of Murray Rolfe in the communities of Kingston and Greenwood. His best are often found in the Valley newspapers.

Murray attends every event in the local community and records, through a sharp lens, the events and its participants. He has offered much joy and a surprise to many as he sends along a photo to a family after catching their child's special moment. Christmas, Easter, and community festivals are Murray's favourite, and you can count on him being there.

I would ask all members of the House to join me in acknowledging Murray Rolfe's role in fostering community spirit in valley towns and villages.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

SACKAWA CANOE CLUB: NEW FACILITY - CONGRATS.

STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the members of the Sackawa Canoe Club in Lower Sackville.

The Sackawa Canoe Club began in 1978, located in the basement of the Sackville Kinsmen Club. In 1982, they built a clubhouse on First Lake Drive. Club membership continued to grow and 40 years later they had outgrown that space.

Through government funding, capital campaigns, fundraisers, and donations, their new facility has become a reality, offering programs for paddlers of all levels, Summer programs for children, and programs for those with disabilities. The facility also offers rental opportunities to the community to host events and functions.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating the members of the Sackawa Canoe Club on providing the youth and adults of the community with an opportunity to be engaged and active year-round.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**ADSUM HOUSE: \$50K TO HOUSE HOMELESS IN HOTELS -
INVESTMENT NEEDED**

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I want to draw the attention of members, particularly on the government side, to information shared by Adsum for Women & Children over Twitter yesterday. They have spent about \$50,000 on hotel rooms from January until March to shelter people experiencing homelessness. Some of the people they put up they don't know, but "shelters were full, weather was bad. No one should have to stay outside . . ."

A woman died of exposure sleeping in a car in the Annapolis Valley in January. A man experiencing homelessness died during the cold snap last October in Cape Breton.

I am grateful to Adsum for helping to prevent such tragedies in Halifax, as I am grateful to volunteers with the Halifax Mutual Aid society and grateful to Coverdale Courtwork Society, but it is this government that is responsible for that gap. It's not too late for the government to say yes, to step forward and purchase a hotel or motel and add to our capacity for supportive housing, which has suffered for too long from lack of investment.

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

**HUDSON, KAREN:
REPRESENTATION IN CULTURE AND CURRICULUM - RECOG.**

BARBARA ADAMS: I rise today to bring recognition to Karen Hudson for her unwavering passion to ensure equity and representation within culture and school curriculum.

As chief administrator for Auburn High School in Cole Harbour, Karen wanted the students to see themselves within the curriculum, to include African Nova Scotian history and high-level high school courses to engage, motivate, and inspire students.

Karen's passion and insight have seen a change in practices. The 2021 graduating class has had tremendous success and has also paved the way for the upcoming class.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in acknowledging Karen Hudson for her compassion for her students and her dedication to this program and Auburn High School.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

MULOCK, ED/MULOCK, MIKE - FIREFIGHTERS: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mike and Ed Mulock, identical twins who recently celebrated an incredible 50 years of service with the LaHave & District and Conquerall Bank volunteer fire departments as members, senior officers, and fire chiefs.

After volunteering six years with Conquerall Bank, Mike joined LaHave & District, where his titles include fire chief from 1987-1994. Ed finished his 11 years of service with Conquerall Bank as deputy chief before joining LaHave & District, where he took on several roles, including fire chief from 1994-2002.

Mike and Ed's honours include receiving the 2017 Provincial Family Volunteer Award along with Mike's spouse Virginia, their sons Jonathan and Darren, and Ed's spouse Cathy. Mike and Ed Mulock have devoted countless hours as mentors, administrators, and leaders with two fire departments since 1971.

I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in thanking these incredible volunteers for their unwavering dedication and commitment to keeping their community safe.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**JONES, GLENDA:
SUPPORTING AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN STUDENTS - RECOG.**

HON. PAT DUNN: Glenda Jones has been an African Nova Scotian Student Support Worker for the past few decades. Her primary role is to monitor and provide support to African Nova Scotian students and their families, as well as being the liaison between the school and her community.

Jones has dedicated her time to making her students feel safe, accepted, and connected to their school. She works to promote a school climate that is supportive and respectful, and that connects African Nova Scotian students to all aspects of school life. Glenda's strongest asset, besides supporting her students and classroom teachers, is facilitating the communications between the school and home. She enjoys watching the smooth transition for African Nova Scotian students from one level of schooling to the next.

Glenda Jones is well known and respected in New Glasgow as a positive cultural role model.

[1:30 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

CAMPBELL, LINDA: OUTDOOR LINE DANCING - THANKS

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, today I recognize Linda Campbell. Linda runs a line dancing class at the Reserve Mines Seniors and Pensioners Club.

COVID-19 forced us all to change habits and how we socialize. It also forced us to get creative regarding our participation in activities and community events. In order to continue her dance classes, Linda got creative. She moved her indoor classes to the parking lot to ensure each dancer was able to socially distance safely.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank Linda for providing an opportunity for people to keep active, stay connected, and be safe.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

**BILLARD, ANDREW - PADDLER:
OLYMPIC HOPES INTL. REGATTA - CONGRATS.**

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a young paddler, Andrew Billard of the Maskwa Aquatic Club.

In September 2019, 17-year-old Andrew Billard won an impressive four medals at the Olympic Hopes international regatta in Slovakia. This regatta is a chance for athletes from across the world to compete in the top international regatta.

Andrew has been one of Maskwa's stellar athletes in the past couple of seasons. He won four medals, including two gold medals at the U17 level. Andrew is hopeful that his chances to participate in the Olympics are strong. He is a great role model for the younger

athletes at Maskwa club. He has an incredible athletic ability and is always ready to compete with a great attitude and smile on his face.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Andrew for his accomplishments. I wish him the best of luck in his paddling career.

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

BAY CoC AWARDS - RECIPIENTS: BUS. ACHIEVEMENTS - CONGRATS.

HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 2020 St. Margaret's Bay Chamber of Commerce Business Award winners.

I congratulate Redmond's Home Hardware of Upper Tantallon, recipient of the award for longevity. This St. Margaret's Bay business won an award in recognition of their service of over more than 40 years to the people of the St. Margaret's Bay area.

I congratulate the Rustic Crust of Upper Tantallon, which picked up the award for Success in Business Growth for their fantastic pizza and other delicious items.

The Excellence in Business Service was awarded to Peggy's Cove Boat Tours, owned and operated by my good friend Peter Richardson.

Finally, the Pillar of the Community award was awarded posthumously to Doug Poulton, who was a founding member of the Bay Chamber of Commerce, a founding member of several other organizations in the area, and the original owner and operator of the iconic White Sails Bakery in Tantallon.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating these fine business members on winning the chamber awards.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

LAVEN, IRIS: ZUMBA FITNESS FOR ALL LEVELS - COMMEND

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Iris Laven, a Dartmouth East fitness instructor, who inspires others to find an exercise regime that brings them both health and happiness.

Iris began taking Zumba classes in 2009 and quickly fell in love with the energy of these fitness classes. In 2017, she began connecting with instructors and realized that she could inspire others just as she had been inspired. Not only that, Iris understands how critical preventative health care is to our province. For the past few years, Iris has been an

instructor who encourages fitness through high-intensity classes that welcome everyone with all levels of athletic ability.

I ask members to join me in recognizing Iris for finding a way, as she says, to take the work out of workout and encouraging a happy and healthy lifestyle.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

GUSHUE, CHANTEL - ARTIST: *WHAT REMAINS* - RECOG.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an incredible visual artist in Dartmouth North, Chantel Gushue. A graduate of NSCAD university with a BFA, Chantel recently completed her Master of Fine Arts at Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Her work is mainly centred around small sculpture installation, drawing, and jewelry.

All her work is amazing, but today I want to bring attention to her latest. *What Remains* is a collection of rare handmade crystals which are contrasted with bone fragments and combined to make beautiful and unique wearable art pieces. That Chantel grows her own crystals for the jewellery allows the structures to conform into a mould and results in a reflective, shimmering material. In her artist statement, she describes the crystals as developing from an attempt to create order from chaos, and I can relate to this drive, as I am sure many can. The result is truly stunning.

Chantel Gushue is a visionary artist as well as a teacher, and I encourage all members of the Legislature to investigate her work and to join me in thanking her for her contribution to art and culture in Nova Scotia.

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

LEWIS, ABBY - RUNNER: PROMISING TRACK CAREER - CONGRATS.

BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, for one Beaver Bank track athlete, 2021 has gotten off to a record start. Abby Lewis, who trains with Chebucto Athletics, is a 14-year-old Lockview High student and has a long list of first-place wins in the NSSAF, Blue Nose, and Athletics Nova Scotia competitions.

Last January, Abby ran 4 minutes, 32 seconds and in early February bested her own time by two seconds, putting her within one second of the national record and giving her the 1500 indoor record for Nova Scotia.

Please join me in congratulating Abby Lewis on her success so far and wishing her the best in her promising track career.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

CARIBOU FIRE DEPT.: FUNDRAISING FOR EQUIPMENT - THANKS

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, when there is a fire or a vehicle extrication, rural Nova Scotians rely on the local fire department. Seconds count, minutes count. That is why firefighters require the most up-to-date equipment to help them get the job done.

Recently the Caribou District Fire Department added a new pump tanker from Fort Garry Fire Trucks to their fleet of emergency vehicles. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the fire department and the local community, the Caribou District Fire Department will be more equipped with the necessary tools to carry out their duties.

I wish to thank and commend everyone involved in making this a reality.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

NORTHWOOD STAFF: SERV. DURING PANDEMIC - THANKS

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, yesterday, April 5th, marked one year since the first Northwood staff member tested positive for COVID-19. Tomorrow, April 7th, will mark one year since the first Northwood residents, five of them at once, tested positive. Cases would continue until May 28th - a total of 345, including 99 among employees. Fifty-three long-term care residents died.

Much has been written and said about the underlying neglect of the long-term care sector, and in Northwood's specific case this government ignored repeated requests for capital investments to eliminate shared rooms. But today, I would like to express my appreciation for all staff - from cleaners to CPAs, to nurses, to the CEO - who showed up day after day, week after week, and cared for the long-term care residents of Northwood.

I know it was incredibly difficult, stressful, frightening and, all too often, thankless. I invite all members of this Legislature to join me in saying thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

**ELDRIDGE, MARY/ELDRIDGE, PETER:
YARMOUTH AREA COM. FUND - THANKS**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, please join me in acknowledging Mary and Peter Eldridge, who run the Yarmouth Area Community Fund.

The Yarmouth Area Community Fund is a permanent endowment fund, the income from which is used to support local charities, initiatives, and projects. The fund was set up to improve our local peoples' well-being by strengthening the common good, enhancing our quality of life and addressing our most challenging issues in a thoughtful and meaningful way.

The Yarmouth Area Community Fund supports the Yarmouth area's social needs and broad interests, including people in need, culture, education, arts, heritage, health, sport, recreation, and the environment. I want to thank Mary and Peter Eldridge for running such an incredible initiative.

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

MACISAAC KILTMAKERS: IMPECCABLE CUST. SERV. - RECOG.

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, in celebration of National Tartan Day, I rise to recognize Rosemary and Mac MacIsaac of MacIsaac Kiltmakers in St. Peter's.

A tartan is recognized worldwide as a Scottish symbol, and 4.7 million Canadians claim Scottish descent, making them the third largest ethnic group in Canada. Cape Breton demonstrates a great deal of pride for its Celtic roots, and many Cape Bretoners proudly wear their tartan year round.

Rosemary and Mac are well-respected family business owners. They demonstrate the quality of their craftsmanship by providing beautiful handmade kilts, using only the finest wool tartan fabric. They are renowned for their impeccable customer service.

Their daughter, Veronica MacIsaac, inherited her love of sewing and everything tartan from her parents, featuring it in her own successful clothing line. She is a designer of our own Nova Scotia Legislative tartan, which I proudly wear today.

Mr. Speaker, I can think of no better way to honour National Tartan Day than by acknowledging the continuing efforts of Rosemary and Mac MacIsaac. I ask the members of this Legislative Assembly to join me in wishing them many years of continued success.

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

**CCS DAFFODIL CAMPAIGN:
REMEMBERING THOSE AFFECTED - SUPPORT**

LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in recognition of the Canadian Cancer Society's Daffodil Campaign. Today I ask all of us to take a moment to remember to reflect upon the people who have passed, all who are living with cancer, and the loved ones who support them in their journey.

I myself am supporting the campaign virtually this year by sharing my digital daffodil in memory and in honour of those affected by cancer. Now, more than ever, the daffodil's sunny symbol serves as a meaningful reminder for us to come together and continue to look ahead to brighter days.

By supporting the Daffodil Campaign, we are spreading hope to those affected by cancer at a time when it is needed most.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

BROOKS, WILL: MERITORIOUS SERV. DECORATION - CONGRATS.

HON. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize Will Brooks of Lunenburg on being awarded the Meritorious Service Decoration in the Civil Division. He is being honoured for his role in creating the Canadian Fallen Firefighters Foundation. The charity honours firefighters who have died in the line of duty and provides support programs for their families. Will helped establish this organization, along with two founders from outside the province.

The charity holds an annual memorial ceremony for Canadian fallen firefighters and subsidizes the transportation and accommodations for their families to attend. It also supports families through scholarships and bursaries.

The decoration is one of the highest Canadian distinctions. It recognizes individuals for their remarkable accomplishments, which bring honour to our country. Congratulations, Will, on receiving this distinction, and thank you for your contributions.

I ask that all members join me in congratulating Will Brooks on this wonderful award.

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

**JOHNS, MIKE/MOORE-JOHNS, AMANDA:
9th WEDDING ANNIV. - CONGRATS.**

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to rise today to acknowledge and celebrate nine years of marriage between my younger brother Mike Johns and his wife Amanda Moore-Johns, which was on September 17, 2020. Mike and Amanda celebrated their nine years of happiness with their three children, Taylor, Logan, and Hunter.

Mike and Amanda, who is a lifelong resident of Mount Uniacke, have shared nine years of marriage in Mount Uniacke, where they continue to live.

I ask all members to join me in wishing my younger brother Mike and his wife, Amanda, many more years of happiness together.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

SOBEYS, N. MINAS: COM. SERV. DURING PANDEMIC - RECOG.

HON. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, until the arrival of COVID-19, having safe and continuous access to our food supply was something many of us might have taken for granted. We assumed from week to week that the shelves at our supermarkets would be stocked.

All that changed last year with the emergence of the pandemic, when suddenly our shopping experience was altered dramatically and supply chains that normally provided the food to our shelves were interrupted.

The fact that, with rare exceptions, our shelves were kept stocked is a tribute to the extraordinary efforts of our food suppliers, distributors, and retailers. Our food retailers quickly introduced change and continuously adapted their stores to ensure a safe food-shopping experience.

Today I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to recognize the team from Sobeys in New Minas, under the management of William Harvey, for their tireless efforts in 2020 and 2021 to put food on the shelves, work the checkout counters, and ensure that our food-shopping experience during COVID-19 was safe, continuous, and secure.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

CCS DAFFODIL CAMPAIGN: SYMBOL OF HOPE - SUPPORT

COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Canadian Cancer Society's Daffodil Campaign. The work of the Cancer Society has never been more important. The reality is that one in two Canadians will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime.

For those living with cancer, the daffodil represents a symbol of strength, courage, and hope, something we need more than ever as we begin to emerge from a very difficult year. By supporting the Daffodil Campaign, we help bring hope to those affected by cancer.

Progress is being made, thanks to prevention, early detection, and treatment. The overall cancer survival rate has increased from about 25 per cent in the 1940s to 60 per cent today.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Canadian Cancer Society and their volunteers for the incredible work they do and encourage all members of this Legislature and Nova Scotians everywhere to show their support to those affected by cancer by supporting the Daffodil Campaign.

[1:45 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

SWINDELLS, IRENE - ADMINISTRATOR: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Today, Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my appreciation to Irene Swindells, the administrator at Melville Heights retirement residence, on the occasion of her retirement this week.

Irene has been with Melville Heights for 26 years dating back to May 1995, having worked as a realtor previously. She started as the residence's marketing director alongside her long-time colleague, Lori Cormier, and has made a lasting mark. Irene has shown remarkable leadership, particularly over the difficult past year and before the pandemic, as Melville Heights began their transition to adding an assisted living wing.

Irene would almost never take time off. She has always been all about the residents, who are not her clients but her friends. I know I've loved joining the wonderful parties and functions she's helped put on throughout the years at all times of the year.

I ask all members to join me in thanking Irene Swindells for her years of service at Melville Heights and the Spryfield Business Commission, and wishing her the best in her retirement.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River.

**ISAAC-GLOADE, CHEYENNE/GLOADE, GARRETT:
FUNDRAISER, FIRST NATIONS YOUTH - THANKS**

DAVE RITCEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Cheyenne Isaac-Gloade and Garrett Gloade of Millbrook First Nation. The couple recently began working on a collaboration with Grammy-nominated director Andy Hines and Nike to bring Mi'kmaw culture to the global stage and give back to their community.

So far, the couple has completed two pairs of shoes which they plan to auction off, donating the proceeds to First Nations youth in Canada. The design is based on Mi'kmaw quillwork from the 17th century, with each shoe taking about 36 hours to complete.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Cheyenne and Garrett on their new partnership and for bringing awareness to traditional Mi'kmaw culture and art while giving back to their community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

TOLLIVER, TYSON: AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN DIRECTOR - RECOG.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Tyson Tolliver of East Preston, who has a passionate interest in preserving and collecting information on African Canadian culture.

About nine years ago, he began a project to address questions he had regarding African Nova Scotian culture. He, with the aid of cameras, created a directory of landmarks, historical points of interest, and profiles of African Nova Scotian culture. He researched for several years, then travelled to capture and document information for the directory.

The Black Business Initiative supported his efforts. He enrolled in the Volta Academy to validate his ideas, outline a viable product, and grow a scalable start-up, which resulted in the African Nova Scotian Directory. The directory is available on Apple app and Google Play stores, allowing visitors to contribute to the directory as well as to important landmarks and information related to African Nova Scotian culture.

Tyson Tolliver demonstrated that through determination, you can realize your dreams and create a resource such as the African Nova Scotian Directory for the benefit of all Nova Scotians.

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

LINLOFF, TAYLOR - FILMMAKER: A *STRONG NAME* - HONOUR

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a young filmmaker from Port Hawkesbury named Taylor Linloff. Her documentary, *A Strong Name*, was produced with hope that Taylor's story will inspire other Nova Scotians with autism living in rural communities to share their experiences.

Being diagnosed with autism later in life can prove to be a struggle for many, especially women, as the diagnosis criteria for so many years has focused on Caucasian, cisgender, heterosexual, middle-class boys. Support programs primarily focus on autistic dependants and their caregivers. In Nova Scotia, after the age of 18, a person seeking diagnosis must pay for a private assessment.

Taylor hopes her documentary will bring comfort to those who always felt at odds with their world by knowing they are not alone in their struggle. She also hopes to bring awareness to the less familiar signs of autism.

I call upon the members of this House to honour Taylor's courage and to quote Taylor: Move past awareness of autism and move to acceptance.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

MAPLE INN: RE-OPENING - CONGRATS.

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Dr. Paul and MacKenzie Aitken, proud new owners of the Maple Inn in beautiful and historic Parrsboro, Cumberland County. The Maple Inn is located on the beautiful Bay of Fundy and was built in 1893.

For so many of us, the year 2020 was a year of change and challenge. This was certainly true for Dr. Paul and MacKenzie Aitkin, who purchased the inn in November 2020. Early in 2020, the Aitkins suffered terrible personal tragedy and health challenges. Once COVID-19 hit in March, they sold everything and moved to Nova Scotia in search of a healing place to recover.

Please join me in congratulating Dr. Paul and MacKenzie Aitken on the purchase and the reopening of the beautiful Maple Inn. I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to our community and join them for the official reopening of the Maple Inn on May 1st.

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

**MOMBOURQUETTE, DOUG/MOMBOURQUETTE, MARGARET:
45th ANNIV. - BEST WISHES**

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, 45 years ago, a young man by the name of Doug Mombourquette left the military and would eventually meet the love of his life, Margaret Novak from Prime Brook. This month represents their 45th wedding anniversary, so I stand in my place to recognize Mom and Dad on their 45th anniversary.

They've sacrificed everything for their kids. They were blessed with three children, who all went their separate ways. The middle one definitely stresses them out the most.

To Mom and Dad: You sacrificed everything for us. You are an example every day of what it means to love and support one another through thick and thin. So, happy anniversary, Mom and Dad. We love you very much. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

**RATCHFORD, DAVE/RATCHFORD, MARGUERITE:
HARNESS RACING AWARDS - RECOG.**

MURRAY RYAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize North Sydney residents Dave and Marguerite Ratchford, whose horse Century Farroh recently added several more accolades to his resume.

A conversation about harness racing in Cape Breton doesn't go far before Dave's name comes up. He has been a long-time owner, trainer, and driver in the harness racing community.

A couple of years ago, his family purchased a horse, which Dave thought had some potential. Four years later Century Farroh won the Breeders Crown Open in Indiana, bringing his career earnings to in excess of \$1.2 million, and at the recent O'Brien Awards the horse received Horse of the Year award as well as Aged Pacer of the Year award.

Congratulations to Dave and Marguerite. I wish Century Farroh all the best in the 2021 racing season.

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

DECOSTE, SHIRLEY - RECIPIENT: LG'S COM. SPIRIT AWARD - THANKS

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Shirley DeCoste. Shirley has dedicated her time to helping her community of Monastery and surrounding area.

She has spent countless hours on the restoration at the Monsignor Donnelly Hall in Tracadie over the past six years and has worked on many fundraisers for her community. Shirley plays an important role in helping individuals and families in all her communities.

Behind the scenes, Shirley has had an even bigger impact in the 40-plus years she has helped students, seniors, and youth in the community. This involves helping to complete student loan forms, access funding, and write grant applications for housing, post-secondary education, and health care. She is the go-to person for so many who need help in navigating and searching for resources.

Shirley was nominated for the 2020 Nova Scotia Representative Volunteer Award for her outstanding contribution to her community. Unfortunately, the ceremony to honour all the hard work that she has done was cancelled, so I would like to take this opportunity

to say, thank you, Shirley, and congratulations on the recognition for your hard work and dedication.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

QUEENS COM. HEALTH BD. - VOLUNS.: HEALTH PODCAST - RECOG.

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, today I acknowledge the Queens Community Health Board and all that they do to promote health initiatives in our constituency.

Today specifically, I would like to commend members of the board for their podcast initiative. The podcast, called the Community HealthCast, began in May of 2020 in response to the pandemic. It was seen as a means of staying connected with the community and to inform people about the work of the board and other great health-related initiatives in Queens. To date, they have produced around 40 episodes, which are available through all major podcast platforms and played on local radio station QCCR.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in extending sincere thanks to the board and its volunteers for this wonderful initiative and for all that they do to contribute to the good health and well-being for all of those who reside in Queens.

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

DAMINI CREATIVES: BUS. VENTURE - RECOG.

HON. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Miss Damini Awoyiga, a young entrepreneur, spoken-word poet, artist, singer, youth ambassador, and Grade 8 student at Madeline Symonds Middle School.

In the middle of the lockdown, her parents gifted her with a sewing machine, and with a desire to keep her parents safe she started making reusable masks, which evolved into a business venture called Damini Creatives. Her masks are unique and made of African print fabric from Nigeria and Ghana, and the colours and designs have deep meaning.

Damini has had orders from all across Canada. Part of the proceeds from each mask are going to the Generation 1 Leadership Initiative bursary fund for students entering university.

The past two years she has presented her poems about racism, feminism, and sexism at the Girls Conference at Mount Saint Vincent University, most recently performing her poem, *Together We Stand*, for African Heritage Month.

I ask all members of the House to join me in recognizing Damini Awoyiga for her initiative and her accomplishments now and into the future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

**SACKVILLE BUS. AWARDS - RECIPIENTS:
BUS. ACHIEVEMENTS - CONGRATS.**

STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the recipients of the 2020 Sackville Business Awards.

Deputy Mayor Lisa Blackburn presented trophies to the winning businesses during the ceremony, which took place during the THRIVE Business Conference on October 22, 2020. Best New Business was awarded to Apartment 3 Espresso Bar, accepted by owners Alex and Heather Stephen; Best Customer Service went to Frenchy & Son Barber Shop, presented to owner Mike Hicks; and Business of the Year went to the Lower Sackville location of the Atlantic Superstore, accepted by store manager Barry Corkum.

I ask that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating the recipients of the 2020 Sackville Business Awards for their continued commitment and dedication to the community of Lower Sackville.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**BUCK'S HOME HARDWARE:
OWNER, YOUNG RETAILER OF THE YR. - CONGRATS.**

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ryan Buck, owner of Buck's Home Building Centre in Bridgewater and the New Germany Home Hardware Building Centre.

Ryan was named the 2020 North American Retail Hardware Association for Young Retailer of the Year in the Multiple Stores category. Ryan, at the age of 34, was selected from a field of inspiring independent home improvement retailers under the age of 35 for making an impact in the hardware industry. Ryan was one of six honourees across Canada and the United States and the only Canadian recipient in 2020.

The NRHA believes that the honourees represent the future of the industry. He was also named the Young Retailer of the Year for Home Hardware last year.

Ryan and his wife, Julie, bought the business from his parents, Brian and Janice, in 2019. He tributes the success to these great mentors as well as a strong support system in his spouse, family, and staff.

I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating Ryan Buck.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

SON, MICHAEL - BIRTHDAY WISHES

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize someone I am very proud of - my eldest son, Michael. The third of six children, Michael is celebrating his 37th birthday today. Following his post-secondary education at McGill in Montreal, Michael joined a health company in Boston. Approximately a decade ago he joined a Swiss-owned biotechnology pharmaceutical company, in San Francisco, where he is in a managerial position.

Despite his personal success, I can recall all of his mischievous moments that were shared with his siblings. He always had a smile on his face, but you never knew what he was up to. Happy birthday, Michael.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

GRASSHOPPERS MARTIAL ARTS: 20 YRS. OF COM. SERV. - THANKS

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Phil Power, a Dartmouth East business owner. Members may recall I have risen in this House previously to honour Mr. Power's hard-working nature and his dedication to the youth of Dartmouth East.

Phil Power works hard to make sure youth in our community have a place to go to participate in physical fitness, learn discipline and, most of all, have fun. This September marks 20 years in that business. I can see first-hand the impact the Grasshoppers program has had on kids in our community. I am so grateful that Phil takes the initiative to allow 10 kids each year to participate free of charge.

I would like to thank Phil Power and his amazing staff at Grasshoppers for their 20 years of shaping the lives of young people. The benefits to the Dartmouth East community will last far beyond the next 20 years.

THE SPEAKER: The time allotted for members' statements has expired. We will now recess for our mandated 15 minutes. The House will resume with Question Period.

[2:00 p.m. The House recessed.]

[2:15 p.m. The House reconvened.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please.

ORDERS OF THE DAY**ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - VACCINE ROLLOUT: LAST PLACE - SATISFIED

TIM HOUSTON: A few weeks ago, I asked the Premier a series of questions about why Nova Scotia was last in the country in its vaccination efforts. I'm sure the Premier probably remembers those questions.

I was told time and time again that preparations were under way, and while we may be last in the country in vaccines, we were leading the country in getting ready to vaccinate. That's what we heard at the time. We were told we would catch up, and we would catch up fast. I look at the vaccine numbers from across the country today and we are, indeed, still last.

I'd like to ask: Is the Premier satisfied that his government continues to be worst in terms of getting vaccines in arms?

HON. IAIN RANKIN (The Premier): I don't accept that we're worst in anything related to the pandemic. Nova Scotians have done very well listening to Public Health restrictions. We continue to keep our cases low. Our cautious approach on how we look at taking those restrictions off has worked very well. When we were able to, we relaxed those restrictions.

As we're rolling out our vaccine, we're very happy that we're continuing to increase our numbers day by day. We have over 100,000 doses in arms. When you look at how we've held back our second doses for those Nova Scotians, we actually are above many provinces that have delivered second doses, especially to health care workers.

We're going to continue with that cautious approach, making sure that we have an efficient system to roll out the vaccines.

TIM HOUSTON: I hate to take issue with the Premier's analysis, but the numbers very clearly show that we're last in terms of getting vaccines into Nova Scotians.

We have asked many questions about various groups of people who are at greater risk of the impacts of COVID-19. People with Down syndrome, cystic fibrosis, cancer patients, organ transplant patients - all of these people receive different and special consideration for early vaccination in every other province except Nova Scotia.

The Premier has continued to say that the exclusion of those groups allowed us to vaccinate more people quicker, but we're still slowest. My question for the Premier is: We were promised that we would catch up and we haven't. Why are we continuing to be last in the country?

THE PREMIER: I think the member opposite knows that we still have a number of doses that are actually committed to Nova Scotians for the second dose. Again, we're ahead of several provinces in terms of how many second doses we've delivered to Nova Scotians.

Over 90 per cent of health care workers in this province have had their vaccine. We're actually ahead of schedule. We've moved cohorts down to those over the age of 70 now. We're delivering the vaccine. We continue to open up more and more clinics across the province. We have openings that continue to be available for Nova Scotians. We are still on track for the end of June for all adults who want a vaccine to get one.

TIM HOUSTON: Nova Scotians have done hard work to keep our infection rates low. Now we're watching as people in other jurisdictions emerge from lockdown sooner because they have their vaccinations, because their vaccination program has been quicker and ours has fallen behind.

The national average for one dose of vaccine is 15 per cent. That's the Canadian national average. The average in other countries is well in advance of that, but it's 15.4 per cent in Canada. In Nova Scotia, it's just 8.6.

Nova Scotians have done the work to put us amongst the leaders in dealing with the virus. This government has put us amongst the worst - probably last - in dealing with the vaccine. What can the Premier say to Nova Scotians about why we continue to be last?

THE PREMIER: He's one of the only people, I think, saying that Nova Scotia is last. When you look at what has been reported in the *Globe and Mail* article, it said, "Can we put Nova Scotia in charge of the country yet?"

That's not what I'm hearing across the province. I continue to hear, continue to listen to Public Health, continue to listen to Dr. Strang, continue to follow that advice to get us to where we are today, so that we're not cancelling vaccinations - as a province did today, because they committed to those as a just-in-time delivery system, whereas we are guaranteeing, when we set an appointment for Nova Scotians, that they get their vaccine.

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

PREM. - SPECIES AT RISK: JUDICIAL REVIEW - RESPOND

GARY BURRILL: After the Auditor General reported in 2016 that conservation efforts were lacking, and again after the 2018 Lahey report urged his department to take

action on endangered species, the Premier - then the Minister of Lands and Forestry - was taken to court under judicial review of his department's record regarding species at risk.

Supreme Court Justice Brothers found evidence of a chronic, systemic failure to implement action required under the Endangered Species Act. The Premier, then minister, argued in the case that a reason for what the judge called this unreasonable failure was what she characterized as "several somewhat vague suggestions" of limited departmental resources.

Does the Premier regret arguing that his department failed to invest the resources required to protect species at risk?

THE PREMIER: In that very budget, we actually increased resources required in the department so that we could hire more biologists. We continue to work with community groups across the province. There were actual sessions held in every region of the province during that court case to ensure that we worked with those practitioners to develop recovery plans. I believe those plans are in place. Those teams were put in place during that process. I look forward to more progress on this very important file.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, dozens of African Nova Scotian families have undertaken the arduous process of attempting to clear title to their ancestral land under the Land Titles Clarification Act. The hurdles in this process are significant. One of them has been a stance from the Premier, in his former role as Minister of Lands and Forestry, that families needed to prove 20 years of use or occupation of their land.

Luckily, this position was struck down in court. Supreme Court Justice Campbell remarked that "the imposition of this standard seemed to be entirely inconsistent with the purpose, the history, and the context of the statute."

Does the Premier regret having argued in favour of a standard of land occupation that is completely divorced from the historical context of the lives of African Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: I am very pleased with that decision so that the department does not have to rely on looking at adverse possession for the guidelines of what is required to prove title to land. This is an important priority for this government.

We have put resources into this. We have hired experts in this field, who have been working very hard to ensure that we have a title for those African Nova Scotians in those communities. They deserve that.

They don't even have the ability to sell their land. They're held behind. They cannot use the equity for that land. This is very important. We're going to continue to increase resources where required so that we can clarify all of those titles in those communities.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier's decisions as minister are now in court a third time. This time, it's the judicial review from last week of his decision to secretly delist Owls Head Provincial Park with a view to selling it to a developer who would turn it into a golf course.

Does the Premier regret forcing communities to take his decisions to court for a third time now?

THE PREMIER: I think it's really important when you are the Premier, or even a minister, that you are there for all Nova Scotians, continuing to look at what is being brought forward, continuing to be reasonable, bringing these issues to your colleagues, following the right process, and hearing from all Nova Scotians when there are matters that they want us to look into.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

H&W: FITCH RECOMMENDATIONS - UPDATE

COLTON LEBLANC: In the opening days of this legislative session, an emergency debate was held to seek solutions to the crisis in Nova Scotia's ambulance service. The paramedics union's Code Critical campaign and the tragic death of April George emphasized the depth of the problems in our province.

During the emergency debate, and again during question period last week, the Minister of Health and Wellness said that a large number of the Fitch report recommendations had already been implemented, and several more were under way.

My question for the minister is this: If so much change has occurred in the service, why do we continue to see Code Critical warnings and continue to hear of tragic stories like that of the MacPhees'?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: In fact, we have seen the Code Critical warnings drop significantly in the last number of weeks. I think that is a result of certain improvements that were made in the system.

We have implemented some very important changes like bringing in the non-ambulatory transport vehicles to transport non-urgent patients from institution to institution or to bring them home. We have recently implemented Fitch recommendations in the contract, which helps us with oversight and ensuring that dollars are being reinvested into that service.

Fitch did not provide solutions to the off-load challenge, which seems to be the biggest system challenge we have that is affecting response times. We are working on that. I believe we'll have solutions in the near future.

COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, paramedics on the front line are working hard and doing all they can within a system that doesn't seem to be working for anybody. The minister says that the vast majority of the Fitch recommendations have been implemented, but there doesn't seem to be any appreciable improvement in the system. We continue to hear about another directive to reduce off-load times when the first directive didn't get the job done.

Our paramedics certainly aren't the problem, and the best advice money can buy has been implemented. My question for the minister is: Where does the blame fall for the broken system - the Department of Health and Wellness or the paramedic operating company?

ZACH CHURCHILL: Fitch and Associates, who are world-class professionals in this field and who do this work across the globe, pointed to Nova Scotia as being one of the best ambulatory services in North America. I realize there are challenges in the system. There's frustration with our paramedics, who do work hard and who are incredible at what they do, but there are no silver bullet solutions here.

That's why we have to have a comprehensive approach to reform, which includes hiring more paramedics. EMC has already hired 21 more to the system, and there will be more paramedics hired as we get closer to the Summer. That's why it was so imperative to move forward on 45 of the 64 recommendations from the Fitch report. Those recommendations, with the exception of four, will be fully implemented.

We are nearing solutions, in the not-too-distant future, to some of our major off-loading challenges that have persisted in the system for a while.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

H&W: VACCINE AVAILABILITY FOR SENIORS - CONCERNS

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, my Easter weekend was incredible, but it was spent responding to emails and phone messages from numerous elderly constituents here in Cumberland North who are over the age of 70. They are contacting me because there were no appointments available in Amherst, and they didn't think they should have to drive to Halifax or Antigonish, where there were vaccine appointments available.

It would seem as though the demand in Amherst definitely exceeded the supply that was made available. The government has made age-based vaccinations the priority, so I guess my expectation and the expectation of the people here would be that the supply would meet the demand.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Do the minister and his department have access to demographic information to help plan for how many vaccine appointments should be needed in each area, based on the demographics?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Yes, we do. Our plan is to provide those vaccinations at the same time across the province - to decant, as I've heard some people say, each region of the province at the same level.

The fact is that our supply does come from the federal government. We are dependent on supply from them. We've got more supply coming in this week.

I think it's a very good sign that these appointments are being booked so quickly. That's an indication that Nova Scotians take the vaccine program very seriously and that they are rushing to get it. As supply goes up, we are going to have more. We have had exponential growth just in the last week. This week we'll be providing 40,000 vaccines, compared to last week, when we gave 23,000.

Each week, as supply amps up, you'll see exponential growth in the amount of vaccines that go in arms.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: What I am wondering, Mr. Speaker, is whether the minister is saying that they opened up the age limit to 70, but they did it without having the vaccine available. That's what it sounded like the minister was saying, because the age was dropped to 70 on Thursday but on Friday morning there were no appointments available in Amherst.

I want to emphasize that getting the COVID-19 vaccine is the most important thing on the minds of the people in my constituency. They are watching what is happening around the world. They are scared, and getting the vaccine is a huge priority.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Is the department looking at other options? The way it is currently set up does not seem to be working. It is creating a lot of stress, especially on our elderly. Has the minister considered maybe asking each zone to take care of arranging vaccine appointments and calling patients directly, especially considering that a lot of our elderly do not have computers?

ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the fact that our booking appointments are getting filled so quickly and that supply is being distributed so quickly does show that the system is working as intended to distribute vaccine as quickly as possible. We

We do not control supply. The federal government provides us with supply each week, and as more supply comes in, more vaccines are distributed. Again, we've now got close to 120,000 vaccines in arms. We're actually leading the country in second doses,

particularly in long-term care facilities, and this week we're planning on delivering 40,000 more vaccines compared to the mid-20s that we did last week.

[2:30 p.m.]

I commend the member's community for their eagerness for this, and all communities that are filling up these booking appointments, because as soon as we get these vaccines they're being distributed and they're getting into arms, and that's a very exciting thing to see happen.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

H&W: CUMB. SOUTH COVID-19 VACCINATIONS - AVAILABILITY

TORY RUSHTON: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness as well. Nova Scotians just want to be vaccinated. After a year of willingly complying with restrictions, they see the vaccine as the only way back to somewhat of a normal life.

People in Cumberland South are no different, and unfortunately many of my constituents are seniors who are finding it impossible to book vaccine appointments online or by phone. The number of frustrated calls I received on the weekend and in the early hours of this week is proof of that.

My question to the minister is to correspond with my colleague: When can the residents of Cumberland South expect appointments to become available online in Cumberland South or available throughout the whole county of Cumberland, for that matter?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: What I just heard from the previous member was that all the appointments were booked, so that's an indication that as soon as we're getting supply, those vaccines are going in arms.

We have had exponential growth almost weekly with how many vaccines are being distributed, and we do have a centralized online booking process to allow that to happen. I have heard some frustrations with that, but it's not unlike frustrations that people have doing a lot of things online. That's why we also have a phone number available and online support for those individuals who have a challenge booking online and who need assistance doing that. Those supports are available as well.

We are on track to meet our target of getting first doses in arms by the end of June. Again, there's exponential growth in this every week. Supply is going up and more Nova Scotians are getting vaccinated, and this system is working as it should.

TORY RUSHTON: I'm sure the minister is quite right - the appointments in Amherst are completely booked up, but when you go online, you don't see a single available appointment that's available in the Cumberland South area, although we're hearing from pharmacies. When you call up pharmacies to check on what's going on, there's an automated message that's indicating they've already released appointments to the Department of Health and Wellness for three weeks in advance. Those are not being released online, and the seniors in Cumberland South do not feel that the commitment to get the vaccines in their arms is extended to them.

I'm sharing these concerns from our constituents. Seniors who have called the vaccine line rather than doing it online due to internet issues are being offered appointments in the Pictou or Truro area from right here in Cumberland South. For example, residents in Advocate Harbour have a 90-minute drive just to go to the clinic in Amherst, and as my colleague pointed out, sometimes it's not a viable option, nor does it meet the promised 45-minute radius . . .

THE SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

TORY RUSHTON: My question to the minister: Will the government's vaccines plan please include the seniors in Cumberland South?

ZACH CHURHILL: It does, and the fact that people can't book appointments, that's because the supply that we have has already been spoken for, and those appointments have already been booked. We're only able to give as many vaccines as we have supply. There is more supply coming in today and Thursday from the federal government, so we appreciate people are eager for this. We appreciate their patience, but when there aren't available bookings online, it's because we have utilized all the supply that we have.

That is a good problem to have, because when we get supply it's getting out. We are amping up supply every week from the federal government, and those vaccines are getting in people's arms every single week. We'll be vaccinating close to 120,000 people in Nova Scotia, and we're vaccinating another 40,000 this week with the new supplies that are coming in. If any members are having issues and need advice or information from Public Health, we will get that to them to help them support their communities.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

H&W: EMERG. RESPONSE SYSTEM - BREAKING POINT

SUSAN LEBLANC: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Our emergency response system is being taxed to the limit, and there are mountains of evidence. One such piece of evidence is that according to the paramedics union, hundreds of paramedics are off work on stress or injury leave.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health and Wellness admit that hundreds of burnt-out paramedics is a sign that our EHS system is at a breaking point?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Our paramedics have a very difficult job, with very challenging hours and very challenging and oftentimes traumatic situations that they have to deal with. We have invested in our ambulance system. We are increasing the number of paramedics who work in that system, and we've hired 21 new paramedics this year to-date, with more coming at the end of May/beginning of June, that EMC will be hiring. We've implemented 45 of the 64 recommendations from the Fitch report to help improve the system.

As many frustrations as people might have with this system, and recognizing that it doesn't save everybody, experts have indicated that we have one of the best systems in North America, that it is world-class and it does save lives, and that wouldn't happen without the incredible work of our paramedics.

The Department of Health and Wellness and EMC are working together to make sure they're getting the supports that they need.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, since the release of the Fitch report, the government continues to point to the fact that they've issued a directive ordering the Nova Scotia Health Authority to find ways to off-load patients faster at emergency departments, but the government already tried that.

After the exact same directive was issued in 2019, ambulance off-load times worsened in every zone of the province except for one, and none reached the 20-minute measurement recommended in the Fitch report.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health and Wellness admit that simply ordering the Nova Scotia Health Authority to fix the problem didn't work in 2019, and it won't work now?

ZACH CHURCHILL: We actually did see some improvements in 2019 leading up to COVID-19, so there was some improvement made that the health authority was able to achieve, but not enough. That's why we issued a secondary directive.

The directive alone is not going to fix this. We have to work with the Nova Scotia Health Authority on solutions. Undoubtedly it'll involve investment, but I do believe there are some solutions there that can alleviate the pressure in the biggest problematic areas with off-loading times in our province, which are primarily here in HRM.

This is a complicated issue. It involves patient flow within our hospitals, from hospitals to long-term care. We've taken some initiatives already to help alleviate some of the pressure in our emergency departments - expanding access to primary care, allowing

paramedics to treat and release - and more will be coming as we get to more solutions in the very near future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

H&W - EMERGENCY DEPT. OVERCROWDING - CONCERN

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, we have heard from our paramedics on the front lines, and finally from the Fitch report, that off-load delays are a systemic issue. The government was reminded recently with the death of Anne MacPhee's husband, Kelly, when the Leader of the NDP shared with the House statistics on increasing off-load wait times. I would ask that member, maybe, to perhaps table those if possible.

Again, off-load delays are systemic, and it starts with our hospital beds. We have 198 people waiting in hospital beds to get into long-term care.

So, my question for the Minister of Health and Wellness is: How many people are in ICU beds that could be in intermediate care beds?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: The member is accurate. This is a system issue. It impacts certain hospitals and emergency departments much more than others, and we're working directly with the Nova Scotia Health Authority to address the pressure points in this. We've made some adjustments already that I think will help alleviate some of that pressure that we experience in our emergency departments, which contributes to off-load delays.

We are working to make sure that we are at that accepted 30-minute standard when we're doing off-loads. We will have more to say on this in the not-too-distant future as we reach some decision points with the Nova Scotia Health Authority on what happens next.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, we're failing Nova Scotians. Nova Scotians know that these are not the only systemic issues we suffer from. Emergency department closures have been rising since 2013 under this government. This reflects a shortage of resources that Nova Scotians have to pay for, but it is not the whole story.

Emergency departments will exceed their capacity and still operate, resulting in poor care for Nova Scotians and more strain on our already-spread-thin health care professionals and system. We deserve, Mr. Speaker, to see the whole picture.

Will the minister please commit to reporting the number of days we had in severe overcrowding in our emergency departments. Is it level four, level five? Would the minister please answer?

ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of factors that do contribute to the pressure in our emergency departments. Those folks who do not have access to a primary care provider, who have to go in for mild symptoms or prescription refills - that is a challenge in our system. That's why we're expanding primary care access points to those folks, through virtual care, by expanding the scope of practice for pharmacists and nurse practitioners - that's why we're so focussed on doctor recruitment and retention - also, having the physicians in place, particularly in some of the rural areas where we have a hard time staffing the emergency departments.

We have recognized that challenge and have increased the remuneration for emergency room physicians pretty substantially, by close to 20 per cent. We now have the most competitive remuneration for emergency department work in Atlantic Canada, all in an effort to recruit more physicians to do this critical work.

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

H&W - CATARACT SURGERY: ANTIGONISH WAIT TIMES - CONCERN

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, the benchmark for cataract surgery in Canada is 112 days. In the Fall of 2018 it took 210 days for Nova Scotians to get a consult for cataract surgery and 218 days for surgery, according to the Nova Scotia Health Care Wait Times site. That's the provincial average and it's almost four times the benchmark.

Let's fast forward two years to the Fall of 2020. Wait times for referrals are now 358 days and consults, 377 days. So, 90 per cent of the time this is what we're seeing. My question for the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Those are the provincial averages - does he know what the actual wait time is for residents in Antigonish and area?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the numbers have actually been reduced significantly for cataract surgeries. The numbers I have here from the department for cataract - this is from 2019 - it was reduced to 79 days. We did see an increase to 97 days during COVID-19, during 2020. We have been actually rebooking those surgeries and utilizing even the private clinic providers here in HRM to help us deal with that backlog and get folks these surgeries quicker, to get them off the wait-list and to reduce wait times for people.

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's answer, although the actual wait time for consult at St. Martha's Regional Hospital is currently 546 days and another 106 days' wait time for surgery, totalling 652 days. There is one doctor in Antigonish, for example, who has a consult waiting list time of 598 days and then a 169-day wait time for surgery.

The long wait times for people waiting for cataract surgery is a lot closer to two years than the 122-day benchmark. My question for the Minister of Health and Wellness

is: Why are the people of Antigonish and area so far behind the rest of the province for cataract surgery?

ZACH CHURCHILL: We'll certainly have to look further into that issue. I don't know that those numbers are accurate, based on what's in front of me, but we'll double check. We do have the benefit here in Nova Scotia of individuals who have a certain wait time in their area for a procedure to elect to go to another region of the province to get that procedure if it can happen more quickly. There's also the option to have some coverage for some of our surgeries outside of the province if there's an ability to get those done sooner.

There are options for Nova Scotians. Again, we're working very diligently to reduce the wait time here, which increased during COVID-19, and utilizing even private clinics for these surgeries is helping us reduce that wait time.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

H&W - CATARACT SURGERY: HRM WAIT TIMES - CONCERN

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. I'd like to return to the subject of cataract surgery. We know Nova Scotians looking for that surgery are waiting even longer than at any time during this Liberal government. Provincially, Nova Scotians are waiting an average wait time of 724 days from referral to surgery. Even longer if they need the second eye to be operated on, which I understand 40 per cent of Nova Scotians often do.

[2:45 p.m.]

HRM, we know, has over 40 per cent of the population in Nova Scotia. We know the demographic realities that are coming at us with an aging population. We know that there is going to be more need for this.

My question is this: When will the wait time for cataract surgery in the Halifax Regional Municipality be at the national average of 112 days?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Again, as I said in the previous question, the Health Authority is working very diligently to tackle the backlog as a result of COVID-19 delays. We are utilizing all the resources that we have at our disposal in the public system. Furthermore, we have enlisted the support of the private clinics, as well, here in HRM to help reduce that wait time and to get people those surgeries more quickly.

There was a significant backlog with elective surgeries here in Nova Scotia during COVID-19 as we prepared space in our hospitals to meet what could have been the demand from the pandemic. I am happy to say that 95 per cent of those elective surgeries have

either been booked or have happened. We are still working to make sure that the backlog is cleared.

TIM HALMAN: While I appreciate the response from the minister, some of the data that I have here - there needs to be more of a sense of urgency when it comes to this health care issue.

The actual wait time for a consult at the QEII Health Sciences Centre is currently 376 days for a consult, then another 461 days - that's the wait time for surgery - totalling 837 days. One doctor has a consulting wait-list time - listen to this - of 1,479 days and then 295 days wait time for surgery.

My question is this: Wait times for people needing cataract surgery sometimes are approaching five years. Does the minister believe that he can get wait times here in HRM in line with the national average?

ZACH CHURCHILL: That number certainly would not be reflective of the average. That would be an exception. We have, up until COVID-19, brought the wait time down for cataract and other elective surgeries. This is precisely why we are even providing billing codes to the private providers here in HRM to help us deal with this backlog.

It is very easy to point to these delays right now, but the members opposite, I know, understand why those delays are there. It is because we had to prepare our health care system to meet the potential needs and pressures of a pandemic.

Those decisions were prudent. They were the right decisions to make at the time. It did impact elective surgeries and cataract surgeries here in Nova Scotia. Since we have had good epidemiology on COVID-19, all efforts are being put forward to reduce these wait times and get people to surgeries that they need, and 95 per cent of those elective surgeries have already happened or are booked.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

EECD: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS - PAY EQUITY

CLAUDIA CHENDER: My question is for the Premier.

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

ECEs are frontline workers who helped restart Nova Scotia's economy and made it possible for businesses and public services to reopen. Given that the government sets both

fees and wages in child care, will the Premier demonstrate his commitment to pay equity by ensuring funding is adequate to provide all early childhood educators fair compensation?

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I think it is important to recognize two things - when we came into government, our ECEs were the lowest paid in the country, and that is why we invested in the wage floor to ensure that we could support their wages. This budget that we just tabled also has \$75 million towards a sector that continues to support the sector whether it is through wages, training, and other education opportunities for the sector.

As a government, we are one of the few jurisdictions to ensure that we continued to fund the sector during the pandemic to ensure that when we could open back up, that the centres were available. I'm happy to report that 98 per cent of them are open.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Wage floors came in a long time ago. They were a great step. It is time for the next step.

Recruitment and retention of qualified ECEs has been a long-term challenge. What we are talking about today is a big part of that challenge.

The implementation of pre-Primary has intensified worker shortages. Those working in pre-Primary have access to affordable health and dental benefits, which are not available to most ECEs working in licensed child care. Extending health and dental to all ECEs is a small step the government could take to recognize the value of the work they do and the instability caused in the sector by the introduction of pre-Primary.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to providing affordable health and dental benefits to all ECEs as is already done for ECEs in pre-Primary?

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: There are a couple of pieces to that question. I'll say this: that pre-Primary has been a huge success. We have implemented the last piece. We now have 900 additional staff working within the system, supporting those four-year-olds. As we all know, only 25 per cent of those four-year-olds were accessing some form of early childhood education leading into school.

I know that there are hundreds of people enrolled in the programs across the province to get into the sector. They see a future for this. I'll make the same commitment that I made during debate last evening, that we are fully engaged with our federal counterparts on a universal system and what supports may be there. I plan on meeting with a number of the stakeholders in the coming week to continue the conversations about what we can do to support the sector.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

H&W: EIBI PROGRAMMING FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN - CUTS

TIM HALMAN: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. It is well known by researchers, educators, and parents of autistic students that early programming can make all the difference for finding success in the classroom and for finding success in our communities. In Nova Scotia, Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI) is supposed to provide 12 months of programming to help prepare for school, but the Department of Health and Wellness has cut this in half to six months.

Mr. Speaker, despite allocating one-time additional monies from the federal government's Safe Restart Agreement, parents are still awaiting clarity from the government on whether future children requiring this programming will get the full recommended 12 months.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Does his department have research to support slashing programming for children with autism in half?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: The programming was not slashed in half. What happened was that, for a year, EIBI services were not able to be delivered because of COVID-19, so it was decided to accommodate that cohort of people who missed that service by putting two cohorts into the system in one year to allow those folks to catch up.

This was a decision made to ensure that no cohort of children lost the necessary programming of EIBI. A difficult decision was made to provide six months of programming to accommodate the cohort that missed as a result of COVID-19, and the current cohort in the system. I do think that as challenging as that is, that was the decision that allowed us to reach the majority of kids who needed the support.

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, at the time, the previous Minister of Health and Wellness indicated that more information would be communicated to parents as to what supports would be available in the school system for those students who will miss out on those six months. It's really critical that that information is communicated.

When this government decides to spend nearly three times as much per year on electric cars for wealthy Nova Scotians as they do on the one-time top-up of EIBI, it is easy to see that this is a question of priorities, not of funding.

My question is this: Will the minister commit to restoring EIBI programming to 12 months and eliminating that wait-list?

ZACH CHURCHILL: We're currently working with Autism Nova Scotia to develop a longer-term autism strategy here in Nova Scotia, of which EIBI will be a part. The member can expect some changes in that programming at some point when we land on where those solutions are.

We have invested more in autism supports in our schools. The member knows that. We have released those figures every single year in our inclusive education budgets, budgets that I will say the member opposite and his Party voted against, which put more behavioural experts in our schools, child and youth care practitioners, autism specialists, and mental health clinicians. That complement of teaching and non-teaching support staff has been substantiated dramatically over the last number of years, and the member is very well aware of that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

H&W: ABERDEEN HOSPITAL SHORT-STAY UNIT - CLOSURE

TIM HOUSTON: The Aberdeen Hospital has not had a short-stay unit since it was temporarily closed way back in 2015. That's six years that the residents of Pictou County needing immediate psychiatric support are held in the emergency room, waiting for a source of help to find their way to them, way too often. Six years with the residents who need psychiatric support being transferred to Truro. Six years with residents who need psychiatric support being transferred alternatively to Antigonish.

My question for the minister is: Can the minister explain why there are not more mental health services available at the Aberdeen?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: That support will be back into Aberdeen in the not-too-distant future. There will be a new clinic that is incorporated into that facility. I will get the specifics on a timeline, which is not too far away, for the member.

TIM HOUSTON: That would certainly be welcome news if the temporary closure is almost ready to be reversed six years later because right now, at present, it's not a good situation. If someone needs to present with a mental health issue requiring in-patient care, they are all too often out of luck when it comes to the Aberdeen. At a time when somebody is in need of the most support, when they're in a mental health crisis, they could be 45 minutes away.

We look forward to the minister providing some details of what their plan is for additional services at the Aberdeen. I would be grateful if the minister could maybe even share a few with us right now to start that process.

ZACH CHURCHILL: I'll absolutely get the member that information from our strategic infrastructure group, which is in charge of that project. That is coming soon.

I will say, though, that for those who have acute mental health illnesses or episodes, there is support available. I realize that there might be some inconvenience in that member's area with the temporary closure of Aberdeen, but we are responding to those

situations within the national standard of seven days on average, and the most acute of those are being responded to within a day or two days.

We have made substantial improvements on the wait time and the response time for dealing with acute mental health issues here in the province.

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

ECC: CLIMATE CHANGE - IMPORTANCE

HUGH MACKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question through you is to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

Nova Scotians - in fact, the majority of Canadians - recognize and acknowledge that climate change is a real and present danger. Yet this is a threat that is apparently not recognized by one of the national Opposition Parties in our country, whose delegates to their recent national convention voted against recognizing climate change as a real threat.

My question to the minister is: Can the minister confirm that this government recognizes the reality of the threat that climate change represents, and can he assure the House that this government recognizes the importance of climate change to government policy and decision making?

HON. KEITH IRVING: There is absolutely no question that climate change is the biggest challenge of our time. Nova Scotians can look to the Throne Speech of this government and see how the environment and climate change make up a big part of the agenda of this government.

This is not only a challenge but a real opportunity for us, because we have the opportunity to create jobs and save energy costs for Nova Scotians while protecting our environment. Our government is excited about this ambitious goal. We've made some additional targets for ourselves - looking to phase out coal by 2030, putting all our government buildings on renewable energy by 2025 - and we're endeavouring to be the first province to be carbon-neutral.

This is really exciting work, and I'm looking forward to working with my colleagues, the federal government, municipalities, and Nova Scotians as we tackle climate change.

HUGH MACKAY: My supplementary today is also for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. As he's just stated, the government has a plan for bold action on climate change and is making that a priority.

[3:00 p.m.]

I would like to ask the Minister of Environment and Climate Change: Can the minister please elaborate to the House as to what these steps are that the government is taking to address the threat of climate change?

KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, our work began on day one. In fact, on the first day of this government, I accompanied the Premier to Dartmouth to make the announcement on the electric car rebates and the e-bike rebates. As well, Nova Scotians can look to our budget.

There is \$80 million dedicated to various programs with respect to climate change, including the green funds of about \$26 million, which we are expending this year, and over half of that money is going to low-income Nova Scotians. So, again, I am looking forward to working with Nova Scotians as we tackle climate change and seizing the economic opportunities that this challenge presents.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

TAAT: PARRSBORO ABOITEAU BRIDGE - REINTRODUCTION

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, my question, although it is related to climate change, is directed to the Minister of Transportation and Active Transit and my key interest in the fact that the Progressive Conservative caucus here recognizes the fact that climate change is happening and the sea water levels are rising.

My concern is with the aboiteau bridge in Parrsboro that disappeared from the five-year plan last year, potentially with the idea of being swept away with the Fundy tides. This year, when the five-year plan came out, we were hopeful that it might be reincluded back into that plan. However, this was not the case. Water continues to flow over the bridge during some of the highest tides of the month.

I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation and Active Transit: When does his department expect to reintroduce the aboiteau bridge in Parrsboro back into the five-year plan that this government had removed?

HON. LLOYD HINES: Like the comments of my colleague, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, our department is extremely focused on the impacts of climate change, sea level rise, and the impacts that they have on our infrastructure across the province.

This weekend, we had a good example of that with significant rainfall and accompanying flooding. I really want to thank particularly the members of our team across the province who worked through the Easter weekend to restore the flooded-out roads,

particularly in parts of Cape Breton, that came apart, really, and the excessive impact that we had. So we are very aware of the impacts of climate change.

TORY RUSHTON: I appreciate the minister recognizing the fact of climate change, which is why I brought this bridge up last year as well. The road is almost at sea level and the tides are coming over the road and onto the bridge many times. The bridge was recognized by this government at one point to be on the five-year plan, but then they removed it. This one creek road, which is not passable in a car, as I tried it last year, is the only way around. This puts hundreds of people at risk of being cut off from local health services. It does not allow for any emergency health services to get in either.

I would like to ask the Minister Transportation and Active Transit: When will the minister put this bridge back in the five-year plan, come up with a plan to rebuild the road, and replace the bridge for residents and businesses of Riverside Beach, Greenhill, and Two Island Road so they can secure emergency and primary health care?

LLOYD HINES: As I mentioned, the impacts of climate change are being felt right across the province. The Insurance Bureau of Canada, for several years, has been sounding the alarm over how the change in sea level rise and other climate change impacts are going to affect us on the insurance side.

We are very concerned about making sure that we take every precaution to limit the damage that happens. However, I will tell the member that we will take another look at his bridge, and I will let him know what we are going to do.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, these questions are for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

A constituent reached out to my office. She wants her daughter to attend pre-Primary this Fall at the same school where her older brother currently attends a French immersion program.

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

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

TIM HOUSTON: On a point of order, during Question Period today, the Premier referred to 100,000 Nova Scotians being vaccinated. The Minister of Health and Wellness referred to 120,000. The CTV vaccine tracker has 83,000. I would just like to ask if the minister or the Premier can table that information to support the assertions they made in Question Period.

Just as a reminder to the Minister of Communications Nova Scotia, we had asked the minister to table the guidelines as to how Communications Nova Scotia determines when to use “the Rankin government” on the good news announcements and “the province” on the not-so-good announcements.

Just if we could ask somebody to table that information to support the assertions they made in Question Period, that would be good.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I must say that it’s pretty rich coming from the member who twice came up with numbers that were inaccurate towards the House. He claimed there was no self-isolation requirement for people travelling from P.E.I., which there hasn’t been since we started the House and before. Before that he claimed there were more doses in freezers than were in arms - both clearly inaccurate.

I didn’t want to stoop to this level of political banter in this House, but if he wants to know the answer to that, the Public Health Agency of Canada’s dashboard has under-reported and needs to catch up. We have already contacted them.

THE SPEAKER: We will now move on to Government Business.

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 the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole on Supply.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise this afternoon to speak on the budget that was tabled on Thursday, March 25th. Before I get to my comments and analysis on the budget that was presented on March 25th, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude, express on behalf of the residents of Dartmouth East just how grateful we are to those who have served our province during arguably one of the most challenging times in our history since World War II.

I know all members of this Chamber feel that sense of gratitude for those in our communities who have gone above and beyond to support Nova Scotians, to support the most vulnerable in our communities. In particular, I know we all think of those in our health care sector, our doctors and our nurses. God bless our nurses. I was married to one for almost 20 years, and I know how hard they work, how hard all our health care professionals work and how they went above and beyond. I think of our health care professionals at the Dartmouth General. It was just amazing how they have functioned and how they have operated in this extremely challenging period of our history.

I think of our lab techs. The lab techs are very much the unsung heroes of the health care system. In many respects, they have emerged in many regards as a profession that I know some of my former students would very much want to go into. They have been at the forefront, and they have been given the limelight during this pandemic, and we thank them for their service.

Of course, I want to recognize our first responders - our firefighters, our police, many in my community who are dear, close personal friends and have confided to me just how challenging it has been the last year. We want to thank them from the bottom of our hearts for the service that they provide to our communities throughout Nova Scotia.

Our paramedics, the same thing, above and beyond, who cared deeply about the well-being - the vast majority of Nova Scotians, when a very dangerous, challenging situation emerges, we have the luxury of not having to rush into that situation. Our first responders are the people who dive right into that.

Just the other day in Dartmouth East, Sobeys Tacoma completed their renovations. I was in there checking out these renovations, and I had an opportunity to thank some of the staff there who go above and beyond, who have done that continuously for the past year. I think of the staff that provide the bags that go to our Square Roots program, a program that provides healthy, nutritious food to at least 150 residents of Dartmouth, Cole Harbour, and Eastern Passage every two weeks, and that's provided by the great work being done by folks at Sobeys Tacoma in Dartmouth East.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues in the education profession. This has been a very challenging year. Their standards of professionalism are of great admiration to Nova Scotians. I want to thank our teachers, I want to thank our administrators, I want to thank our support staff, who embody that professionalism each and every day and have modelled to our students how to conduct themselves during a very, very challenging time. Of course, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our students who have done such an extraordinary job in ensuring the spread of COVID-19 is at a minimum.

Mr. Speaker, the budget presented on Thursday, March 25th - this budget does not contain the necessary investments required to address the systemic problems impacting our

long-term care and home care supports. This budget fails to address the chronic problems within long-term care and home care. In the four years I have served as an MLA, this is one of the top concerns I've heard from my residents in Dartmouth East. Staffing, staffing, staffing. Where is the staffing? Where are the plans to address the demographic realities that are coming at us here in Nova Scotia?

The Leader of the Official Opposition - the MLA for Pictou East - has referred to this budget as "a mile wide and an inch deep." In other words, this is a budget that has lots of sound bites and slogans but falls short on detailed, comprehensive plans. On this side of the House, we've often referred to that as the effort sprinkling that we see from this government.

I certainly agree with that analysis from the Leader of the Opposition. This certainly is a budget that has a lot of effort sprinkling, but it doesn't have any real plan to address the staffing or supply shortages of beds and facilities in long-term care.

The Finance Critic for the Official Opposition - the MLA for Northside-Westmount - has referred to this budget as a sales pitch, noting that there are lots of words in the budget like new, more, largest, most - lots of buzzwords, but it falls short of focusing on people. Mr. Speaker, this budget falls short of focusing on seniors.

The Leader of the Official Opposition and the Finance Critic for this caucus are pointing out that this budget fails to rethink and reimagine health care, long-term care, home care for the 21st century. It fails to ensure our seniors will have confidence moving forward, that this government takes the issues in long-term care and home care seriously.

It is the job of leaders to prepare for tomorrow. It is our job to ensure that there are clear policies and plans in place to deal with the issues that are coming at us. We need dignity for our seniors. We need leadership and vision, and it's sorely lacking from this government on this file when it comes to our seniors.

We know that demographic realities are crashing down on Nova Scotia, yet for eight years this Liberal government slashed operating budgets and is now just starting to acknowledge the demographic reality that has been coming at us for quite some time. Already, we know that far too many Nova Scotia seniors with mobility and cognitive difficulties are stuck on wait-lists. Nova Scotians are waiting in hotels - they're waiting in hotels - to access a long-term care facility.

What is this demographic reality? The reality is our population is aging at a rate that our current health care and long-term care systems are struggling with and will not be able to support unless we rethink and reimagine long-term care, home care - health care in general - for the early 21st century. If you consider the demographic projections of the constituency that I have the honour of representing - the constituency of Dartmouth East - and other areas like Cole Harbour, Preston, Cherry Brook, downtown Dartmouth, North

End Dartmouth, some of the data I have here gives you a good indication of what is coming at Nova Scotia.

[3:15 p.m.]

Today, Mr. Speaker, Dartmouth and communities east of Dartmouth have a seniors population - that is 65 and over - at 10,359. That number is projected to increase to 13,786 by 2031. That is an increase of 33 per cent. It is projected that those over the age of 85 will increase by 58 per cent in the same period.

Mr. Speaker, I'll table all those documents for your reading pleasure.

Reality has a way of shaking your complacency when it looks you in the eyes, or it should when you acknowledge reality. Unfortunately, there's no sense of urgency on the part of this government when it comes to long-term care and home care. All we are seeing in this budget, when it comes to seniors, is minor adjustments. That is not acceptable. We need a detailed and comprehensive plan that addresses these population realities. If Dartmouth has demographic realities like this, I can only imagine the provincial numbers, Mr. Speaker.

Yet we see a government that is not prepared to make the necessary investments into long-term care and home care. Recently, as many members of this House are aware, the Advocates for Care of the Elderly - the ACE team - has assigned the mark of C+ to the Liberal budget. As I always used to tell my students, Mr. Speaker, C+ is not where you want to be. You don't want to strive to be average, you don't want to strive to be mediocre, you want to strive for excellence at all times. Strive for excellence and you will attain the highest standard.

Mr. Speaker, our seniors in Nova Scotia deserve excellence, they deserve dignity. I'd like to take a moment and just read an excerpt from this press release from March 29th:

The ACE team, Advocates for the Care of the Elderly, has given the new Nova Scotia Government's 2021 Budget a C+, noting that slightly above average is not a grade that any government should want when being evaluated about the money it is willing to provide for the care of long-term care seniors.

I'll table that as well, and I agree with that analysis. We need to stop kicking the reality of our aging population down the road. Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, our caucus has a detailed plan to end the Liberal trend of kicking this issue down the road.

Since June of last year, the Leader of the Official Opposition and our critic for seniors, the MLA for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage, have been crystal clear about our plans for seniors: a massive capital investment of \$465 million in our seniors, that commits

to building 2,500 new, single rooms to meet the demand of today and into the future; a proposal to the federal government to seek infrastructure dollars to support an extra thousand rooms that the federal government is willing to invest alongside the Province of Nova Scotia. This is a proposed capital investment of \$821 million, which would be shared between the two levels of government.

As my colleague from Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage says, when it comes to long-term care, when it comes to home care, it is staffing, staffing, staffing. If we are to rethink and reimagine long-term care and home care in this province, we need to acknowledge that the greatest asset to any organization is its people. This Liberal budget falls short of that as well.

By contrast, Mr. Speaker, our caucus is committed to hiring 2,000 health professionals with the correct skills mix to support the changing social and health needs of Nova Scotians. We need more staff and we need them to feel appreciated and respected. They are the foundation for providing dignity of care to our seniors. That is why we need to reinstate the CCA training grants. We need to make the CCA registry mandatory.

There are big differences between this Liberal budget that allocates 236 beds, versus the plan of the Official Opposition. I can see why ACE gives this budget a C+. It lacks the depth and it lacks the investments that are required to rethink and reimagine long-term care.

Mr. Speaker, along with these reforms that will allow us to rethink and reimagine long-term care, our caucus maintains that we need to prepare the system for the future. Our Dignity for Seniors plan creates a new level of support to establish enhanced options of government-funded care by providing funding to seniors for expanded housing options, while reducing the stigma attached to seniors with mobility issues.

I think, for example, of the innovation that's happening in our community of Dartmouth East - in particular with our not-for-profit housing and mental health support organization, the Affirmative Ventures Association. They're going to be providing affordable housing and mixed-use development for mental health consumers and seniors' housing. We know, in an aging society, the Main Street centre will include a partnership with senior care organizations to help tenants age well in place.

This is an example of the innovation government needs to support, to rethink and reimagine how we deliver care for our seniors. I commend Affirmative Ventures on the outstanding work that they're doing with affordable and seniors' housing. I'll table their plan for seniors' housing here.

We've certainly reimaged and re-envisioned long-term care. We've added supportive living to provide seniors and families with increased choice and autonomy over their care options and services. We have ensured through supportive living in our plan that

seniors will have a comfortable, safe, living environment. Of course, we will ensure government will have the necessary regulation and accreditation for that.

There's one issue that I've learned quite a bit about in the past four years. It's seniors' issues. It is certainly a reflection on the aging population of Nova Scotia. It is the job of leaders to prepare for tomorrow. Our seniors deserve and expect a long-term care system that strives for excellence and lands on the exceptional. They deserve nothing less.

Our seniors deserve to know that government will care for them at their most vulnerable. Unfortunately, this Liberal budget does not inspire the confidence they need nor does it provide a blueprint to rethink and reimagine our long-term care and our home care system.

That is a missed opportunity, but it is an opportunity that this caucus is prepared to stand up and show the necessary leadership, provide the vision, provide the policies to move this forward.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. The House will now recess for its mandated 15-minute COVID-19 break.

The House will resume at 3:38 p.m.

[3:23 p.m. The House recessed.]

[3:38 p.m. The House reconvened.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, the play *Red Noses*, by Britain's Peter Barnes, is set in 1348 France during the Black Plague. There is no cure; people are dying everywhere, and they are full of fear.

The story follows a priest named Father Flote, a man named Sonnerie who speaks with bells tied to his limbs, and a number of other characters who are from the margins of society. Together, they make up the Red Noses of Auxerre. They move throughout France as clowns, bringing comedy and laughter to the afflicted and dying masses.

When I was a student at Dalhousie, the classes ahead of me staged a production of *Red Noses*. Since then I have often thought of the play and how for centuries, like the characters in the play, it has been the art makers and performers who have been the ones to respond to and articulate our collective emotional reaction to disasters, be they natural or human-made.

Some examples from recent history would be blockbuster films like *Schindler's List* or *The Pianist* that offer intimate peeks inside the treachery of the holocaust; Jonathan Safran Foer's novel, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, in which the protagonist father has been killed in the September 11th attacks in New York; or the Canadian-made Broadway hit show about the same tragedy, *Come From Away*.

The hugely popular nature of these pieces of art speak to their ability to help us humans process deep sadness, abject fear, utter joy, outrage and anger, and so many other real-life emotions. Many pieces of art will inspire us to take action against injustice, or seek acceptance, or make amends with someone.

Art is powerful, and it is not just the blockbusters or the mass marketed or the award winning pieces of art that are important. Here in our province, artists of all kinds have created works that touch us, challenge us, and make us consider something in a way that we never have before. The art makers among us here in our communities are essential threads in the weave that makes up the fabric of our lives, even if we do not always notice.

Like the people in 1348, we are in the midst of a global health pandemic. Millions of people have died, and millions still fear the virus, even as vaccines roll out through the world. This past year, we have watched a global shutdown that has left us numb, incredulous, depressed, scared and, in lots of cases, grateful. In what seemed like the blink of an eye, people have lost loved ones, jobs, autonomy of movement, and the ability to gather in groups. This in part means no theatre, no movies, no dance shows and, in most cases, no art galleries.

The COVID-19 protection measures, while absolutely necessary, have affected artists and cultural organizations in an immediate and direct way, and the things we do to feel connected to one another, especially in times of global crisis, are gone.

In the first few weeks of the pandemic in Nova Scotia, the job losses in the arts sector here were palpable. A musician friend of mine was touring in Australia; his tour was cut short. Another friend had a show at the very famous and prestigious Battersea Art Centre in England; that was cut short. Friends who were in *Calendar Girls* at Neptune Theatre were told their run would end abruptly, and others who were just starting rehearsals for *Billy Elliott* were told they wouldn't get to perform.

Summer theatre, a backbone for tourism in many parts of our beautiful province, held out hope. Maybe this thing would just last a couple of weeks and we could get back to work. Then announcement after heartbreaking announcement took place that the shows simply couldn't go on.

My own personal disappointment was the cancellation of Toronto's Luminato Festival, one of Canada's most prestigious arts festivals, at which I was booked to perform with Zuppa Theatre.

Many arts workers were hit doubly hard as their part-time work, the jobs they do between arts gigs to pay the bills (which is a whole other issue that I hope to get to later on in this speech) also dried up - jobs as ushers in theatres, bartenders and servers in restaurants.

They were dark and uncertain days for many Nova Scotian artists, but artists are resilient and resourceful, and many incredible things came out of needing to rethink how to make art for people and how to bring people together, even if not physically.

The Mayworks Festival asked artists it programmed for live events to rethink their offerings, and the result was amazing. Online concerts, podcasts, and guided or curated walking tours presented through phone apps all happened. Singer-songwriter Bruce Guthro presents a subscription-only songwriters' circle that folks from all over can tune into every second Friday. The Ultimate Online Nova Scotia Kitchen Party was invented. Two Planks and a Passion Theatre turned its production of *Animal Farm* into a podcast. Wonder'neath studio created art packs that family could pick up to create things together at home instead of at their studio. Textile artist Leesa Hamilton made a series of cross-stitch pieces of the coronavirus. I could go on and on.

Like the brotherhood of *Red Noses* during the Black Death, spreading cheer and laughter to the afflicted and dying, artists in Nova Scotia have persevered and continued to create. We may not see the full result of the pandemic on art making for years to come, but as we are in the midst of a state of emergency, artists are working hard to make sure we have chances to experience beautiful things and feel connected to one another.

Why am I bringing all of this up now in a speech going into Supply? Because once again, there is very little in this budget that addressed the needs of one of our province's most precious resources: our arts and culture sector.

Last March, when arts and culture jobs and revenues started falling off the side of the planet, artists and organizations were pleading with the government for help. I was impressed with the quick reaction of the staff at CCH, who seemed to understand the dire need of the arts community, and yet it took months and months, much fear, and much advocacy for money to get into the hands of organizations. That money was absolutely necessary and appreciated, and yet that is the money that should have been coming to those organizations for the last several years. That increase, or that amount of \$2.1 million, which showed up as emergency funding because of COVID, needs to be made a permanent increase.

For the last four years, we in the NDP have asked this government, on behalf of the arts sector here, to end the freeze on operation funding for arts organizations. For years, the response has been that this is under review, yet here we are again with another budget and no real investment in the day-to-day workings of the organizations that have continued

to exist in spite of this government. The emergency funds helped, and they must be made permanent.

For the last four years, we have asked this government to reinvest in our incredible film industry, to admit the mistake of ending the Film Industry Tax Credit, to bring it back and make sure our industry is competitive. We have amplified the calls from the industry to invest in a proper sound stage and bring back the Equity Fund that was axed in 2016, and once again, we see this budget as a status quo budget.

[3:45 p.m.]

We know this Summer will be the best Summer in a long time for the film industry. Nova Scotia has become attractive again because of our low COVID-19 numbers and the dogged work of industry reps like Laura Mackenzie at Screen Nova Scotia. This is great, but imagine what would be happening if we had been investing properly for the last several years. With production picking up this year, now is the time to show the world we are competitive with the rest of Canada and beyond.

We need a more competitive incentive fund, a tax credit, a plan to rebuild a skilled film workforce and a sound stage. Having film moved into the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage could signal a positive change, but time will tell if change means embracing what the industry has been pushing for for years.

I have many questions for the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage and I look forward to getting some real answers, but as I head into Estimates I have to say I am not hopeful. When will we see this Liberal government recognize in a substantial way the power that art and culture holds for us here in Nova Scotia? When will we recognize that it is our arts and culture sector that attracts new residents to Nova Scotia, that attracts those very valuable tourism dollars? But beyond that, when will we realize the value of art and culture to our everyday lives? The richness the arts brings us cannot be evaluated only on monetary return of investment only, but on the emotional return as well.

I know that the minister will point to the new art gallery, to Culture Link CIC, to the Convent in Sydney, and rightly so, but the question lingers: Who will show in the new art gallery and perform in those spaces? If we do not support the entire ecosystem of artists - new and established, rural and urban, from diverse communities - they will be forced to leave or enter different careers. Our entire arts sector depends on support at all levels, and the economic spinoffs are incalculable.

Those smaller organizations and organizations who support emerging artists need space too. The Khyber Centre for the Arts, the Eyelevel Gallery, and the Bus Stop Theatre are just a few who have teetered on the edge of a crisis of space. Thank goodness the Bus Stop is now reaping the benefits of hard work and advocacy and is currently undergoing renovations as I read this. We need a plan for all of those folks too, and all across the

province there are deficits of libraries, galleries, studios, performance spaces, and practice spaces.

Investment in this sector must be a part of our COVID-19 recovery. Like the Federal Theatre Project, which was part of FDR's New Deal in the 1930s - real investment to put a lot of people back to work - we can invest in new art, in new artists, in new art spaces in many communities around the province. Like the possibilities that we see and experience in the presence of art that truly moves us and makes us see the world in different ways, the possibilities for our arts and culture sector are endless.

But we need vision and commitment from this government. I had hoped to see that vision in this budget, but I am afraid that we will have to wait and hope some more.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on Supply, as presented on March 25th this year. It is a pleasure for me to take a few moments to talk about the government's proposed business plan in the 2021-22 budget.

Last year was my first provincial government budget. This year is the first for the member for Cape Breton Centre and the member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River. I offer congratulations and welcome, and I look forward to working with the members on behalf of all Nova Scotians.

The budget process must be open, transparent, and subject to scrutiny in the development and execution. Legislative oversight is required to hold the government accountable to its citizens. Government needs to tell us what they are going to do, how they are going to do it, how they are doing and, in the end, what they did.

All members of this House discuss the budget through questions and answers. However, in the end, it is 16 members, the Premier and ministers, managing the government's daily operations, who are charged with delivering on the budget's programs and services for Nova Scotians. I thank all our government employees who deliver the programs and services as best they can for Nova Scotians.

Last year's Budget Address said "Budget 2020-21 supports Nova Scotians who may not have been feeling the success of the province." Well, I agreed with that. There are a lot of Nova Scotians who did not feel the success of the province then and still don't. I acknowledge that when you spend \$11.8 billion, some good things will happen. Last year's small surplus is now projected to be a large \$705.5-million deficit, and this budget is looking at deficit spending of \$584.9 million. This would be a \$1.290 billion two-year running total adding to our debt.

This eight-year-old Liberal government tells us: “This is not a structural deficit. It is shorter term and caused by COVID-19, allowing us to anticipate that our economic situation, revenues, and expenditures will return us to the strong economic position we had pre-COVID-19”; and “In 2013-14 we were facing a deficit of \$657 million and our government eliminated it three years later.” So now this government is prepared to repeat their three- or four-year deficit-surplus cycle, and there are Nova Scotians who will still feel left out.

In my office, the greatest concerns expressed are health, the need for more affordable housing, homelessness, and income assistance. There will be Nova Scotians who will not benefit from this budget despite what the government commits to. There are numerous wait-lists for housing, for disability support programs, for long-term care beds, for mental health access, for surgeries, and for doctors, to name a few. The MLA for Pictou Centre mentioned an array of numbers a few days ago.

In the next few minutes, I will talk about housing and homelessness. There is so much more to talk about, and I will do that in the coming weeks.

Before I go on, though, I have comments on what I see as a fundamental business structure organization issue. Since being sworn in as a member of the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia a mere 20 months ago, this Liberal government shuffled the housing portfolio through three areas. It started with Community Services and Housing, then it was Municipal Affairs and Housing, and now Infrastructure and Housing. There have been three deputy ministers and three ministers, while homelessness has been carved off housing and now moved to Community Services. It appears that “and housing” has been couch-surfing for years and has yet to find a stable and supportive home of its own.

Two years ago, the minister for housing provided substantial and separate housing reports and published them on the Housing Nova Scotia website. It gave one a sense of openness and transparency, and therefore accountability and confidence. It was quite surprising and disappointing to me last year that there was no separate Housing Nova Scotia business plan nor accountability report provided by the minister.

Incredibly, this year under the Minister for Infrastructure and Housing, the budget and plan is even less informative. *Estimates and Supplementary Detail: Budget 2021-22* shows absolutely nothing. Zero dollars for the 2020-21 Estimate, nor the 2020-21 forecast, with no explanatory note. Why would that be? I don’t know.

The business plan, all in 18 lines, often a repeat or a variation of the same lines for housing, but the plan is supported by one line of \$107.84 million.

From the 2018 Canadian Housing Survey, Nova Scotia had 410,800 households: 31.1 per cent of them were rentals, 61.7 per cent owned their own home for more than five years, and 7.2 per cent owned their home for less than five years. Nova Scotia is above the

national average for long-term homeowners. These long-term homeowners are getting older, want to maintain their priorities and their properties as their incomes decline, and eventually look to sell. They purchase smaller accessible homes, rent, or move into long-term care, if they can get it.

There have been substantial increases to rental supply. However, the demand for affordable housing continues to outpace it. In addition to people downsizing, other factors impacting demand are immigration, in-migration, international students, and now what is being termed by some as “COVID-19 refugees.”

Of course, on the supply side, it is negatively impacted by renovictions and short-term rentals. Last year the overall rental vacancy in Lower Sackville was an unthinkable 0.5 per cent. You would pay \$931 a month for a one-bedroom, a two-bedroom is \$1,100, and \$1,300 for, let’s say, three bedrooms.

Since 2010, vacancy rates have been steadily trending downwards and rents steadily increasing upwards. Year-to-date, February 21st, home sales over 2020 are down 35 per cent. Days on the market went from 44 days to 19 days. The average sale price has gone from \$246,000 to \$366,000 - a 49 per cent increase, all of these in Lower Sackville.

More people are staying put, houses are selling quicker, and the prices are much higher. This is a supply issue. Although there are over 800 units under construction and planned for over the next few years in Lower Sackville, they may not be enough to get us to a healthier three to four per cent vacancy rate.

In the 1960s, under the Progressive Conservative leader Robert Stanfield, they recognized the need for affordable housing. In Halifax and Dartmouth, the vacancy rate at that time was about 0.4 per cent and the government of the day decided that they required more housing.

The government accumulated land in what they called the Sackville Lakes Land Assembly. It was a planned community for about 30,000 people or so. Successive Progressive Conservative and Liberal governments, through the Nova Scotia Housing Commission, expanded the service land and that led to very rapid housing growth. Sackville was one of Canada’s fastest-growing communities in the early 1970s.

Maybe we could learn from what was done back then to increase affordable home ownership going forward - maybe take advantage of what we have now and increase the capacity of what is already in place. In the 1950s, Sackville had less than 1,000 people. At around 1969, the population was about 7,000, and in the 1980s, the population was around 35,000, and the population is still growing.

My Progressive Conservative colleagues recognize that affordable housing and homelessness is a critical issue. Consequently, government ought to look at comprehensive

and integrated strategies to address it. We need to drive the change. We need more social and market housing units, and we need them quicker.

Our non-market and market housing continuum includes emergency shelters, various transition shelters, private and public social housing through co-operatives and housing societies, as well as long-term care facilities, transition houses, housing for youth in care and those with disabilities, apartments, and home ownership. The government needs to take a more active role in facilitating housing construction across this continuum.

Nova Scotia's emphasis is on growing the economy and immigration. Growing that population has seen steady population growth but with no strategy or plan to grow the housing stock. As the Leader of the Official Opposition questioned the government just last week, we need more. We need to be able to have an integrated strategy.

We are anticipating a population of one million people in a few years. Some incentives for business immigrants and others from across Canada to move to Nova Scotia are an educated workforce, geographic location, and quality of life. However, the Liberal government does not have a strategy that takes housing into consideration.

Why not invest in a comprehensive housing sector to keep up with our growing population? To do this, we need to engage non-profit and for-profit housing segments. I look forward to what the Affordable Housing Commission comes up with and, more importantly, what the government, regardless of who is at the helm, will do to the commissions and work with the commission's recommendations.

It is unfortunate that the commission was not established before this government signed the National Housing Strategy. Imagine if we had negotiated an agreement armed with full understanding and knowledge of Nova Scotia's current and future housing environment.

Let's take a look at the federal government's \$1 billion Rapid Housing Initiative late last year. Money was offered but Nova Scotia was not able to grab much of it. The HRM Municipal Funding Stream was leveraged only because there were two projects already in the pipeline and everyone worked tirelessly together to make it happen - the Project Stream less so, because there were few, if any, organizations, for-profit or non-profit, that had the capacity to pull together other stakeholders and necessary resources to respond. This is evidence of an out-of-date, ineffective housing strategy in today's environment.

On the social housing side, the government owns and maintains about 12,000 affordable housing units. This budget only looks at 150 new affordable housing units - not nearly enough. There are many struggling families and individuals looking to the government for help.

[4:00 p.m.]

Last year, there were numerous ministerial queries and questions about increasing housing units, to which the minister continuously responded that there was a federal-provincial agreement and results were coming. An agreement is not a result. A result is a door being opened and a family moving in. We have yet to know how we are increasing housing stock under those plans.

Often investments in affordable housing don't go as far as they need to. Significant portions of funding are required for critical repairs and maintenance on existing units. The years of deferred maintenance versus keeping an asset in a state of good repair have led us to this point. The government's approach to affordable housing must go beyond just maintaining essential repairs for non-market housing.

It's time to look at affordable housing through the lens of property life cycle management to provide safe and sustainable housing. This eight-year-old government is long overdue in delivering a plan with goals, timelines, initiatives, and results for housing and for homelessness.

To help those who are homeless or near-homeless is very important. The government-related agencies have a concept called Housing First. However, it falls short of recognizing that people who are homeless may not have ready access to housing. For the most part, identification of the homeless has been a sign to establish shelters or street navigators, funded in HRM by non-profits and HRM.

Homelessness is not just an urban, Halifax-centric issue. It pervades all of Nova Scotia. In Lower Sackville, community initiatives have created the Sackville Area Warming Centre, Community Outreach Meal Event, and the Freedom Kitchen & Closet. These are in response to the growing, hidden homelessness here. These groups need government support to better help the homeless. I do not know of any street navigator support or other initiatives in this budget.

COVID-19 laid bare many gaps in Nova Scotia's housing sector. The limited number of shelter beds has exacerbated this problem. A few years ago, the number of homeless on the Halifax peninsula was just over 200. Now the HRM number is around 500, with no growth in emergency shelters.

Housing First is the primary goal. However, shelter housing is the emergency department of the health care system. Nova Scotia needs funding for street navigators, people whose job it is to seek out the homeless and help them get help with housing. Yes, that includes a journey through supportive shelters. People simply do not go directly from being homeless to having safe, affordable, and appropriate housing. It can take many months or years. There are many questions yet to be asked and asked again.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

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

[4:03 p.m. The House resolved itself into a CW on Supply with Deputy Speaker Susan Leblanc in the Chair.]

[9:06 p.m. CW on Supply rose and the House reconvened. Deputy Speaker Susan Leblanc resumed the Chair.]

THE CHAIR: Order, please. The Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on Supply reports.

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

THE CHAIR: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

[9:07 p.m. The House recessed.]

[9:22 p.m. The House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on Bills with Deputy Speaker Susan Leblanc in the Chair.]

[9:37 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Deputy Speaker Susan Leblanc resumed the Chair.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

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

Bill No. 28 - Land Titles Initiative Acceleration Act.

Bill No. 47 - Municipal Government Act and Halifax Regional Municipality Charter Act.

Bill No. 50 - Municipal Government Act and Halifax Regional Municipality Charter Act.

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

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Madam Speaker, that concludes the government's business for today. I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow, Wednesday, April 7, 2021, between the hours of 12 noon and 11:59 p.m.

Of course, with Wednesday being Opposition Day, I will momentarily turn it over to the Deputy House Leader of the Official Opposition to call their business.

For the government business, which will follow Opposition business, we will include the Committee of the Whole and Subcommittee on Supply, and with time permitting, second readings on Bill Nos. 85 and 87, as well as second readings on Private and Local Bill Nos. 74 and 77, and also with time permitting, third readings on Bill Nos. 1, 4, 9, and 23.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Official Opposition Deputy House Leader.

BRAD JOHNS: Madam Speaker, the Progressive Conservative caucus will be calling the order of business, Private Members' Bill No. 86, An Act to Provide for Efficient Operating Rooms, and Bill No. 60, Mental Health Crisis Hotline Act for second reading.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise to meet again on April 7th, between the hours of 12:00 noon and 11:59 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded. Thank you.

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned until tomorrow at 12:00 noon.

[The House rose at 9:40 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 319**

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Courtney Brown, a social worker hired with the Families Plus program, grew up in Timberlea and has described herself as a descendant of Africville, a Black community on the shore of the Bedford Basin that was expropriated in the 1960s; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Government hired the Families Plus agency to help families struggling to stay together and is expanding its services to offer aid specifically geared to Black families, and strives to have the person who is providing the most intensive support look like you, be sensitive to issues of racism, and understand cultural nuances and your traditions; and

Whereas the Families Plus program is designed to work with families in crisis, whose children are in imminent risk of removal and placement into out-of-home care, and has the goal of keeping children at home with their families in a safe, stable, and nurturing environment;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Courtney Brown for her work to bridge the gap between Black communities and government programs.

RESOLUTION NO. 320

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Keith Tasco, an African Nova Scotian support worker and resident of Timberlea, assisted in creating a mural celebrating the Black Lives Matter movement, which sits permanently on the walls of Sackville High School after a student from the school pitched the idea; and

Whereas the mural includes names of Black Americans and Canadians who have lost their lives to police brutality and violence and racist incidents dating back to 1996 and also includes George Floyd, whose death sparked the Black Lives Movement worldwide; and

Whereas all of the African Nova Scotian women at the school, students and faculty members, included their handprints on the mural in solidarity with “Am I next” - a movement in South Africa that rose after the sexual assault and death of a 19-year-old;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Keith for supporting this project and using the mural as an important tool to educate all students on racism and create a safe environment for everyone to learn and feel comfortable regardless of skin colour.

RESOLUTION NO. 321

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! raised in excess of \$200,000 for local charities from 2016 to 2020; and

Whereas due to COVID-19 concerns the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! has now ceased in-person meetings; and

Whereas during its time of operations the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! supported many great local charities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly express their gratitude to founding member Bruce Tupper for his participation in the 100 Men leadership team and for his generosity and commitment to the Annapolis Valley community.

RESOLUTION NO. 322

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! raised in excess of \$200,000 for local charities from 2016 to 2020; and

Whereas due to COVID-19 concerns the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! has now ceased in-person meetings; and

Whereas during its time of operations the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! supported many great local charities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly express their gratitude to founding member Ed Raine for his participation in the 100 Men leadership team and for his generosity and commitment to the Annapolis Valley community.

RESOLUTION NO. 323

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! raised in excess of \$200,000 for local charities from 2016 to 2020; and

Whereas due to COVID-19 concerns the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! has now ceased in-person meetings; and

Whereas during its time of operations the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! supported many great local charities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly express their gratitude to founding member Greg Coldwell for his participation in the 100 Men leadership team and for his generosity and commitment to the Annapolis Valley community.

RESOLUTION NO. 324

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! raised in excess of \$200,000 for local charities from 2016 to 2020; and

Whereas due to COVID-19 concerns the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! has now ceased in-person meetings; and

Whereas during its time of operations the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! supported many great local charities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly express their gratitude to founding member John Lohr for his participation in the 100 Men leadership team and for his generosity and commitment to the Annapolis Valley community.

RESOLUTION NO. 325

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! raised in excess of \$200,000 for local charities from 2016 to 2020; and

Whereas due to COVID-19 concerns the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! has now ceased in-person meetings; and

Whereas during its time of operations the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! supported many great local charities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly express their gratitude to team member John Smith for his participation in the 100 Men leadership team and for his generosity and commitment to the Annapolis Valley community.

RESOLUTION NO. 326

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! raised in excess of \$200,000 for local charities from 2016 to 2020; and

Whereas due to COVID-19 concerns the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! has now ceased in-person meetings; and

Whereas during its time of operations the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! supported many great local charities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly express their gratitude to team member Jon Watson for his participation in the 100 Men leadership team and for his generosity and commitment to the Annapolis Valley community.

RESOLUTION NO. 327

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! raised in excess of \$200,000 for local charities from 2016 to 2020; and

Whereas due to COVID-19 concerns the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! has now ceased in-person meetings; and

Whereas during its time of operations the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! supported many great local charities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly express their gratitude to founding member Mike Landry for his participation in the 100 Men leadership team and for his generosity and commitment to the Annapolis Valley community.

RESOLUTION NO. 328

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! raised in excess of \$200,000 for local charities from 2016 to 2020; and

Whereas due to COVID-19 concerns the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! has now ceased in-person meetings; and

Whereas during its time of operations the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! supported many great local charities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly express their gratitude to founding member Robert MacNamara for his participation in the 100 Men leadership team and for his generosity and commitment to the Annapolis Valley community.

RESOLUTION NO. 329

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! raised in excess of \$200,000 for local charities from 2016 to 2020; and

Whereas due to COVID-19 concerns the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! has now ceased in-person meetings; and

Whereas during its time of operations the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! supported many great local charities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly express their gratitude to team member Sandy Fraser for his participation in the 100 Men leadership team and for his generosity and commitment to the Annapolis Valley community.

RESOLUTION NO. 330

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! raised in excess of \$200,000 for local charities from 2016 to 2020; and

Whereas due to COVID-19 concerns the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! has now ceased in-person meetings; and

Whereas during its time of operations the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! supported many great local charities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly express their gratitude to founding member Zachary Morse for his participation in the 100 Men leadership team and for his generosity and commitment to the Annapolis Valley community.

RESOLUTION NO. 331

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the administration, teachers, and staff of Aldershot Elementary School continued to teach during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-21; and

Whereas this public service was done willingly and at great personal risk to themselves and their families; and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic also caused significant extra work and time commitment preparing both in-person and online lesson plans, extra cleaning, and addressing health concerns;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the administration, teachers, and staff of Aldershot Elementary School for stepping up and serving our community above and beyond any previous expectation, at great personal risk and placing the needs of others before their own.

RESOLUTION NO. 332

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Canning Baptist Church monthly breakfast has long been a favourite Saturday morning event in our community; and

Whereas the congregation volunteers who create, serve, and clean up this breakfast do an incredible job; and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic forced suspension of the church breakfast and all hope it will resume soon;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking volunteers Wilfred and Debbie Ells, Shirley Smith, Fred and Pat Stockall, Sally DeWolfe, Terry and Gloria Porter, Dawn Keddy, Robert and Diane Sherman, Paul Bushnell, Linda Barkhouse, Charlotte Rhynold, Corey Coffin, Shirley Rogers, Mary Ann Mackenzie, Hermine Heger, Ryan Skaling, John MacMillan, Chris deWaal, Pete and Alicia

Lindeman, and youth from the congregation for all their efforts creating an incredible breakfast.

RESOLUTION NO. 333

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas Eldon Smith is a charter member of the Port Williams Lions Club; and

Whereas the Port Williams Lions Club celebrated its 50th anniversary charter night on November 21, 2020; and

Whereas Eldon Smith served as president in 1983-84 and on many committees and was recently recognized for having 50 years of dedicated service to Lions;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Eldon Smith for his remarkable service to the Port Williams community and Lions Club.

RESOLUTION NO. 334

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas Eric Bolland served the citizens of Kentville in Kings County as a town councillor; and

Whereas he has served the public faithfully and diligently as a town councillor for 15 years; and

Whereas he has retired from municipal politics;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Eric Bolland for his commitment and dedication to public service of behalf of the citizens of the Town of Kentville in Kings County.

RESOLUTION NO. 335

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas Ernie Hovell is a charter member of the Port Williams Lions Club; and

Whereas the Port Williams Lions Club celebrated its 50th anniversary charter night on November 21, 2020; and

Whereas Ernie Hovell was the founding secretary in 1970 and has served as president in 1975-76 and on many committees, and was recently recognized for having 50 years of perfect attendance;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Ernie Hovell for his remarkable service to the Port Williams community and Lions Club.

RESOLUTION NO. 336

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the administration, teachers and staff of Glooscap Elementary School continued to teach during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-21; and

Whereas this public service was done willingly and at great personal risk to themselves and their families; and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic also caused significant extra work and time commitment preparing both in-person and online lesson plans, extra cleaning, and addressing health concerns;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join in thanking the administration, teachers, and staff of Glooscap Elementary School for stepping up and serving our community above and beyond any previous expectation, at great personal risk and placing the needs of others before their own.

RESOLUTION NO. 337

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas Rev. John Andrew served the citizens of Kentville in Kings County as a town councillor; and

Whereas he has served the public faithfully and diligently as a town councillor; and

Whereas he has served the public through his ministry and leadership of Open Arms;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Rev. John Andrew for his commitment and dedication to public service of behalf of the citizens of the Town of Kentville in Kings County.

RESOLUTION NO. 338

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas Karen Jenner has dedicated her time and effort to cleaning up Black Rock beach in Kings County; and

Whereas Karen has single-handedly picked up over 14,000 lbs of garbage and reported exactly what she has found on Facebook; and

Whereas Karen's dedication and commitment has resulted in her continuing to pick up beach garbage despite discouragement at its seemingly unending accumulation;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Karen Jenner on her outstanding commitment to cleaning up the Black Rock beach and inspiring others with the diligent recordkeeping of what she has picked up.

RESOLUTION NO. 339

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the administration, teachers, and staff of Kings County Academy continued to teach and work during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-21; and

Whereas this public service was done willingly and at great personal risk to themselves and their families; and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic also caused significant extra work and time commitment preparing both in-person and online lesson plans, extra cleaning, and addressing health concerns;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the administration, teachers and staff of Kings County Academy for stepping up and serving our community above and beyond any previous expectation at great personal risk and placing the needs of others before their own.

RESOLUTION NO. 340

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas Laurie Hennigar served the Province of Nova Scotia for 34 years on the Natural Products Marketing Council; and

Whereas Laurie Hennigar grew apples for many years and owned Blomidon Produce Limited and served on many boards and committees; and

Whereas Laurie Hennigar received the Golden Apple Award from his peers at the Nova Scotia Fruit Growers Association for outstanding contributions to the industry;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Laurie Hennigar for his outstanding service to the Province of Nova Scotia through service to the apple industry and on the Natural Products Marketing Board.

RESOLUTION NO. 341

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the administration, teachers and staff of Northeast Kings Educational Centre continued to teach during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-21; and

Whereas this public service was done willingly and at great personal risk to themselves and their families; and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic also caused significant extra work and time commitment preparing both in-person and online lesson plans, extra cleaning, and addressing health concerns;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the administration, teachers, and staff of Northeast Kings Educational Centre for stepping up and serving our community above and beyond any previous expectation, at great personal risk and placing the needs of others before their own.

RESOLUTION NO. 342

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the administration, teachers, and staff of Port Williams Elementary School continued to teach during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-21; and

Whereas this public service was done willingly and at great personal risk to themselves and their families; and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic also caused significant extra work and time commitment preparing both in-person and online lesson plans, extra cleaning, and addressing health concerns;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the administration, teachers and staff of Port Williams Elementary School for stepping up and serving our community above and beyond any previous expectation, at great personal risk and placing the needs of others before their own.

RESOLUTION NO. 343

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas all staff of the Valley Regional Hospital continued to serve the public during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-21; and

Whereas this public service was done willingly and at great personal risk to themselves and their families; and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic also caused significant extra work and time commitment on their part in training, in extra cleaning, and in addressing health concerns;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the entire staff at the Valley Regional Hospital for stepping up and being willing to serve our community above and beyond any previous expectation, at great personal risk and placing the needs of others before their own during the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESOLUTION NO. 344

By: John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! raised in excess of \$200,000 for local charities from 2016 to 2020; and

Whereas due to COVID-19 concerns the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! has now ceased in-person meetings; and

Whereas during its time of operations the Annapolis Valley 100 Men Who Give a Damn! supported many great local charities;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly express their gratitude to founding member Joel Stoddart for his participation in the 100 Men leadership team and for his generosity and commitment to Annapolis Valley community.