



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

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Third Session

THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 2021

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 2021

Sixty-third General Assembly

Third Session

12:00 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: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Health, I am pleased to submit the annual report of the committee for the period from September 2019 to August 2020 of the Sixty-third General Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, I am pleased to submit the annual report of the committee for the period from September 2019 to August 2020 of the Sixty-third General Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, I am pleased to submit the annual report of the committee for the period from September 2019 to August 2020 of the Sixty-third General Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: As Chair of the Committee on Law Amendments, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 98 - Municipal Government Act and Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

Bill No. 103 - Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

Bill No. 105 - Financial Measures (2021) Act.

Bill No. 112 - Emancipation Day Act.

and the committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, each without amendment.

THE SPEAKER: Ordered that these bills be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

HON. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development, I am pleased to submit the annual report of the committee for the period of September 2019 to August 2020 of the Sixty-third General Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS****GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour and Advanced Education.

RESOLUTION NO. 526

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

Whereas youth have been among the most impacted by the employment challenges presented through the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas our government recognizes the need to support our youth, and I was pleased to share at an event in November an investment of \$1.3 million over three years to support 350 young diverse Nova Scotians, including African Nova Scotians, Indigenous, and newcomers, with free IT training delivered by NPower Canada; and

Whereas graduates of the employer-driven program will have the skills needed to launch entry-level IT careers with Nova Scotian employers and receive five years of continued career support, including job placement, mentorship, and professional development;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature join me in celebrating NPower Canada's first Nova Scotian youth cohort, which began training in February, and wish the participants the best of luck in their journey to IT careers in our province.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.

RESOLUTION NO. 527

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

Attendu que ce 25 mai 2021 à treize heures marque précisément le 25^e anniversaire de la cérémonie d'ouverture de la première réunion du conseil d'administration et de la création du Conseil scolaire acadien provincial; et

Attendu que la création du Conseil scolaire acadien provincial et la place qu'il a prise dans la promotion et le soutien de la culture acadienne et de la langue française ont changé le paysage social de la Nouvelle-Écosse et sont un exemple de dynamisme et de diversité culturelle; et

Attendu que l'engagement des familles et du personnel et le lien profond entre les écoles et la communauté contribuent non seulement à la vitalité de la communauté acadienne et francophone, mais aussi au développement culturel, social et économique de toute la province;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les membres de la Chambre d'assemblée se joignent à moi pour féliciter le Conseil scolaire acadien provincial de ses 25 ans et lui souhaiter des plus nombreuses années de grand succès dans son rôle d'assurer le dynamisme continu de notre culture acadienne et de notre langue française.

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

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

Whereas this May 25, 2021, at precisely one o'clock in the afternoon, marks the 25-year anniversary since the opening ceremony, the first board meeting, and the creation of the province's Acadian and francophone school board, le Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP); and

Whereas the creation of le Conseil scolaire acadien provincial and the place it has taken to promote and support Acadian culture and the French language has changed the social landscape of Nova Scotia and is an example of dynamism and cultural diversity; and

Whereas the commitment of the families and staff and the deep connection between the schools and the community contribute not only to the vitality of the Acadian and francophone community but to the cultural, social, and economic development of the entire province;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial on 25 years and wishing them many more years of great success in its role of ensuring the continued vibrancy of our Acadian culture and French language.

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 Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 528

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

Whereas in 1921, Edward Hennigar and his wife, Thelma, purchased 39 acres of land and a small orchard in Greenwich, Kings County, and began to farm there; and

Whereas in 1952, Hennigar's Farm Market was built where it stands today and the farm continues to grow with a portable peach orchard and a new apple orchard being planted with heritage varieties; and

Whereas celebrating 100 years, Hennigar's Farm is now the fifth generation of Nova Scotia family farming;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the efforts and accomplishments of Hennigar's Farm and farming innovation and retail success over its 100-year history.

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 Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.

RESOLUTION NO. 529

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

Attendu que cette année marque la retraite du directeur général du CSAP, M. Michel Comeau, après une carrière de 38 ans, dont cinq ans comme directeur général du Conseil scolaire acadien provincial; et

Attendu que Michel Comeau a consacré toute sa carrière à servir la population acadienne et francophone de la province en tant qu'enseignant, directeur d'école et dans divers rôles au sein de l'administration du CSAP; et

Attendu que, sous la direction de Michel Comeau, le CSAP a vu augmenter le nombre d'inscriptions dans ses écoles, a offert une éducation de qualité en français langue première et a travaillé fort pour ajouter de nouvelles écoles à la famille des écoles du CSAP de la province;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les membres de la Chambre d'assemblée se joignent à moi pour remercier M. Michel Comeau, un Acadien fier et dévoué, pour son leadership et son travail exemplaire dans le domaine important de l'éducation en français langue première et lui souhaiter une retraite très agréable et bien méritée.

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

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

Whereas this year marks the retirement of the CSAP Superintendent, Michel Comeau, after a 38-year career, including five years as Superintendent of the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial; and

Whereas M. Michel Comeau has committed his entire career to serving the province's Acadian and francophone population as a teacher, a principal, and in various roles within the CSAP administration; and

Whereas under the leadership of M. Michel Comeau the CSAP has seen increased enrolment at schools, delivered quality French-first language education, and worked hard to add new schools to the family of CSAP schools throughout the province;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking M. Michel Comeau, a truly proud and dedicated Acadian, for his leadership and his exemplary work in the important area of French-first language education and wishing him a very enjoyable and well-deserved retirement.

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. 530

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

Whereas sport fishing contributes significantly to the economy in Nova Scotia, generating more than \$66 million annually, and there's room for growth by increasing the number of non-resident anglers who visit Nova Scotia, while also improving participation by residents; and

Whereas the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture has partnered with industry leaders to develop and implement a marketing strategy to grow the sport fishing industry by launching a Fish Nova Scotia brand and identity showcasing Nova Scotia as a unique and exciting fishing destination for non-residents by developing a professionalization plan for fishing guides, and launching fishnovascotia.ca and social media platforms to allow anglers to explore fishing opportunities across our province; and

Whereas we are well positioned to continue building on the early successes of growing the sport fishing industry project and Phase II continues to create authentic Nova Scotian marketing content to showcase various sport fishing experiences to visitors;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the staff of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and Tourism Nova Scotia in their collaborative engagement for the province's diverse fishing community, and position Nova Scotia internationally as a premier sport fishing destination, in turn creating economic stimulus in rural areas.

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 Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 531

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

Whereas Lydia Crossley of Ellershouse, Nova Scotia was appointed a Deputy Issuer of Marriage Licences on August 8th, 1958; and

Whereas over the course of her career, Ms. Crossley issued an estimated 1,800 marriage licenses from her home, always going above and beyond to help couples out when they came to her; and

Whereas Ms. Crossley retired on March 31, 2021, bringing an end to her 62-year career of service to this province;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize Lydia Crossley for her 62-year career helping love flourish in this province, and wish her happiness and health in her retirement. (Applause)

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 Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 532

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 prestigious Lieutenant Governor's Award for Excellence in Nova Scotia Wine was adjudicated by a 12-member panel of wine experts established to recognize the exceptional quality of locally sourced and produced wine; and

Whereas the awards are administered in conjunction with Wine Growers Nova Scotia and Taste of Nova Scotia in partnership with the Lieutenant Governor's office, culminating with the adjudication and award ceremony at Government House; and

Whereas Lightfoot & Wolfville Vineyard's 2014 Blanc de Blancs Brut was recognized with an award from the 37 wines submitted for adjudication by the panel of experts;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the honour bestowed upon Lightfoot & Wolfville Vineyards, and the winery's ongoing dedication and craft as it helps grow a rural economy.

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 Fisheries and Aquaculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 533

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

Whereas February 12, 2021, was Chinese New Year, and celebrations were held in China and the Chinese community worldwide over the month of January and February; and

Whereas realizing partnerships between Nova Scotia seafood companies and companies in China are a leading part of our seafood export markets; and

Whereas Nova Scotia companies participate in a Chinese New Year live lobster promotion between January 9th and February 10th that focused on lobster sales and customer education in over 200 leading Chinese superstores which resulted in the companies selling one million pounds of high-quality Nova Scotia live lobsters with an estimated value of \$18.8 million and reached over 100 million Chinese customers;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the efforts and accomplishments of Nova Scotia seafood exporting companies for their efforts to build sustainable, long-term lasting business relationships in China and worldwide.

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. 127 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 4 of the Acts of 1995. The Highway 104 Western Alignment Act. (Elizabeth Smith-Crossin)

THE SPEAKER: Ordered that this bill be read a second time on a future day.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Cumberland North.

PUGWASH SALT MINE, LIFE-SAVING CO-WORKERS - RECOG.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Today I'd like to honour real-life heroes in Cumberland North. On August 27th, Jason Trenholm was buried alive in a freak accident at the Pugwash salt mine. The ground literally gave way and swallowed him alive. He was completely buried and cut off from oxygen for a period of time.

His life was saved through the quick action of his co-workers Tim Smith, Jeremiah Siddall, and Ross Henderson were the first on the scene and started to dig Jason out by hand and were soon joined by other co-workers, who literally saved his life. Jason was air-lifted to the QEII Health Sciences Centre, where he received excellent care.

His co-workers not only saved his life but came to their home and split and piled seven-and-a-half cords of wood to ensure that Jason and his wife had heat for the winter. This is why I love the people I represent.

Today I want to encourage Jason and his journey to healing and recognize his co-workers, who are heroes who saved his life.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

PRENATAL CARE: ACCESSIBILITY DIFFICULTIES - UNACCEPTABLE

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I rise today to bring the House's attention to a troubling and gendered consequence of the doctor shortage in Nova Scotia.

In my community of Dartmouth South, not all pregnant people are currently able to access essential prenatal care. One constituent, lucky to become pregnant after difficulties but unaware that her doctor had recently been suspended by the College of Physicians and Surgeons, unexpectedly found herself without a family doctor and with a complicated pregnancy. She has since spent weeks navigating emergency rooms and walk-in clinics, trying and failing to obtain a needed prenatal appointment, while unable to access test results during a crucial time in her pregnancy.

Her experience with the system has been frustrating, confusing, and opaque. This is unacceptable. No pregnant person in Nova Scotia should have to go through the stress of wondering whether they will be able to access the care required to carry a pregnancy to term.

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

SWEPS TRAILS COMMITTEE: LAKE WM. TRAIL SUSPENSION BRIDGE - THANKS

BILL HORNE: As the Spring weather arrives, I invite my colleagues to journey to Waverley and visit the new Lake William Trail suspension bridge, spearheaded by our SWEPS trails committee member, Allan Billard.

This impressive suspension bridge has been installed over the CN rail tracks, making the dream of connecting Waverley to Dartmouth through active transportation one step closer to reality. Built by Dexter Construction, the accessible walkway features panels

recycled from the Angus L. Macdonald Bridge. SWEPS raised the funding from three levels of government to complete the project.

This suspension bridge is more than a safe way to cross the busy rails. Walkers want to hike in just to see it and the wonderful vistas and views from the centre span.

I ask all members of the House of Assembly to join me in thanking Allan and the SWEPS organization for the work they have done to build and enhance our community trails.

[12:30 p.m.]

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

SALTWATER WELLNESS: NEW BUS. - RECOG.

BARBARA ADAMS: I rise today to acknowledge Micaela Hartling for opening up her massage therapy business, Saltwater Wellness, here in Eastern Passage in August 2020.

Micaela trained and graduated from the Canadian College of Massage and Hydrotherapy in 2019. When a local wellness center closed its doors, Micaela saw the opportunity to start a new chapter with her own business. She knew there was a need in our community.

Micaela strives to promote wellness through massage, helping clients with pain or injury, stress, and anxiety. Micaela was born and raised here in Eastern Passage and she's very happy to be working in her community.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in recognizing Micaela Hartling as a new business owner here in Eastern Passage.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

ENERGY POVERTY: EFFICIENCY UPGRADE PROGS. - CONSIDER

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, as we come to the end of a mercifully mild Winter, otherwise known as heating season, I want to highlight an issue and an opportunity.

Thirty-seven per cent of Nova Scotians experience energy poverty, meaning that they spend 6 per cent or more of their after-tax income on energy bills. Much of that, in Nova Scotia, is spent to heat the outdoors in older, inefficient rental housing with oil or electric heat.

I love to think about public investments that can pay off in multiple ways. We could be incentivizing more landlords to do efficiency upgrades, deep retrofits that pay off in green house gas emission reductions, and increased income in the form of purchasing power for modest income Nova Scotians.

I know that there are proposals on various government desks, and I urge their serious consideration.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

**MUNROE, ALLIE - ATHL.:
WOMEN'S WORLD HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP - CONGRATS.**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to share with this House that Yarmouth's Allie Munroe will be part of Team Canada's selection camp for the 2021 International Ice Hockey Federation Women's World Championship.

Allie has had a hugely successful hockey career, playing for the Swedish Women's Hockey League and starring in four seasons of the NCAA with the University of Syracuse. She has been named College Hockey America's top defenceman twice.

Mr. Speaker, all of us in Allie's hometown of Yarmouth are very proud of her and I would like to ask this House to join me in congratulating her on yet another amazing accomplishment in the sport of hockey and in wishing her the best of luck and much continued success.

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

HOCKEYVILLE, COLCHESTER RINKS: COM. SPIRIT - CONGRATS.

LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, Kraft Hockeyville is entering its 15th year of cultivating the passion and the spirit of hockey in rural Canadian communities. They have awarded \$3.8 million across 85 communities. Nova Scotia's own Deville's rink, in Salmon River, was crowned the first official Hockeyville in 2006.

This year, three rinks in Colchester had made presentations to win the \$250,000 in repairs and upgrades for their arenas, plus an NHL game in their hometown: the Don Henderson Memorial Sportsplex in Brookfield, the North Shore Recreation Centre in Tatamagouche, and the West Colchester United Arena in Debert.

Although none of our three rinks made it through to the next round, the level of teamwork, volunteerism, community support, and community spirit generated through a project like this is priceless.

I want to congratulate to all those who worked very, very hard to keep these facilities active in their communities.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

BEC BEARS BASKETBALL: CHAMPIONSHIP WINS - CONGRATS.

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker I rise today to congratulate the Breton Education Centre (BEC) Bears girls basketball team. Last Friday, the BEC Bears defeated the Strait Area Education Recreation Centre Saints 76-14 at the BEC gym in New Waterford, capturing the Highland Region Division 2 championship. I play with the member from Cape Breton-Richmond.

On Saturday, the BEC Bears boys basketball team answered back. They claimed the Highland Region Championship with a 100-51 win over SAERC in New Waterford.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to join me in congratulating both teams on their championship wins.

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

**STRAIT TO EXCELLENCE AWARDS - RECIPIENTS:
CONTRIB. TO STUDENTS AND SCH. - THANKS**

ALANA PAON: Well done.

Mr. Speaker, the Strait Regional Centre for Education's Strait to Excellence Award recognizes the dedication and contributions of employees in supporting student learning and achievement. No matter their role, the recipients have shown a commitment in contribution to students and schools.

I would like to extend a sincere thank you and congratulations to this year's recipients from Cape Breton-Richmond, including: Jeremy Samson, teacher, East Richmond Education Centre; Daphne Campbell, teacher assistant, Felix Marchand Education Centre; Carol Ann MacPhee, janitor, Felix Marchand Education Centre; Alfred Boudreau, bus driver with additional duties at the Richmond Education Centre/Academy; Tara Gale-MacLeod, SchoolsPlus facilitator at Richmond Education Centre/Academy; Paula Landry, youth service teacher, Richmond Education Centre/Academy; and Danielle O'Brien, teacher, Richmond Education/Academy.

I ask the members of this Legislature to join me in sincerely thanking these award recipients for creating a positive learning environment and enhancing the lives of our students. Congratulations.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

**BLUENOSE ACAD. SEAHAWKS:
GIRLS VOLLEYBALL, DIST. CHAMPS - CONGRATS.**

HON. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate Bluenose Academy's Tier 1 girls volleyball team for winning the district championships. Bluenose Academy's Seahawks of Lunenburg played the Bridgewater Vikings on February 1, 2021. This is the third year in a row that the Seahawks team have won the championship game. This success has taken hard work, practice and commitment from students, staff, and parents.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and the members of this House join me in congratulating Bluenose Academy girls volleyball team and their coaches on winning the district championships.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

IODE, SPRINGHILL: SERV. TO SUNSET COM. - THANKS

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the Springhill Cobequid Chapter of the IODE and the outreach work they have done for the residents of Sunset Residential. The IODE has been a very vigilant group of ladies from Springhill and the area for almost 105 years. Once again, this past year, they have provided Christmas gifts for the residents of Sunset.

For so many of us 2020 was a year of change and challenges. This was certainly true for the Springhill Cobequid Chapter of the IODE, but they wouldn't let COVID-19 stand in the way of giving to the residents. Each member of the IODE selected a resident and ensured that they received items off their Christmas wish list.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating and thanking the Springhill Chapter of the IODE and bringing Christmas to the residents of Sunset Residential Community. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

DART. LAKES: PRESERVE AND PROTECT - TAKE ACTION

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring the attention of the House to the Dartmouth Lakes. This week my colleague from Dartmouth South and I re-sent our letter for the third time to the Minister of Environment, appealing for immediate action to help us preserve these precious ecological gems. These lakes are an invaluable ecological, social and economic resource that must be protected, but their future is caught up in a

jurisdictional web which means that each level of government punts responsibility to the next.

The MLA for Dartmouth South and I are calling for an urban lakes commission, something that came out of a Lakes Town Hall that we hosted two years ago. Summer is coming, meaning the return of blue-green algae and invasive species that keep us from enjoying the natural beauty of Dartmouth. After an especially challenging year we know how important our outdoor spaces are.

It has been two years that we have been advocating for the protection of the Dartmouth lakes, and it's time that the province take urgent and decisive action.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

CBA AND CHINESE SOC. OF N.S.: FACILITATING PPE ACCESS - THANKS

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate the Chinese Benevolent Association and the Chinese Society of Nova Scotia for their role in helping many Nova Scotian organizations access personal protective equipment in the early days of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

I heard about the societies' donating to long-term care homes, including Ivany Place in Bedford, transit providers and their customers and Halifax Regional Police.

Initially the two societies were working to assist hard-hit Wuhan. When COVID-19 arrived at our shores they shifted gears and helped here at home.

I'd like to thank Michael Ruan of the Chinese Benevolent Association and Wilbur Huang of the Chinese Society and their teams for helping many Nova Scotians access the masks, gloves, and goggles they needed during a difficult time.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

CLEVELAND, JOSH: LIFE-SAVING ACTION - COMMEND

COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Josh Cleveland, whose first aid training and quick-thinking action saved a man's life. Josh, a West Pubnico resident, was at a local restaurant last September when a man choked on his food, blocking his airway. Jumping into action, Josh performed the Heimlich manoeuvre and after a number of attempts was able to clear the man's airway.

The importance of first aid is widely known and its ability to make a difference cannot be overstated. Knowing what to do in an emergency can limit the severity of a health scare or injury and sometimes make the difference between life and death.

I encourage every Nova Scotian to make first aid training part of their lives. I ask that members of this Legislature join me in commending Josh for his quick actions that saved a man's life; he is truly a hero.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

DART. S. COM.: TIDYING THE TOWN - THANKS

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible work of the Dartmouth South community, my neighbours. At this time of year as snow recedes and the winds pick up, the trash that escaped our garbage bins over the Winter becomes an unsightly blight along roadways and parks and around lakes.

Every year in preparation for Summer, the community gets together to tidy the town. Already the Pleasant Woodside Neighbourhood Association, the Penhorn Lake Area Trail Association, Russell Lake West Community Group, Harbourview Residents' Association, and Oathill Lake Conservation Society have all planned community cleanups in the coming weeks. So that is my agenda after we rise from this House.

They provide garbage bags and gloves, but also the opportunity for neighbours to meet and work together. Keeping a neighbourhood beautiful is a collective effort to which Dartmouth is very dedicated.

I ask all members of this House to join me in thanking these groups and my neighbours, who work so hard to keep the lakes, trails, and roadways of Dartmouth South in such beautiful shape.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

COLDBROOK FOODLAND: MAINTAINING FOOD SUPPLY DURING PANDEMIC - THANKS

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

The fact that, with the rare exception of a few items, our shelves were kept stocked is a tribute to the extraordinary efforts of our food suppliers, distributors, and retailers. Our food retailers had to quickly introduce changes and continuously adapt their stores to ensure a safe food shopping experience.

Today I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in recognizing the team from the Coldbrook Foodland grocery store, under the management of Jerry Brown, 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 Sackville-Cobequid.

CLASS OF 2020: ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HARD WORK - RECOG.

STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Nova Scotia's high school graduates of 2020.

High school graduation is supposed to be an event in our lives that we cherish for years to follow. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the graduating classes of 2020 from Sackville High School - where I graduated from, some 47 years ago - and all other high schools in our province were not afforded the opportunity to celebrate in the usual fashion.

Even though they were not able to participate in the traditional graduation ceremonies and prom celebrations, this does not mean their accomplishments and hard work should not be acknowledged.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating our very special graduates from the classes of 2020 and wish them continued success as they continue their studies and/or join the workforce.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**DELAYED IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGISLATION:
DRAFTING REGULATIONS - REQUIRED**

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, during this session we have heard frustration from some members about legislation coming forward without the details of what will be in the regulations. I hear from constituents concerned about a range of legislation that has been delayed in its implementation because the regulations have not been developed.

For example, the Tourist Accommodations Registration Act - where is the evidence of the registry? How many full housing units have been subtracted from our limited housing supply into short-term rentals? How is that Act assisting municipalities in regulating that activity? Or, for example, the Sustainable Development Goals Act, which a year and a half after we had an emergency debate in this Chamber about the climate crisis, still has no goals.

Mr. Speaker, all these aspects of government - government and governance - need attention.

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

RIPTIDES: HOCKEY N.S. FEMALE LEAGUE CHAMPS - CONGRATS.

HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Western Riptide U-11 B team, Chester's female hockey team. The Riptides are members of the Chester Minor Hockey Association, playing out of the Eleanor Pew Memorial Arena in Chester.

On Saturday, April 4th, the Riptides finished their inaugural season with a 7-1 very convincing victory over the Metro East Inferno, capturing Hockey Nova Scotia's female league championship. The game took place at Emera Centre in Liverpool, so the team did especially well, playing away from their home rink.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Chester's Western Riptide U-11 B team for winning the Nova Scotia female championship.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

KAPSALIS, ELENI - CCA: NEW GRAD - CONGRATS.

HON. LENA METLEGE DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to recognize Eleni Kapsalis, who on February 16th received her diploma with distinction from Eastern College for completing the Continuing Care Assistant program. We all know how essential our continuing care assistants are in our long-term care system and for the well-being of our residents. Ensuring we have a strong and stable CCA labour force to meet the needs of Nova Scotians is crucial and a priority.

Eleni is a young mother of a toddler, and I've known her since she was a child. I'm proud of her commitment and her desire to succeed.

I ask all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Eleni on this milestone and wish her and her family the very best.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**AUCOIN, SHEILA - TEACHER:
SHARING A PASSION FOR MUSIC - THANKS**

HON. PAT DUNN: I rise today to recognize a popular music teacher, Sheila Aucoin.

A music teacher is responsible for sharing music and musical knowledge with their students. Aucoin is a music teacher at North Nova Education Centre in New Glasgow.

[12:45 p.m.]

Sheila's in-depth musical knowledge, enthusiasm, excellent teaching skills, and flexibility in her classroom are well known within her peer group and community at large. It is very apparent Aucoin teaches music because she wishes to share her passion for music with her students. Sheila also listens to her students, constantly having dialogue and creating a positive climate in her music classroom.

I would like to ask all members of the Legislature to join me in thanking Sheila Aucoin for being such an amazing teacher and role model for her students.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

**MARCIA FIOLEK MEM. PLAYGROUND COM.:
COMMITTED TO ACCESSIBILITY - COMMEND**

KENDRA COOMBES: I rise today to acknowledge the Marcia Fiolek Memorial Playground Committee in Dominion.

The committee is dedicated to making the playground more modern, accessible, and inclusive. The playground is a true testament to love of community.

This playground is well maintained and very well used. As accessibility standards have become more focused on ensuring inclusivity, the committee is dedicated to ensuring the playground continues to be updated and accessible for all children. This committee continues to strive toward removing barriers for persons with disabilities so more people in the community and outside of it can access and enjoy this beautiful playground.

I want to commend the Marcia Fiolek Memorial Playground Committee for their hard work and commitment to ensuring a playground that is accessible for all.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

E. PRESTON COMMITTEES: SAFE SPEED LIMITS - THANKS

HON. KEITH COLWELL: I would like to recognize and commend the East Preston Active Transportation Committee and the Rural Access to Physical Activity Committee for initiating the effort to have the speed limit reduced in East Preston.

A 70-kilometre-an-hour speed limit throughout the community was a long-standing safety concern. It has been a pleasure working with these committees and community

members. Their concern for safety for the children and staff at the East Preston Day Care had become a hazardous concern when taking children on walks or getting on and off the school bus. It also was a problem for residents walking and biking on the road.

The community of East Preston has advocated for physical activity as a lifestyle change, and a 70-kilometre-per-hour zone was a barrier to using the road, which is in fact the main street of the community.

I was pleased to have assisted. I want to thank the East Preston Active Transportation Committee and the Rural Access to Physical Activity Committee for their advocating for change and their tireless but successful efforts to have the speed limit lowered to 50 kilometres per hour. A 50-kilometre-per-hour speed zone will provide a safer road for walking and biking. It's also a significant benefit for those residents involved in more physical activity and lifestyles.

It's through the efforts of these two groups that this change was achieved for the betterment of the community. Their work is an exemplary model for advocacy and improving the lives of all community members.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

COLP, MACKENZIE: SHAID TREE SHELTER FUNDRAISER - THANKS

KIM MASLAND: Today I am pleased to recognize an amazing young woman from Queens. MacKenzie Colp serves as an inspiration to many with her resilience and positive outlook on life.

Sadly, MacKenzie's father, Toby, passed away suddenly last fall. Wanting to do something in his honour and having a love for animals, in December of 2020, MacKenzie decided to organize a food drive and fundraiser for the SHAID Tree Shelter Society.

The Society shelters and cares for animals who are waiting to be adopted by loving families. When her campaign was over, she had collected \$235 for SHAID, and also raised awareness in her community for the importance of the shelter.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in applauding MacKenzie's generosity and sense of giving. MacKenzie, thank you for your efforts and know that your community is so very proud of you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**WIGGANS, SIOBHAN - RECIPIENT:
DALHOUSIE-HORROCKS NTL. LDRSHIP. FUND - THANKS**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, the Dartmouth North Public Library recently moved just around the corner from my office into Farrell Hall. One of the people who makes it so special, no matter where it's located, is Dartmouth North resident and library assistant Siobhan Wiggans.

Siobhan, who has called Dartmouth North home for the past decade, was recently awarded the Dalhousie-Horrocks National Leadership Fund for leadership in the field of librarianship. Siobhan, who began working in public libraries in 2016, began a part-time Master of Library and Information Studies at Dalhousie in 2018.

She has developed several programs for Halifax Public Libraries, including puppet shows, story times, and hands-on activities. She is passionate about ensuring that libraries meet the needs of marginalized communities and her thesis focuses on how public libraries respond to the opioid crisis.

I ask that this House join me in congratulating Siobhan for her recent award and to thank her for her commitment to those whom Dartmouth North Public Library serves.

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

ELLIOTT, IRIS: COMMITMENT TO UNICORN THEATRE - THANKS

HUGH MACKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize and congratulate Mrs. Iris Elliott on her contribution to the youth and performing arts in Chester-St. Margaret's, and especially her dedication to the Unicorn Theatre.

When Iris and her daughter Caroline first came to Nova Scotia, they undertook a production of *The Lion King* at the iconic Shore Club in Hubbards. Now, 26 years later, the Unicorn Theatre they established offers two major musicals a year, six weeks of Summer drama camps, Halloween and Valentine shows, a team program, and a theatre program for beginners.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all the members of the House of Assembly to join me in recognizing and congratulating Mrs. Iris Elliott for her important contribution to the performing arts in Chester-St. Margaret's.

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

BURNS, EILEEN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember a leader in my community, who left us last Fall well before her time.

Eileen Burns had a long career as an educator. She started employment with the Cape Breton District School Board in 1973, where she taught both French language and English literature. When she retired in 2018 with 45 years of service, she had been the principal at Malcolm Munroe Memorial Junior High for many years.

Second only to her family, her focus in life was her students. She always said they needed to feel welcome, safe, and fairly treated. She impacted many people's lives through her caring approach. In an exceptional way, she made it about the kids and their futures, doing everything she could to help them build their lives. This was a big part of the Malcolm Magic.

I ask that the members of this House join me in remembering Eileen and the impact she has had on the lives of countless students across Cape Breton.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MACKLEY, EMMA: *STUCK WITH U* MUSIC VIDEO - CONGRATS.

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Emma Mackley, a Dartmouth East resident, who graduated in 2020. Like so many Nova Scotia youth last year, Emma was not able to attend her prom due to COVID-19 but still managed to make lifelong memories in her 2020 senior year.

On May 1st, Canadian music star Justin Bieber called out for submissions of people dancing in their prom outfits with their loved ones at home. Certain clips would be selected for the music video of Justin Bieber and Ariana Grande's new song, *Stuck with U*.

Knowing it would make her mother very happy, Emma submitted a video of her wearing her prom dress and dancing with her father in their living room. A week later, the clip of Emma dancing with her father was included in the music video of Justin Bieber and Ariana Grande.

While this was not the memory Emma expected to make during her senior year, this is something she will never forget. I wish to congratulate Emma on her creativity in making the most out of a very challenging 2020.

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

HOUSE OF MODA: 10 YRS. IN BUS. - CONGRATS.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Ozlem Manness, who was born in Turkey and came to Canada to study at Saint Mary's University. While in university, Ozlem started what was then just a hobby but is now a full career in jewelry design by creating unique pieces.

House of Moda has been on Spring Garden Road for 10 years and currently is located in the Doyle building. Her jewelry is being sold Canada-wide and has even been worn by Beyonce. Ozlem is a great example to all of us to follow our passion in entrepreneurship.

I wish to congratulate her and the House of Moda team on their 10-year anniversary.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

HUMMEL, SUE: RUGMAKING FUNDRAISER - THANKS

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the creative work of Sue Hummel, affectionately known as the Rug Lady of Lyons Brook, who creates floor rugs and wall hangings from recycled T-shirts for charity. Since 2015, Sue has created over 66 rugs, some of which were donated to fundraisers or given as gifts to someone going through a difficult time.

Most, however, were sold as a fundraiser for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Sue's favorite charity. Each rug takes approximately 24 to 30 hours to complete and are made with recycled T-shirts donated to her or that she purchases second-hand. Sue has raised \$3,980 so far and has a goal of raising \$5,000 by the end of the year, which I know she will achieve.

I would like thank Sue for her ingenious efforts to aid in saving the environment.

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

AVERY, CHRIS & LINDA: BELMONT GOLF RESORT MODEL - THANKS

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to share my gratitude for a young couple from Guysborough, Chris and Linda Avery. As kids and teenagers, they grew up spending their Summers at the iconic Belmont Resort and Golf Club in Guysborough. The property has since been replaced by a vineyard and brewing company, but they were able to bring it back to life virtually.

The very popular golf video game, PGA Tour 2K21, offers an option that allows players to design a course of their own. Once a player has finished their creation, it becomes available to all players to experience. The Averys spent over 40 hours recreating the Belmont golf resort.

They did not miss a detail, from the elevation of the land, agricultural species, look-off towers, even the owners' homestead that was situated on the property - my family home. The remarkably detailed re-creation of the once-place-to-be has touched many in our community. It was a place where all ages were welcome to spend many long Summer days between the pro shop, restaurant, golf course, pool, and campground.

I send my sincere gratitude to Chris and Linda Avery for a walk down memory lane and their hard work to ensure that the Belmont Resort and Golf Club will live on forever.

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

KING, MADISON AND SHERRY: DONATING HEALING SOAP - THANKS

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Madison and Sherry King, a mother and daughter who live in Middle Sackville, who have come together to make soap to help heal the overworked hands of frontline workers.

Madison and Sherry run a small business from home, where they bake and decorate cakes, but because of COVID-19 the business had to stop production. So, the two decided to start making soap to help heal the hands of overworked health care workers and frontline workers. The Kings have delivered over 300 jars of soap across Halifax, due to generous donations that have helped the Kings to be able to provide this soap free of charge.

Mr. Speaker I would like to take this opportunity to thank Madison and Sherry King for their hard work and dedication in helping frontline workers of Halifax, who are selflessly battling the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

GRAD. PROCESSION 2020: CELEBRATING STUDENTS - THANKS

ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, our 2020 graduates were not able to celebrate their success and achievements through normal time-honoured traditions. Today I rise to acknowledge the efforts of all those who found new ways to honour the graduating class of 2020.

I was pleased to assist in organizing Grad Procession 2020 in Richmond County. Carefully following Public Health protocols, graduates and their families were able to decorate their vehicles and travel in proud succession, beginning in the community of Petit-

de-Grat and making their way through Arichat, West Arichat, Louisdale, River Bourgeois, Grand Anse, and St. Peter's.

The procession culminated at the national historic site of the St. Peter's Canal. Although we had a downpour, the weather did not dampen the spirits of participants or any community members, who stood and waved from their driveways, porches, and windows along the parade route to cheer and congratulate our community's graduates.

Mr. Speaker, many late hours of planning and preparation and fundraising went into the Grad Procession 2020. I would like to thank our Richmond County District RCMP, St. Peter's Lions Club, Parks Canada, Dr. Robert Strang, and all the community members and businesses who supported the event. I would especially like to thank the planning committee members, who deserve a round of applause: retired RCMP officer Jim Wilson and his wife, Carolann; Brandie Pottie; Shanna Burke; and Chuck Boudreau.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. The time allotted for Statements by Members has now expired. The House will now break for 15 minutes. Proceedings will resume at 1:15 p.m.

[1:00 p.m. The House recessed.]

[1:15 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. - NORTHWOOD: COAST ARTICLE - RESPOND

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. We woke up this morning to a devastating exposé in *the Coast*, titled "What happened at Northwood?" It was written by Stephanie Nolen. Some may recall that Ms. Nolan wrote an article for *the New York Times* this past Fall that praised Nova Scotia's pandemic response. She is an accomplished, respected journalist.

I will also state that we know that this tragedy at Northwood, in particular, touched many Nova Scotians, including members of this House. I offer my condolences to them and assure them that they are not far from my mind as I ask these questions today.

As I said, the exposé was devastating. It includes many heart-wrenching accounts of lives lost and bereaved family members and some pretty damning comments from medical leaders.

My question to the Premier is: Has the Premier read the article?

HON. IAIN RANKIN (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, my heart goes out, and I'm sure all Nova Scotians' hearts go out, to the families that were impacted at the long-term care facility at Northwood. We need to make sure that we continue to do better.

If we could go back in time with what we know today, I'm sure we'd all like to do that, but what we can focus on is making sure that we move forward and we make the key investments that are required. That is under way. We are looking at this budget and injecting funds in areas that are necessary to help bolster our long-term centre to keep our seniors safe.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear if the Premier read the article, so I'll start from where the reporter ends. That is with the notion that because Nova Scotia has done so well overall with the pandemic, we've almost come to believe that Northwood was just a regrettable but unavoidable tragedy.

Dr. Samir Sinha, head of the National Institute on Aging, says - and this is a quote: ". . . frankly, everybody in Nova Scotia has blood on their hands. But it makes us all feel better when we tell ourselves, well, 'We did the best we could.'"

There's a statistic we never talk about when it comes to our pandemic response: Nova Scotia has the worst mortality rate among COVID-19 patients in the country. What happened at Northwood is certainly reflected in that statistic.

For all the good in the pandemic response, does the Premier believe that the government failed the residents of Northwood?

THE PREMIER: This instance is part of a larger story in Canada, the impact that this serious disease has had in our long-term care centres. We've done well to make sure that we learn from those mistakes, looking at the independent reports to ensure that we make the changes required so that this does not happen again.

This is a tragic event that all Nova Scotians don't want to see happen. We want to make sure that we prevent a third wave, expedite our vaccines out to those who are living in long-term care centres. That's why we've focused on getting second doses early on. Virtually half of the people in our long-term care centres have those second doses, and we continue to try to get out those vaccines and implement the right policies so that something like Northwood doesn't happen again.

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, everyone wants to learn from their mistakes and hope nothing like this happens again, but the question was: Does the Premier believe that the government failed the residents of Northwood? I do believe that.

Let's remember the state of things when this tragedy was unfolding, beyond the general fear and confusion that gripped the province - and the country, really. This government had systematically shut down any form of questioning or accountability. Access by media was seriously curtailed, the Legislature was shut down, committees were shut down, and later the government created a review that they didn't release in full and that they restricted participants from speaking about publicly.

Now we know why. The information in this article today demands a full and open inquiry into what happened. Will the Premier set aside the inadequate review that has been done and finally call for a full and proper inquiry into the tragedy at Northwood?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I agree that we have some lessons we need to learn to ensure that we continuously do better for our seniors in this province in how we manage a pandemic. I want to thank those Public Health people and those working on the front line who are working every day to prevent a third wave. We are making sure that we are prioritizing the vaccines in the right places, Mr. Speaker.

That member continues to criticize the way that we have handled this pandemic. Yesterday he said it was because of me. He said he liked when Doctor Strang was in charge and he started to focus on people. But what we are focusing on is solutions moving forward and continuing to do our best to manage this pandemic, and that is what we are going to continue to do.

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

PREM. - NORTHWOOD: BUDGET CUTS - RESULTS

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, with every fitting respect, I too wish - on the anniversary this week of the first COVID-19 deaths at Northwood - to continue in the vein of questioning begun by my colleague, the Leader of the Progressive Conservatives, and ask the Premier about his government's relationship to those events.

In the article, which I will table, which has been cited previously, the author describes critical staffing shortages - describes them in great detail. She writes, "Staffing levels had been minimal for years, as the province rolled back the amount it was willing to pay for care." The rollbacks she is referring to is the \$360,000 that was removed from the operating funds of Northwood in 2015, and the \$600,000 that was removed from the operating funds of Northwood in 2016.

I want to ask the Premier: Does he agree with me that Northwood was not able to be adequately prepared to deal with COVID-19 because his government negatively affected staffing with these cuts?

THE PREMIER: Since that time, we have actually had two reviews that we are looking at to ensure that we are always doing better. We have invested an increase of over \$100 million in our long-term care sector in this budget. We are going to continue to look at the recommendations.

All of the short-term recommendations are under way, and we are looking at continuing to make the investments in the right area so that we do not have outbreaks in our centres. Thankfully, we have been able to prevent them ever since.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, every staff member, and every administrator, and every member of a family of someone in long-term care, and every policy expert in this area agrees that the highway for infection transmission in long-term care is shared accommodations. It was for exactly this reason that Northwood put forward its funding proposal in 2017 for a \$12.5 million capital expansion to move to a model of one resident, one room. That application was not successful.

Then, the following year, the application was resubmitted. The resubmission was also not successful, and then in the year before the pandemic - 2019 - for a third time Northwood's application for an expansion to provide for one resident, one room was, again, rejected.

Does the Premier agree that Northwood was not able to be adequately prepared to deal with COVID-19 because this government turned down those three expansion proposals?

THE PREMIER: I am very focused on ensuring that addressing the issues in long-term care is a priority for the government. The issues around Northwood are being addressed, both with staffing and in a capital that had been approved before I took office. We will see that investment through to fruition, and we will continue to look at other aged centres across the province. There is already seven approved.

We are continuing to work through the list in priority to see those that need the most attention for infection control and other aspects through a review, and looking at how we provide more support for our hard-working frontline staff, and they deserve it.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier says that he is very focused, but all his "being focused" in the world does not change the fact that today, in Nova Scotia, there is not a single CCA who is being paid what they are worth. All his being focused does not change the fact that of all the nursing homes we have in our province, there is not one where today there was an adequate ratio of staff to residents.

All his being focused does not change the fact that there is nothing in the government's current program that is effectively addressing these two crises.

So, I want to ask the Premier: When is he going to move from being simply focused to effectively taking responsibility for what has come from the fact that this government has systematically neglected the long-term care sector?

THE PREMIER: There have been no COVID-19 cases since the first wave in our long-term care centres, Mr. Speaker. We are continuing to ensure that we suppress a third wave as a possibility. We are continuing to roll out the vaccines. We lead the country in vaccinating our residents in long-term care centres, whom we know would be most vulnerable to disease entering the facility, and that is also why we have worked backwards from those most aged in our province. We continue to get the second doses out. Half our residents have that second dose already, and we are continuing to work through that list.

We are making strategic investments in these homes to make sure that this never happens again, what happened at Northwood.

PREM. - NORTHWOOD, FUNDING REQUESTS DENIED - EFFECTS

TIM HOUSTON: I want to revisit something that my colleague in the NDP asked that did not get answered. Hopefully, we get an answer from the Premier.

The seeds of the disaster and the tragedy at Northwood were planted years earlier. Its administrators were well aware that the double- and triple-bunking left residents vulnerable to infectious disease. In fact, in 2016, Northwood commissioned engineering studies that showed that the building could be expanded upwards, allowing for new rooms that would permit single occupancy.

In 2017, 2018, and again in 2019, Northwood asked the provincial government for a one-time \$12.5 million to do the build. Each year - 2017, 2018, 2019 - that request was rejected time after time. The message was clear to the government - the risks of an outbreak were known, and overcrowding was the key culprit.

My question for the Premier is: Will the Premier admit that the outbreak was worsened by the Liberals ignoring the request for single-room funding?

THE PREMIER: Again, our hearts are with all those Canadians who had loved ones who were impacted by the virus, especially in long-term care centres. We had the tragic outcomes in Northwood. A fair and compassionate government would respond, as we have, with reports that we are acting on. All of the short-term recommendations have been acted on, with the long-term ones under way. All of the funding that was requested for this budget

to address staffing issues, bringing more allied health professionals in there, bringing more supports for recreation, addressing workplace safety, that is what a fair government does.

The other thing that we are doing is ensuring to lead the country in suppressing cases to keep COVID-19 out of our province.

TIM HOUSTON: The question was whether the Premier thought the outbreak was worsened by the Liberals ignoring the request for funding, and the answer involved the Premier's assessment of what is fair and what is not fair. I guess we can maybe read something into that.

After the COVID outbreak, the CEO of Northwood told the Canadian Press that most of the 53 residents who lost their lives, and the 240 who were infected, were in shared rooms.

In 2015-16, the Liberals began a series of cuts to long-term care budgets. Northwood lost \$360,000 in the first year and \$600,000 in the next. Members will remember the headlines of the \$5 a day per meals. Just 60 per cent of that funding was restored in the following years.

The Liberal government needs to accept responsibility for cutting Northwood's funding, and they need to acknowledge that the cuts to the services that make up the care that we provide to our seniors is not the appropriate path for the government's prized balanced budget.

Does the Premier regret the cuts that his government made to Northwood?

THE PREMIER: I am very proud of this budget. What we have brought forward is an historic increase to the whole continuing care sector, a \$100 million increase for long-term care alone that will be targeted at the areas that need it the most.

There are definitely lessons learned when dealing with COVID-19. No one is disputing that. We are going to continue to ensure that we are supporting frontline staff, the health care heroes that have been on the front line throughout this pandemic, and we are going to continue to make sure that we are listening to them and making sure that the investments that they are asking for come to fruition.

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

PREM. - COVID-19 RESPONSE: INFECTION CONTROL - AWARENESS

TIM HOUSTON: At the heart of the tragedy at Northwood is really what should the government have known and when. Dr. Samir Sinha points out that on March 27th, a blueprint for COVID-19 infection control in long-term care facilities was published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* - on March 27th that was.

On April 13th, a full 17 days after the publication of the journal article, the province ordered long-term care workers to begin wearing masks. In reference to the more than two-week delay on the implementation of masks for infection control, this is what Dr. Sinha had to say: "This information was readily available. Either [Strang and McNeil] weren't aware of it, and therefore they didn't act on it. Or they were aware of it, but they didn't act on it. Well, either way, that's terrible." Those are Dr. Sinha's words.

[1:30 p.m.]

My question for the Premier is: Was this government aware of the information provided in the *New England Journal of Medicine* about infection control, but failed to act on it?

THE PREMIER: Again, there are always lessons learned, especially in a tragedy of this nature. We responded immediately with reports, acting on the recommendations. The Blueprint for Change is a half-million dollars in this budget. There's money in there for workplace safety.

We've hired 200 long-term care support workers since this time. We're continuing to make sure that we keep COVID-19 out of our facilities. At the same time, we're making investments in capital to rebuild our existing stock to make sure that it's more modernized so that we avoid having residents in such close quarters together in shared rooms and washrooms. We know that that's not ideal. That's why every new build has more modern standards.

We're going to make sure that we have capital in there for the right renovations. At times, we're going to need to rebuild centres. We have seven in this budget, and we're working on more to come.

TIM HOUSTON: I'm not sure from that response if they knew and didn't act or if they just didn't know. It's an important question, and it's worrisome that I didn't hear a clear answer to that very clear question.

Dr. Sinha, one of the foremost experts on geriatrics in the country, goes on to note that at the end of March, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention were very clear that asymptomatic transmission was happening - at the end of March, that was very clear - and that this information was readily available to the National Institute on Aging where, of course, Dr. Sinha is the director of health policy research. It was also readily available to the provincial health officer . . .

THE SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

TIM HOUSTON: I do have a question. It was also readily available to the provincial health officer of British Columbia, and no one expects that it wasn't available to our Public Health officials and our government leaders.

Would the Premier have us believe that Nova Scotia was the last province to learn that asymptomatic transmission was happening?

THE PREMIER: While we sit here today, there are literally hundreds of outbreaks in long-term care centres across the country. We're very thankful that we've been able to prevent any outbreaks in our long-term care centres since the first wave.

We're not resting on our laurels. We want to make sure that we're continuing to put restrictions in where required and roll out the vaccine. We're well ahead of schedule. We focused on those most vulnerable, making sure that those in long-term care centres get their second dose.

That member continues to argue against the plan and what we've put in place based on what Public Health advises. We're going to continue to make sure we're in lockstep with Public Health in making continuous improvements and continuing to lead the country.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition on a new question - and I just want to remind him that the agreed-upon length of questions and answers is 45 seconds.

PREM. - NSGEU FRONTLINE WORKERS: NORTHWOOD - CONDITIONS

TIM HOUSTON: On April 22nd, the NSGEU put out a press release in which their president, Jason MacLean, said, "Our members are telling us it was like walking into a war zone."

According to NSGEU, inside of Northwood, there was massive disorganization, limited PPE, and no clarity over who would be supplying it. The limited PPE that was available was stacked in boxes in the hallway and there was no place set up to change the PPE without risking contamination.

Given what we are now learning about the situation at Northwood, does the Premier think that those NSGEU frontline workers - who he is so quick to praise - does he think that those people who were risking their lives to save residents of Northwood were fearmongering about the conditions they were facing at the facility?

THE PREMIER: I'll continue to commend those workers every day. The work they do is very important to make sure that we keep our most vulnerable safe: our seniors in our

long-term care centres. We're going to continue to stand by them when they need investments and improvements in homes.

Our aged infrastructure goes back many decades where all Parties had a hand in not making the required investments in those centres. That's what we're going to make sure that we reverse. We're going to continue to make sure that investments that are needed go to the right places across this province.

TIM HOUSTON: I'm going to assume the Premier doesn't agree, but I'm not sure, because he won't answer any questions for us here this morning.

The government's response at the time was to put out a press release saying there was fearmongering and hyperbole. That's how it was referred to by the Premier's government at a press conference.

Meanwhile, according to staff who are on the ground, in the front lines at the facility, patients who had tested positive and had dementia or other cognitive issues were still interacting with other residents. I'm going to quote: They would be going from their room, and you might find them laying in another resident's bed or visiting another resident who was negative.

Does the Premier believe that this government was fully transparent with the public in how dire the situation at Northwood really was?

THE PREMIER: Obviously, the situation was very dire with people losing their life. It can't get more dire than that. We continue a fair government that has compassion, would make those investments to ensure it doesn't happen again and do everything that we can with the response to the pandemic.

That's why we continue to make investments in the area and implement a report from experts, where they see the best investments going - more staffing into the facilities, capital to make sure that we have single rooms for seniors. That's what we're going to continue to do.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

PREM.: MUNICIPALITIES - NEEDS

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Last year, when the federal government offered a safe restart funding to support municipalities, Nova Scotia ensured that revenues lost due to COVID-19 recovered, but in the process they left money on the table and failed to match the federal funding as stipulated by the Safe Restart Agreement.

On April 12th in the Committee on Supply, the Minister of Inclusive Economic Growth explained: We met all the needs of municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, since 2018, the NSFM has been asking for a substantial increase in annual funding so that municipalities can keep pace with rising operational costs.

Will the Premier admit that, under this government, municipalities are not getting what they need?

THE PREMIER: I'm pleased that we're getting back with our economic recovery, leading the country. We were within 0.04 per cent of our employment when we got into the pandemic. We're going to continue to make sure, if there are restrictions imposed on businesses in this province, we'll respond. We'll make sure they have support.

The federal government has been an excellent partner, bringing out programs to help with labour gaps, when people have lost their jobs or been reduced in hours, and we're going to continue to make sure that when there are not programs federally that are rolled out to help those sectors that are impacted, that we'll be there too.

KENDRA COOMBES: That was an answer to some question, but it wasn't the answer to municipalities.

Nova Scotia's also withholding funding in the form of Canada's revenues. The federal government agreed to give the provinces more tax revenue from the sale of cannabis if municipalities were given a 25 per cent share to cover costs associated with legalization. Ontario, Quebec, and Alberta have all set up tax revenue-sharing agreements with municipalities, and I will table that.

Here in Nova Scotia, projections for cannabis revenues continue to rise, but there is no indication that any money will flow to municipalities.

My question for the Premier is: When will this Province stop stiffing municipalities and give them their fair share?

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, it's a great time for us to talk about the great relationship this government has with municipalities across the province.

During the pandemic, we asked municipalities to participate in a program. In that program, they brought forward approximately \$67 million of funding they required. We actually applied for a \$68 million - we went over and above what they asked for, and we provided that funding to them to make sure they got through the pandemic.

We have conversations with all our municipalities from one end of the province to the other in terms of what their needs are, and we work with them every day through the Department of Municipal Affairs and the Department of Inclusive Economic Growth.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

H&W - LTC FACILITIES: PREM. STATEMENTS - AGREEMENT

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: On April 2nd, Northwood sent out a letter to residents and decision makers. They said, “the safest and most comfortable place for your loved one to be cared for is in Northwood. We are also considering the probability of harms for patients, and we are prepared to care for any of our residents who become sick with COVID-19 in our care home.” This document was tabled.

On April 6th at his daily briefing, the former Premier said: We, with the support of Public Health, are strongly encouraging Nova Scotians that the best place for their loved one is to remain in the long-term care facility they are currently in.

My question for the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Does he agree with these statements?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: At the time, the decision was made to provide equivalent medical support in-facility to what would have been available in a hospital. That decision was made to protect the hospital from spread of infection.

However, since the Northwood report and recommendations and the IPAC report and recommendations, this strategy has changed to have regional care units available and dedicated in hospitals, so that if there are positive cases in long-term care they will be removed from the long-term care facility and put into the regional care units. The policy on this did change as a result of the two reports and the recommendations that were conducted.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, Betsy Webb was told that her mother, who was 88-year old Lee Webb, recovered from COVID-19 and that she would be moved to a hotel. When Betsy called her mother, she was surprised to find her mother breathless and speechless. A nurse informed Betsy that her mother had bacterial pneumonia and would be started on antibiotics, but two days later her mother was still not started on antibiotics, due to the staffing crisis.

Betsy said her mother’s condition deteriorated significantly and was frustrated that the people who bathed and dressed her mother were actually from other facilities, due to the shortage of staffing.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Will he apologize on behalf of this government for not intervening in conditions of understaffing that were due to decisions by this government?

ZACH CHURCHILL: Thank you very much for the question. The government has increased human resource capacity in our long-term care facilities, including last year, with the introduction of 200 long-term care assistants. We're also increasing access to primary care and allied care professionals.

There were cost savings that had been found in previous budgets. Those were related to administrative savings, not related to staffing, and efficiencies found for bulk purchasing of items that are required in those facilities. I just wanted to clarify those points for the member, and I thank her very much for the question.

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

PREM.: NORTHWOOD COVID-19 STAFFING - INADEQUATE

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, on March 10, 2020, the member for Argyle-Barrington asked the then-Minister of Health and Wellness what contingency plans were in place to ensure that health care facilities were staffed appropriately if health care workers were themselves to contract COVID-19. The minister's answer was intended to convey the fact that a plan was in place and that the government was prepared for both the general public and for our health care workers.

Today, in a heart-wrenching account of Northwood - and I'll table that document - we learned that 90 of a normal staffing complement of 160, were off work - more than half - and that the facility urgently needed 15 registered nurses. "All efforts to date have not addressed gaps," said Wendy McVeigh, the NSHA's Director of Continuing Care in the Central Zone.

My question for the Premier is: Will he admit today that the government did not have an adequate contingency staffing plan to make sure that long-term care facilities were adequately staffed during the pandemic?

THE PREMIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue to make investments where they are required. That's why the minister highlighted some of the immediate responses and how we had to bring in 200 support staff into long-term at that time.

In this budget we're very focused on priority areas, especially dealing with the pandemic. We've invested significant funding, but specific to long-term care it's a 16 per cent increase. It's a historic investment that we need to continue to look at as we move forward, while at the same time making sure that we keep COVID-19 out of our province and making sure that we have restrictions in place to prevent it entering any home again.

BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, just to remind everyone, historic investments followed historic cuts. There are times when shaking your heads and saying that we did the best we could just doesn't cut it.

The Premier has said that he has learned from his experiences, but we want to talk about lives lost. This may be one of those times when saying that we did the best we could isn't enough. In *the Coast* article, Janice Keefe herself said that the situation raises questions about whose lives are worth protecting. The NSGEU president, Jason MacLean, said this of the government's approach: "I think at the time they made a very cold calculation." Their words, not mine.

Will the Premier admit that not enough was done to plan for the adequate care for our vulnerable seniors in long-term care facilities?

THE PREMIER: I can understand the desire to place blame on specific people or institutions, but this government is making sure that we have an appropriate response that looks at the recommendations. The short-term and long ones are under way. We have investment in this budget, significant investment to address both staffing and capital.

There is no question that our infrastructure needs that investment. It has been there for a long time, and successive governments have not addressed it. That is what we need to make sure that we are going to look at. We have seven approved for rebuilds; we have capital renovations under way with more to come.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage, on a new question.

PREM. - NORTHWOOD EPIDEMIC: LACK OF INFO - ACKNOWLEDGE

BARBARA ADAMS: We are not placing blame on people or institutions, but on this government.

The stories of terrified family members desperately trying to find out the status of their loved ones who lived at Northwood are terrible to read and even harder for me to have taken those phone calls.

We can only imagine the anguish they must have felt, and I personally know families who lost loved ones. The fact that there was no one at times to answer the phone or to give adequate and accurate information to families is an indication of just how bad the situation got at Northwood during the height of the first wave.

[1:45 p.m.]

My question to the Premier: Was the Department of Health and Wellness aware, yes or no, that Northwood did not have the capacity to provide worried family members with accurate information about the health of their loved ones?

THE PREMIER: It is important that we continue to focus on how we manage the pandemic to keep the virus out of our homes. We did not experience an outbreak in any centre after the first wave. That is the most important thing that we are focused on, while simultaneously making the appropriate investments to make sure we are modernizing health care.

That is what we have done in acute care, if you look at the infrastructure builds across the province, in Cape Breton, in Halifax, and throughout, and we are doing it now. We are focusing on chronic care with our aged population. There is no question we need that investment, and that is why this budget puts historic investments in it.

BARBARA ADAMS: I did not hear an answer, so I am not sure whether the Premier's answer would have been yes or no.

Why did this government continue to allow family members and residents to suffer for as long as they did? The former Premier said at the time that his greatest fear was that this virus would make its way into our long-term care homes. Yet when it was winding its deadly path through Northwood, the government did not bother perhaps because they did not indicate that they knew what was happening. I was working in one of those long-term care facilities myself, and I know how hard it was for me to get a mask.

My question to the Premier is this: I imagine that the greatest fears of families who entrusted the lives of their loved ones at Northwood came true, and they want answers, and they want an inquiry. The Premier was a member of the Cabinet while all of this was happening, and while he would like to focus forward, we need to look at the past to make sure that the future does not repeat itself.

Can the Premier tell me - yes or no - was he aware of how bad things were at Northwood?

THE PREMIER: The reviews give us an indication of where we need to go. We had the 12 short-term recommendations implemented, we have the long-term recommendations under way. The need to make sure that we are addressing these is important, and that is why in this budget we have investments to help with workplace safety. The issue of having aged infrastructure is an important one, which is why we have put more money into capital. We went from a very modest amount to over \$10 million per year, plus the rebuilds that we are working on.

We are looking at the lists across the province, and yes, we have facilities 50 years old plus that need work on them. That is why we need to make sure that we are moving forward with our experts and continuing to work with frontline staff.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

ECC: FRESHWATER LAKE ISSUES - TAKE ACTION

CLAUDIA CHENDER: My question is for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

Dartmouth's 23 freshwater lakes are an incredible asset to the HRM. The North American Indigenous Games, canoe and kayak events, the ICF World Championships, and countless other competitions are slated to take place on Lake Banook, home to three sprint canoe and kayak clubs, two rowing clubs, and a dragon boat club. Countless other recreation takes place on all of our lakes.

It is easy to forget through the Winter months that this Summer will be another Summer when those lakes are plagued by invasive weeds and algae blooms, but now is the time we need to be planning ahead. Despite a hopeful first meeting with the previous Minister of Environment and staff two years ago, we now find ourselves needing to renew our request on community demands for action on Dartmouth's lakes.

Can the minister please provide an update on the department's work to protect our lakes?

HON. KEITH IRVING: Yes, I am aware of the file. It is one of the files I've been briefed on in my early days here. I understand these are complex multijurisdictional issues, which your colleague mentioned in a member's statement earlier.

I would be very happy to sit down with you and your colleague to have a conversation further about this issue.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, hundreds of community members came out on a Summer evening in 2019 to share their thoughts and concerns about Dartmouth's urban lakes, which we then passed on to the former Minister of Environment. The lakes have tremendous ecological, economical, and recreational value. They are a part of Dartmouth's identity. We are the City of Lakes.

The challenges facing the lakes, as the minister pointed out, are complex, with multiple contributing issues, governing policies, and cross-jurisdictional responsibility. The resident ask from the community was that an urban lakes commission be convened to work collaboratively with all the stakeholders towards solutions. We presented that ask over a year ago.

My question for the minister is: Will he commit to establishing an urban lakes commission, as requested by the community?

KEITH IRVING: I thank the honourable member again for bringing forward this issue. Our staff are always willing to provide information with respect to this complex issue. Again, I'd be very happy to meet with the honourable member and her colleague to discuss further a path forward.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - MASK POLICY: IMPLEMENTATION DELAY - EXPLAIN

TIM HOUSTON: Thank you. My question is for the Premier. In early March, Nova Scotians, Canadians, people around the world were becoming very concerned about COVID-19. On March 10th, before this government closed down the Legislature for an entire year, my colleague for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage asked the Minister of Health and Wellness if all health care workers in Nova Scotia have the recommended protection that they need to be safe. That was the question on March 10th.

The minister responded that the Province was ensuring that we have appropriate equipment. The *Coast* article specifically cites the national guidelines on mask-wearing in long-term care properties, and states that Nova Scotia was delayed eight days in implementing those recommendations. On April 13th, Public Health explained that the delay in implementing the mask mandate was because we did not have the proper supply of PPE.

Can the Premier explain why on March 10th, the minister would confirm appropriate supplies being in place, but on April 13th had to delay implementing the national masking guidelines because of inadequate supply?

THE PREMIER: Actually, our province was one of the early adopters of masks in the country. In the last year, we spent over \$600 million dollars fighting this virus, with a substantial amount going towards PPE. In this budget, we have more money for PPE.

We are going to continue to make sure that we respond and work with Public Health. That is what we've been doing since day one. That was the plan that the member opposite was commending yesterday. Over the last couple days, he was actually saying that we were doing better before I came in, and now he is saying that we were doing worse. Which is it?

TIM HOUSTON: Actually, what he's talking about is the details that have now emerged about the terrible tragedy and the loss of life we experienced. We can find a way to clap over that, I guess, if we are on the Liberal side, but it's pretty hard on this side.

I will tell you this: by March 10th it was already clear that long-term care properties would be the epicentre of the pandemic, which is why on that date, our caucus drew the government's attention to 16 deaths that had happened at a facility in Washington State. We were trying to raise the alarms. We asked specifically what safeguards were in place to protect our seniors and our health care workers to prevent them from inadvertent exposure to the residents.

The Premier was sitting at the Cabinet table at that time. Can he advise whether or not he felt, way back on March 10th of last year, that the pandemic was a serious issue to which all resources should be diverted; or by March 10th was the Premier just thinking that maybe it wasn't a big deal?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, He is making the case for our vaccine rollout plan, that plan he's been criticizing week after week.

In our long-term care centres it is the epicentre, and that's why three-quarters of our long-term care residents already have their first dose and half of them have their second doses. That's why we continue to prioritize our actions to make sure that we keep COVID-19 out of our long-term care centres.

Yes, we have work to do. We have investments to make in our long-term care centres. That's going to continue. We're going to continue to make sure that the requirements we made, restrictions, vaccines and all the rest to do with COVID-19 are in lockstep with Public Health.

TIM HOUSTON: The question was how the Premier felt sitting at the Cabinet table in early March: Was he concerned about COVID-19 or not? We didn't get an answer to that, but maybe I'll refresh the Premier's memory.

On March 4th, the Province told students and parents not to travel for March Break. On March 9th, residents in long-term care across Canada - we began losing them to COVID-19. On March 11th, the NHL and the NBA had cancelled games. I remember thinking, wow. On March 12th, Northwood restricted visits from families and volunteers travelling internationally. On March 13th, the Province restricted travel for the public service, with strict rules that said they'd be reckless to travel. That same day . . .

THE SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

TIM HOUSTON: I do have a question. That same day, on March 13th, Global Affairs put out a travel . . .

THE SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

TIM HOUSTON: I do have a question. That same day, on March 13th, Global Affairs put out travel restrictions. That's the day that the Premier chose to get on a plane and travel to the Bahamas.

My question to the Premier is: At what point did the former Premier have to demand that the current Premier return to the Province of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: I don't know why he goes to ad hominem attacks in this House, Mr. Speaker. Maybe he is running out of policy issues to come at me with, but as soon as I heard about the restrictions, I came home. I ended my trip early.

TIM HOUSTON: The restrictions started in early March. They would have been known to the Cabinet because they were known to Nova Scotians and people who worked in the public service.

In an interview a few weeks ago, on the Herle Burly podcast, the former Premier stated: Our first news conference was on March 13th, which was a Friday, and I was telling every public servant that if you went south for March Break, when you come home you are going to be quarantined. That was on March 13th - the former Premier.

So we started off at the very beginning with quarantining people who were going. At the beginning, we thought we could only do it with our public servants who were working and deciding to go away. Some made that choice, others didn't, wisely.

We now know that that same day, when the former Premier was warning public servants not to travel and saying that those who did not travel made a wise decision, the current Premier chose to do what other Nova Scotians . . .

THE SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

TIM HOUSTON: . . . were explicitly being asked not to do and he went on vacation.

My question to the Premier is: Will the Premier please confirm whether he was slow to take COVID-19 seriously, or did he simply choose to ignore the virus?

THE PREMIER: Restrictions came in place March 14th, when I had already left for my vacation, which was approved. Like many Nova Scotians did, as soon as I found out about that, I booked my flight home and ended my trip in the middle of March Break.

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

H&W: KINGSTON HEALTH CTR. - CLOSURE PREVENTION

ALANA PAON: The Dr. Kingston Memorial Community Health Centre has been short a family doctor since March 2020, creating a financial shortfall close to the loss of \$36,000 in revenue towards the operating costs last year.

The clinic sees approximately 3,100 patients a year, and the clinic predicts that it's going to last at best another six months, utilizing what is left of the reserve fund. If they don't receive immediate financial support from government, the doors are going to close. They have made an emergency request to the Municipality of Richmond. However, when I last checked, health care is provincial.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: What assistance can the Minister of Health and Wellness commit to in order to ensure that the Dr. Kingston Memorial Community Health Centre does not close?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: We can certainly look into the issue. I believe that would be a facility run by the physicians there. I can tell the member that when it comes to doctor attachment in her area, we are at over 96 per cent of her constituents being attached to a family physician, which is good news for her area. We will certainly look at this issue and evaluate if anything can be done.

ALANA PAON: What I can actually tell the minister was bad news for my constituents are the 8,836 people and the almost 36 per cent increase in the number of people without a physician since last month.

The newly rebranded Nova Scotia Health - not Authority any longer - must be, I think, more proactive in supporting struggling centres in not only recruiting, but to retain physicians. There must be a provincially standardized funding model for community health centres so that clinics such as ours are not faced with financial burdens when a physician leaves.

Can the minister please provide me, again, with what commitment he is going to take and give to our local health centre in order for their doors not to close?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I certainly assure the member we'll look into this situation immediately.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: HEALTH CARE WORKERS - GAG ORDER

TIM HOUSTON: I'd like to read a few quotes from today's *the Coast* article into the record. "An Infirmity nurse who had been redeployed headed for Northwood," and *the*

Coast, in their article, says they agreed to keep her identity confidential because “she, like a number of Northwood employees interviewed, feared retribution from her employer for speaking to the media.” Northwood CEO declined to speak to *the Coast* and would not allow another Northwood employee, who’s a director of long-term care at the facility, to do so either.

I’d like to ask the Premier: Is the Premier comfortable with the atmosphere that has been created amongst health care providers in this province, where they don’t feel safe speaking up and saying what’s actually happening?

THE PREMIER: All frontline health care providers should feel safe to bring issues of any nature to their employer to make sure that government can always look to do better and make investments to make their workplace better.

That’s why in the long-term care expert panel we have recommendations that come from frontline workers to ensure that we’re making workplace safety better, that we have more resources for them to do their work. We’ve invested in PPE and other types of material that they would need to make sure they perform their job to optimal levels, and we’re going to continue to make sure that we credit those health care heroes for keeping Nova Scotians safe. (Applause)

TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, we know the culture that exists in the health care system now, where doctors and health care professionals are afraid to speak up. *The Coast* just confirmed it.

Another quote I’d like to share with the Premier, and this is a quote from the article: “After Northwood went into lockdown, she called her daughter and said no one would tell residents what was being done to prepare the facility or protect them. ‘She said she couldn’t get anything, any truth out of anyone,’” and no one was telling them anything.

This is what her daughter said, who’s referred to as LS in the article because “LS is a health care worker who was not comfortable using her full name to speak about her family’s experience because she feared repercussions for being publicly critical.”

Time and time and time again it’s the same theme, that people are afraid to speak up because of the actions of this government. Will the Premier commit now to lifting the gag order on health care workers in this province so that family members can have the closure they deserve? (Applause)

THE PREMIER: These are the types of findings that would come out of the qualitative review that took place. We need to continue to make sure that we are looking at continuous improvement across the health care sector, especially the areas that were more exposed during the pandemic, in our province and throughout our country.

As we speak, there are over 100 outbreaks happening right now in another province. We need to make sure that we keep COVID-19 out - as we have been able to do since the first wave - of our long-term care centres. We're very focused - laser-focused - on our vaccine program, which continues to make sure that we have more doses in arms every single day, and we're going to continue to focus on those most vulnerable with that plan.

TIM HOUSTON: Nobody would dispute wanting to support health care workers and families and Nova Scotians and moving forward, but when you know better, you do better, and the only way you can know better is to own the actions of the past and be held accountable for them.

The common theme we see with this government is that they don't want to be held accountable. They don't want to listen to Nova Scotians. They don't want to know anything about what the ramifications of their actions are. What we're trying to do today - and I don't know if we got an answer to a question here today - but I know this: there are a lot more questions to be asked.

I hope that on a future day, this Premier will be willing to be held accountable for the actions of his government.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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 a Committee of the Whole House on Supply.

THE SPEAKER: We'll take our mandated COVID-19 recess for 15 minutes.

[2:05 p.m. The House recessed.]

[2:20 p.m. The House reconvened.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a variety of funding issues facing municipalities. As a former councillor and now in my role as the NDP spokesperson for the Department of Municipal Affairs, I often witness that, due to a lack of funding, municipal units are fighting for scraps of money. Municipal units often find

themselves competing with each other over small pots of money because the large pot of money - the Municipal Financial Capacity Grant, also known as the Municipal Grants Act and better known as equalization - has not changed for years, while its name has changed a few times. This has created a situation where municipal staff spend a lot of their time chasing various streaming funds and writing grants and proposals when there's other work - other more important work - that needs to be done in their municipalities.

The municipalities are required to balance their budgets. Due to a lack of revenue, municipalities often face budget shortfalls. This lack of funding limits the choices municipal units can make to improve their communities. Municipal units do not want to raise property tax rates because rates are too high already comparable to the services provided.

The lack of funding means municipalities cannot properly improve infrastructure - roads, water, sewer - and it has created an inability for municipal governments to create more sidewalks, especially in the rural areas. It has also created an inability for municipal units to afford to expand municipal water into the rural areas. The lack of revenue means municipal units cannot provide more accessible recreation, indoor, and outdoor facilities. The lack of revenue makes it difficult for smaller or economically challenged areas to retain younger populations and recruit newcomers to their areas.

Residents are entitled to comparable services at comparable tax rates. I am sure there are residents, municipal units, that would agree that the services residents receive are not comparable to the tax rate they pay. Over the years, there have been disagreements on what the appropriate level of funding should be, but what people can agree on is that municipal units are not receiving enough equalization funding to enable municipal units to provide comparable services at comparable tax rates.

Municipalities need financial help. The NSFM - the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities - needs and has asked for financial help. The NSFM has been calling on the Province to increase the equalization payments to municipal units by \$20 million over three years. I do not see this reflected in the budget. Despite the government continuing to change the name of equalization, there is still no increase in funding. The government can change the name of a program, but it doesn't change the fact that the budget has come before the Legislature, and the municipal funding remains frozen while mandatory transfers from municipal units to the provinces rise based on CPI - the Consumer Price Index.

The issue of mandatory payments needs to be addressed. The provincial government is receiving funding from municipal units for education, housing, corrections, and other services, all of which are not municipal responsibilities. They're provincial. For many municipal units, these payments are one of the top three budget expenses for them.

When I sat on CBRM council, I was surprised to learn that while provincial costs - particularly, let's say, for education - were calculated by population, the municipal costs,

according to the CBRM CAO, were based on CPI. How is that fair? This is flawed for a few reasons. One is fairness or the unfairness that municipal units are paying for provincial responsibilities. Second is how the provincial government calculates their portion based on population while calculating the portion the municipal units pay based on CPI.

On the issue of funding, the Nova Scotians for Equalization Fairness group has requested accountability and transparency of the government's federal equalization funding of 23.1 per cent that is generated out of the municipal units to provide comparable services at comparable taxes. What this group is looking for is the ability to know and to see where the equalization money of the federal government is being allocated in this province. I do not see this as a troublesome ask when it could be put in the budget.

Another way in which municipal units are getting shortchanged in the funding department, as I mentioned today in Question Period, is through the cannabis tax money. Before cannabis became legal, the Canadian Federation of Municipalities, the provinces, and the federal government agreed that instead of a 50-50 split between the federal government and the provinces, the feds would take 25 per cent, giving the provinces 75 per cent, with the agreement that 25 per cent of the provinces' 75 per cent would go to municipal units.

Instead of allocating the 25 per cent to the municipal units and working with them to devise a formula, this government is making municipalities show their receipts and prove costs. On March 2, 2018, the former Premier stated: "Let me be clear, there is no great revenue source here coming in from this product." We know cannabis sales and therefore revenues are high in this province. The former Premier also stated the same day: "As I stand on the floor of this House . . . they will have to prove to us that those costs are real." I will table that.

That was not the agreement the federal government made with the provinces when it agreed to reduce its revenue share from 50 per cent to 25 per cent so that municipalities would receive tax revenue, too. This has created an unnecessary administrative burden on municipalities and police departments. This government needs to work with municipal units and the NSFM to create a better way of distributing the cannabis tax revenue to municipalities that reflects the spirit of the agreement made with the federal government.

Enforceable codes of conduct at the municipal level are long overdue, and I am happy to say that they are on their way. The face of municipal representation is changing, which is good news, because not everyone can see themselves reflected in the makeup of our councils. What is worse, though, is when some people do not feel welcome or represented, even once they are elected. Enforceable codes of conduct are crucial to ensuring progress, and more diverse representation on councils keeps moving in the right direction. However, without proper funding, these codes of conduct may be without teeth. If the government wants municipalities to be successful in the implementation of these codes, there must be funding allocated to municipalities.

I spoke in this Chamber of just one incident with myself where another councillor, when I bent down to pick something up, said, “Good thing she stood up, I was going to spank her on the fanny.” That was just one incident of mine. I have numerous.

[2:30 p.m.]

A funding stream allocated to municipal units allows municipalities to train elected officials on their codes of conduct so they understand it. They understand what it means, what the code of conduct means, what their conduct should be and shouldn't be. That type of training will prevent harm before it occurs.

We know that financial inequalities across municipalities are a problem. The robust implementation of legislation such as codes of conduct should be an option for every municipality, regardless of their budget.

Oftentimes, these things are elusive to councils because they can't afford the cost of training. They can't afford the investigator who comes after an incident occurs. They can't afford a diversity officer. That is why funding needs to be attached to these acts, to codes of conduct, to things that we download on to the municipalities or provide to them. Oftentimes we, this government, need to help them in funding, especially when they've been shortchanged in equalization for years.

In closing, I would welcome a budget line that provides a substantive response to the NSFM's and municipal units' repeated request to increase the municipal equalization program. Increase that budget line. That is what's needed from this government.

With that, I will take my seat.

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

BRAD JOHNS: I'm honoured to have the privilege to stand here today to offer a reply to the budget (to discuss some of the things that I've noted that aren't in this budget that should be) and honoured and privileged to be able to do that in this House here today.

I'm very fortunate in some respects, from the aspect of the fact that the majority of my constituency rests within the boundaries of HRM currently - Halifax Regional Municipality. I'm fortunate for that because what it means is at least the residents I represent in Middle and Upper Sackville and in Beaver Bank, are getting some services - albeit those services are coming mostly from the municipality and very few of them are coming provincially, which I find very frustrating because the residents of Middle and Upper Sackville and Beaver Bank pay taxes. They pay good taxes, but we are certainly by far not getting value for money for what we pay, considering the tax amounts that we do pay.

I want specifically for a minute to focus in on a couple of issues, the first being of course something I've raised in this House numerous times over the last four years. That is the Cobequid Community Health Centre. We are very fortunate in Sackville-Beaver Bank to have that facility. It's a great facility, and I commend everybody who works there. We have wonderful staff there. We're fortunate. But you know, when I look at the missed opportunities - I've raised these in the past and I raise them again.

Cobequid Community Health Centre should have 24-hour emergency service. There is absolutely no reason, when you look at the catchment area that that facility takes in, that that facility does not have 24-hour emergency services.

It was first floated before this Legislature about 15 years ago, just prior to the Dexter government coming in. The member for Sackville-Cobequid at that time ran on a campaign saying that the community health service centre in Sackville would have 24-hour emergency services. The next candidate who ran for the government ran saying that Cobequid Community Health should have 24-hour emergency health services. We're 15 years later since the first person was talking about this, and Cobequid Community Health Centre still does not have 24-hour emergency services.

I've raised this in the House numerous times, that there are residents who are going to that facility and are being forced to stay after closing time at that facility, sometimes all night. There's no food, there's no bed, there's no anything. Yet residents are either being taken there by ambulance or are going there and are having to stay for 24 hours in some cases.

I've raised this here in this House, but this government has done nothing to address that. They've put millions of dollars into a health care system. They're putting millions of dollars into building a facility in Bayers Lake, but they aren't taking an opportunity to take the infrastructure that currently exists, that was built to be able to be expanded upon. It's got enough land. It was built to go higher. It could be built upon, but nobody's done that.

In this budget, again, there's nothing in there. I find it frustrating.

On another note, I am tired of what is happening to the schools in Sackville and Beaver Bank. I stood up here when we started talking about pre-Primary programs - and I by no means think that the pre-Primary is not a good program. I do think it's a good program. I do think it's something my residents value, even though we were in the last phase of the rollout of that program. We just got it in Sackville-Beaver Bank this year.

I do think it was a good program, but I stood up here four years ago and said the infrastructure in Sackville and Beaver Bank is not in place to accommodate all those children coming. I said there are going to be too many children coming to schools that are already overcrowded; schools that already have portables; schools that need infrastructure

upgrades to the actual facilities, to the parking lots, to the Park and Rides, and the drop-offs.

I raised all that in this House four years ago. Three years ago. Two years ago. Now I'm raising it again, and I'm raising it now because what I predicted four years ago has come to fruition. It's happening. I'm getting calls from residents who are backed up now from traffic trying to drop their children off at school and who have kids walking along the roads that don't have sidewalks. Every single elementary school that is in my constituency has portables. Last year I was on the news talking about the quality of some of those portables. Some of those portables I wouldn't have put my dog in, but yet that's what my constituents had to send their students to - had to send their children to.

I see a capital plan here - the 2020 to 2025 school capital plan. It lists all these schools and things that are going to be upgraded and fixed. Not one of them are in Sackville. We have three significantly new subdivisions that are currently under review through HRM through the public information and the public hearing process. There are three development applications that are coming, and they're all significantly - they will impact these schools that are already overcrowded.

This Province has a duty and a responsibility to the residents in Sackville and Beaver Bank to fix and upgrade the schools. Don't keep piling the kids into schools when there's no room now. There's no room. Every single one of my elementary schools - about 10 years ago, I remember when I was on council attending public meetings that were held at the time by the Halifax Regional School Board to look at how they were going to redistribute the grades. What they did was all the elementary schools dropped. Instead of going to Grade 6, they dropped to Grade 5. It was decided that the junior high was going to be a 6-8 instead of a 7-9, and the high school would then be a 9-10.

We're overcrowded now. Even though they moved students around and shifted people, we're still overcrowded.

Twenty years ago, in the Rodney MacDonald government, there was a plan coming forward to fix Harry R. Hamilton Elementary School. There was going to be a significant upgrade made to that school, where new classrooms were going to be added on to where the current gym was and a new gymnasium was going to be added on to the side of that building. There was an opportunity. There was a plan - I saw the prints to it. We talked about it in the community for the last 15 years, 10 years, whatever it's been. Nothing has happened to address that.

What has happened is there has been more development, more children coming, more students, more crowding, and more people moving. My residents in Sackville and Beaver Bank deserve - we pay the taxes - we deserve to have money spent on us. I see upgrades to schools in Halifax that are actually having enrolments going down, but I don't see any investment in the schools out in Sackville and Beaver Bank.

I want to take a minute and I want to talk about, if I can, a few other things I've brought forward the second time. The landfill bill - I'm not sure if I can speak on that, where it is at first reading now, but I will say that it is an important bill for the residents I represent. I hope this government will look at it, because it has significant impacts to people down the river. It's an important thing.

I want to go back for a minute regarding the schooling issues, and not just to the issue of expanding and meeting the needs of the students for Sackville and Beaver Bank - expanding schools or doing something other than portables. I do also want to talk about the maintenance that is happening in those schools.

Some of the maintenance is a provincial responsibility. I know that day-to-day operations and the majority of the maintenance are handled by the school board - once again, by a different level of government instead of the Province, because it seems to me that the Province just continues to neglect what they should be responsible for.

I have schools that have significant infrastructure issues that are beyond the capability of a capital budget of a school board. The Province, which owns those schools, should be standing up and investing in taking care of some of the roofs, some of the windows, some of the doors - I mean, at Beaver Bank-Monarch Drive Elementary, I literally have a crumbling school that has mould on the outside of the school and green mould on the outside and the roof is caving in.

The residents I represent don't want the world. They just want a few things. They want to know they are getting tax value for the tax dollars they are paying to this Province.

I would be remiss if I did not discuss, very briefly, a 10-year project that has been going on in my constituency. It's not located directly in my constituency. It's actually located in the member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville's constituency. It is the Cobequid Cultural Society facility. That facility has been discussed, has been looked at and worked at with community groups now for approximately 15 years as well.

There have been no commitments whatsoever by this government. The only movement that's happened on that has happened because of the work that has happened at the municipal level. The municipality has given land for that construction and, once again, I raise in here that I feel there should be an opportunity for some provincial money coming forward to support that \$15 million cultural facility located just off Highway No. 101.

I find this frustrating because this is not the first time I have talked about these things in this House. I've tried to work with certain members opposite. I've tried to work with ministers. I've tried to work with government officials, and I've tried to work with bureaucrats on these issues, but time and again it seems like money will go to certain ridings but it won't go to other people's ridings. It doesn't go to other people's places. Some of these things, in all fairness, I think they extend beyond partisan politics. I think

it's for the good of all Nova Scotians, and some of these things should be funded. They should be reviewed. They should be looked at, and there should at least be an answer given to some of these.

[2:45 p.m.]

I will also make a quick comment that the one time - two times - that there was an investment in new schools or any upgrades in Sackville-Beaver Bank, both of those - Sackville Heights Junior High as well as the construction of Millwood Elementary School - happened under a Progressive Conservative government. There's been no infrastructure and nothing since.

I'm very hopeful that at some point in time, instead of sitting on this side of the House, I might have an opportunity to sit on that side of the House. If that's the case, perhaps Sackville-Beaver Bank will finally get some of these things addressed.

Thank you very much for your time. I appreciate the opportunity today.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

The House will now recess itself for 15 minutes while it resolves into the Committee of the Whole on Supply.

[2:46 p.m. The House recessed.]

[3:00 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Supply with Hon. Ben Jessome in the Chair.]

[8:03 p.m. The House reconvened.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please.

The Chair of the Committee of the Whole on Supply will now report:

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

[GOVERNMENT BUSINESS]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR THIRD READING

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 74.

Bill No. 74 - An Act to Incorporate the Yarmouth Golf and Country Club.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I move that Bill No. 74 pass third reading.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 74. All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 77.

Bill No. 77 - Digby Marketing and Promotions Levy Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

HON. GORDON WILSON: I move that Bill No. 77, Digby Marketing and Promotions Levy Act be read for a third time.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 77. All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 97.

Bill No. 97 - Electricity Act

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Energy and Mines.

HON. CHUCK PORTER: I now move third reading of Bill No. 97.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

ALLAN MACMASTER: I was expecting this to come maybe in order tonight, but we'll go ahead here.

Mr. Speaker, I had a chance to do a little more thinking and research on this bill. As I said on second reading, we're being asked to support something that's really yet to be defined. We understand that this legislation has to be in place before regulations can further define what it will become. All of that, of course, is going to come out of consultations that are yet to happen.

I guess there are a couple of questions I would put on the record tonight. One is: If we are moving towards renewable power to supply our province - if we're moving away from coal and we're moving towards renewable power - there are probably more efficient and more significant ways to do it. No doubt that is in the plans for the future.

If it's coming, and if it's coming soon, it begs the question why somebody might choose to go this direction at this time. It's certainly part of the mix, and we know there are people who are putting solar panels on their homes. It's not something that I've seen to be for people who are of low income.

It's not a cheap undertaking, even with the subsidies involved. Certainly, there are those out there who are choosing to do so because of their interest in protecting our environment. They want to have an energy source that is not generating carbon.

One concern that has been raised - and it's not with this legislation, it is with a BUTU service tariff that is in place with municipalities right now - it is now on the radar. It has been put on the radar with the UARB.

Under the analysis and findings, the board has stated that they're concerned about Nova Scotia Power's assertion that this tariff is being subsidized by other customers, and the municipalities are not paying an appropriately assigned cost of service. If that is true, and it's found out to be true, the UARB, out of an interest to protect consumers, would

have to investigate that to determine that other consumers are not, by way of the rates they're paying, subsidizing these arrangements with municipalities.

The same could happen here with this plan to allow for higher amounts of energy to be generated by organizations that want to enter into this agreement, primarily because, when we look at what is happening here, there are two main things that are happening, and one is increasing the net metering cap.

The more energy that can be generated through this plan that is being enacted with this legislation, those organizations that are going to be taking advantage of this are going to have their power when it is available to them. When the panels are generating the power they need, they are fine, but they are going to have to come back and draw from Nova Scotia Power the same way everybody else does when they don't have enough power through these panels.

There are a couple of things there. They are not as substantial in terms of being a customer; they are just using Nova Scotia Power when they are needed. Depending on how many panels go up across the province, we could have actually inefficient use of existing Nova Scotia Power assets, which means it could cost more. But it also means if they are not being used as efficiently, we could actually have coal-fired plants that are generating more carbon dioxide than they need to.

That is why I come back to my original point - if the goal in this province is to move away from coal and is to generate more renewable energy, we probably need to be doing that on a very large scale. I know there is discussion now about possibly another transmission cable coming across the border from New Brunswick to bring hydro power from Quebec - that is just one idea. Something like that is going to have a much more significant impact on our ability to move away from coal. Because it is going to be a large initiative, it is going to be more efficient, and it is probably going to be more affordable for Nova Scotians.

There are so many people out there who are having difficulty paying their power bills. I think while it is important that we have these initiatives and give people flexibility, I just want to issue a statement of caution to be careful with this because, yes, we want to move towards renewable energy. Yes, we want to move away from coal, but we need to do so in a way that ensures that power rates are affordable for people, and we need to do it in a way that we ensure that the intended goals for the environment are achieved.

So, with that I will conclude my remarks.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

[8:15 p.m.]

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I am pleased to rise and say a few words about the Electricity Act.

I would agree with my colleague that we remain concerned, as I said earlier, about the lack of detail about the regulations, but we certainly support this bill. Unlike my colleagues in the Official Opposition, I don't talk about the transition to a clean energy as an "if."

I believe the member said if we transition from coal to a greener grid, which is mystifying to me that anyone could even have that idea in 2021. We are moving away from coal, we are, despite its storied history in our province and particularly on the island of Cape Breton. It is time for us to make a shift. This is one small piece of that, I will agree, but it is an important piece.

This bill, as we understand it, is in particular actually geared in many ways towards lower-income Nova Scotians because it enables solar farms and net metering and all of the things that allow people to access energy. Renters, et cetera, can buy in to accessing renewable energy without having to physically have a solar panel on their own home.

We appreciate what this means for the solar industry. We have heard many people in Law Amendments Committee but also in our caucus offices and on the phone tell us that this was a positive step forward.

Again, we appreciate what this means for communities that have been held back from being able to access solar and also for larger entities that draw from the grid that can now set up substantial solar arrays and be able to take advantage of that and not have the limit that was formerly in place as to how much energy they could generate and that could be used and not wasted.

We introduced an amendment to put a time limit on the introduction of regulations because we want to ensure that this isn't just enabling legislation, as we have seen many times before, but that this happens and happens quickly.

We are happy to see progress on the efficiency, but I also want to put this bill in a little bit of context. We've been in Budget Estimates now simultaneous to this, and if you look at the budget for Energy and Mines you'll see that petroleum resources and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board will receive two and a half times the money that is allocated to sustainable and renewable energy in this budget. So we're moving. We're glad we're moving. We're not moving quickly enough.

In Estimates this week we also learned that we're spending \$12 million on a multi-year agreement with Morocco to learn more about how to extract fossil fuels. This

government has confirmed that they support the Goldboro LNG proposed project, knowing that it would cost the federal government \$1 billion to get it off the ground and that it would create 3.7 megatons of GHG emissions annually, which would trash our climate targets. That's the basic formula that needs to change.

So we're happy to see this but, as my colleague the member for Dartmouth East always says, the order of operations is backwards - I think that's what he says. That's how this feels to us, a little bit.

We're glad to see it happen. We need more, and we need it quickly. This is a time to make historic investments in a green transition, based in renewable energy but also based in care work, based in green jobs, based in labour. This is what we've been talking about this session.

I appreciate that changing the Electricity Act to enable shared and commercial solar problems is a step in the right direction. We're hoping that it's the beginning of a sprint. We'll be supporting this bill but, tomorrow, when students gather across the world for Fridays for Future, know that they are not asking for steps. They're asking for bold, transformational action, and we still wait for that to come. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Energy and Mines.

HON. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues in the House for their comments. The member in the NDP caucus spoke moments ago quite correctly on a number of these topics.

This is one tool, one part of what we're doing. There is much going on in the energy world. It's not an "if" at all. We are moving in this direction. The government has been pretty clear on that. Regulations will be developed, and we have every reason to believe that this will start in the very near future. It's important that we get those done so that we can move on with this file.

I am happy to be presenting this bill in the House. I won't take a lot of time. I just wanted to touch on that the regulations will follow the proper procedures, and they will be well consulted. We will seek input from Nova Scotians. We will see the interest in this kind of solar that is out there.

I spoke in the Estimates about some of the excitement around this, not only for those in that field but for those in communities, municipalities, individuals, et cetera, that may be quite interested in this. We'll get a real good idea of what that looks like.

Again, this is one piece. There's a lot of things going on in the world of energy these days. It's a pretty exciting time as we move into new ideas of how we get off things like coal. Coal creates and uses about half of what we use in the run of a day right now. That's a lot of power, and we need to make sure we have the ability to create that capacity by the time we're ready to come off coal.

There's a lot of work ahead of us. I don't think anybody is saying that there isn't or doubting that, but we are also well under way. I am excited about what the future of renewable energy looks like in the province of Nova Scotia.

With those few words, I move to close Bill No. 97, the Electricity Act.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 97.

There has been a call for a recorded vote.

We will ring the bells until the Whips are satisfied.

[8:20 p.m.]

[The Division bells were rung.]

[8:45 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: I have been informed that the Whips are satisfied. We will now proceed with the recorded vote on Bill No. 97, the Electricity Act.

I would ask that all members physically present in the Chamber, when your name is called, stand tall and state your vote with a simple Yea or Nay. And I would ask that all members participating virtually, when your name is called, please use your voting card, as well as unmute yourself and verbalize your vote with a simple Yea or Nay.

A reminder that the Clerk will call each caucus one at a time, in alphabetical order by your last name.

The Clerks will now proceed with the recorded vote on Bill No. 97.

[The Clerk calls the roll.]

[8:47 p.m.]

YEAS**NAYS**

Hon. Patricia Arab
Hon. Karen Casey
Hon. Zach Churchill
Hon. Keith Colwell
Hon. Randy Delorey
Hon. Lena Metlege Diab
Rafah DiCostanzo
Hon. Mark Furey
Hon. Leo Glavine
Hon. Lloyd Hines
Bill Horne
Hon. Tony Ince
Hon. Keith Irving
Hon. Ben Jessome
Hon. Labi Kousoulis
Hon. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft
Hon. Geoff MacLellan
Hon. Brendan Maguire
Hon. Margaret Miller
Hon. Derek Mombourquette
Hon. Chuck Porter
Hon. Iain Rankin
Hon. Kelly Regan
Hon. Gordon Wilson
Barbara Adams
Keith Bain
Steve Craig
Hon. Pat Dunn
Tim Halman
Larry Harrison
Brad Johns
Colton LeBlanc
John Lohr
Karla MacFarlane
Allan MacMaster
Kim Masland
Dave Ritcey
Tory Rushton
Murray Ryan
Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin
Gary Burrill
Claudia Chender

Kendra Coombes
Susan Leblanc
Lisa Roberts
Hugh MacKay
Alana Paon

THE CLERK: For, 47. Against, 0.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 92.

Bill No. 92 - Continuing Care Assistants Registry Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I move that Bill No. 92 be read a third time and do pass.

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

BARBARA ADAMS: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill No. 92.

As we have already talked about in the Legislature, the continuing care assistants in Nova Scotia are the second-largest health professional group in the province. This registry bill is a commitment by the government to count the number of CCAs in the province, and once we have an accurate number they may very well be in fact close to the largest group in the province. It is time that they are given the respect that they deserve. They are a hard-working group of professionals who are doing a back-breaking job.

What has already been said is that they deserve a higher salary than they are getting. They deserve to have the right to take a vacation when they want it, even in the Summertime. They deserve at the end of their shift to not be told, you have to stay back because there is no one to replace you.

This morning the Premier mentioned that his government had completed the short-term goals in the expert report by the long-term care committee. I know those recommendations off by heart, and there are nine of them that are short-term goals. The

date of those short-term goals was to be February 2019 to July 2019. That's 2019. That's well before the pandemic. The expert panel's report said in its very first goal - the very first thing they said was - to invest in human resource capacity and, at the end of the report, it said the number one key to success is accurate staffing data.

This report came out in December of 2018, and the government is just now in 2021 - two and a half years later - committing with this Act to count the number of CCAs. This is a good Act. It should have been done two and a half years ago.

Ironically, the last thing in the long-term care expert panel's recommendations says: "but there is no waiting for perfection. We can't wait until all of these recommendations are done in terms of data collection. We need to take action." Well, Madam Chair, taking two and a half years to complete the short-term goals is not action in my mind.

Then the medium-term goals, which include some of the things related to CCAs, were to be done by August 2019 and November of 2020. August 2019 is months before the pandemic locked us down. We are supposed to be, in fact, all done those long-term care expert panel recommendations, and we're not.

During Health Committee, back in 2020, when I asked about an update on why the recommendations had not been updated in terms of what had been done and what hadn't been done, the government staff said, well, we were busy with COVID-19. I totally respect that, but the government shut down the Legislature for a year. They couldn't do both at the same time. They shut down Health Committee for seven months. They couldn't do that at the same time as they were dealing with COVID-19, when other provinces across this country were able to do both.

Given what happened at Northwood, in this long-term care facility, where the majority of staff looking after their patients are CCAs, not only should have this government been able to do both, there should have been a sense of urgency to do both.

I apologize for being emotional about this, but we all know that there was not enough done at Northwood. We all saw the *Coast* article today, talking about what should have been done that wasn't done. The CCAs and all of the other allied health staff in that building deserved better.

This CCA Registry Act is necessary. I am glad there is no fee to be registered. Continuing Care Assistants are one of the lowest professions in the province in terms of salary. It's not above the living wage, so we know that that needs to be addressed. We know, according to the expert panel, that there were supposed to be staffing regulations in terms of the number of staff. It was a recommendation from here. It's in the Homes for Special Care Act. This government will not commit to a staffing ratio until they get more data. Well, in the long-term care expert panel that was commissioned by this government, they said, don't wait for perfection, we need action. This is, by my estimation, a very small

step, and we needed to take a giant leap to help those allied health professionals who deserve our respect and our support.

Madam Chair, one of the things that I know is that the *Coast* article laid bare some of the things that were missing at Northwood. As you've all heard me say before, I was working at Ocean View Manor during this pandemic, and I know what was going on. I know how many times the rules changed and staff tried desperately to keep up because I was getting those emails saying, this is what's happening now, it's going to be different tomorrow. I also know that when you have an inability to have a bare minimum staffing level, when you are even more short-staffed because of COVID-19, it's a disaster waiting to happen, and it happened.

[9:00 p.m.]

From the *Coast* article and what I know from being told personally by management at Northwood, they were down to 90 staff when they had more than 160 supposed to be on duty. I know what it was like for me at Ocean View Manor. I'm good at my job. I was there and I was run off my feet, and we didn't even have full staffing because when someone passed away they did not fill those beds.

The staff at Northwood and the staff in every long-term care facility deserve to have staffing ratios. This bill did not address staffing ratios. This bill addresses counting of those staff. We need to commit dollars and money, and if I hear the words "continuing to invest" one more time - it's such a frustrating thing to say when you took two and a half years to decide we're going to count how many of you there are before we decide whether there are enough of you.

I can tell you right now there aren't enough. I know from all of the cancellations by home care. They cancelled 1 to 2 per cent of their visits before COVID-19. That's for people who cannot live by themselves without that care. It is not okay for me that 1 per cent or 2 per cent of those needing home care didn't get the visit because there was nobody to come in an evening or a weekend. Our CCAs deserve so much better than that.

I'll quote just one thing from the *Coast* article that was put out this morning called "What Happened at Northwood?" In this article, Matthew Nette stepped up to work at Northwood. The managers asked him, even though he didn't have the training, would he like to train to become a CCA? This is a more than eight- to 10-month course. He got not even a whole day of classroom training, and then he did job-shadowing of a CCA for two days. He was then allowed and expected to give full care to patients. He said he was not scared of COVID-19 but of the work and the lack of resources.

I'm not sure why he was allowed to do that or expected to do that. I know that desperate times call for desperate measures, but we didn't need to get ourselves into this position. This was a crisis that this government had been warned about for years.

The course that this young man took is offered in community colleges. This was someone who wanted to step up and help because he guessed, as the rest of the province did, how badly the people in that facility needed help. He was told when he started the job that there would be five fully-trained CCAs on the floor.

Let me remind everyone in this Chamber that working in a long-term care facility takes special training, and it takes a very special kind of person to be able to do that job. They know that when they develop those emotional relationships and attachments with the people they are looking after, they are all going to pass away, for the most part. There are angels who work in those facilities who are willing to develop a relationship, to come to love the people they are looking after, knowing that they will sit beside their bed when they take their last breath.

Matthew was told that there would be five fully-trained CCAs. Instead, he was accompanied by the person who'd trained him and one other new CCA. Matthew quit at the end of his second week. He and Northwood were both overwhelmed. Everything was not under control. What happened in Northwood, what happened around the rest of the province, and frankly, it's going on right now.

The last thing I want to say is that a few weeks ago, as I mentioned before, Dr. Strang told my caucus that in 48 of 133 nursing homes, the residents had received their vaccines. They were supposed to be the number one priority, by age and by vulnerability, in a long-term care facility, they and their staff.

Today the Premier said that 75 per cent have been vaccinated. Why - not that I begrudge anyone in the public getting their vaccine. I don't. I want every single Nova Scotian to have one. I don't understand, and this government has not told me, why people in those long-term care facilities - 25 per cent in residential care - have not gotten their vaccine.

We're not vaccinating by age or by criteria in Phase I of long-term care, because we have people in their 50s, 60s, 70s, and 80s who are living at home who have not gotten their vaccine. The CCAs in this province who are going into those facilities, working in homes with these residents, deserve those vulnerable patients to be vaccinated along with them.

I still know of home care staff - CCAs - who have not gotten their vaccines, even though they're going from one home with a vulnerable senior who's elderly to another home with a vulnerable senior. Madam Chair, we can do better, and we must do better. Yes, we want to move forward and learn from the lessons, but we must look back and make sure that they are not repeated.

The final thing that I will say is that doing nine of 22 short-term goals that were supposed to be completed over a year and a half ago is not good enough. We need to put an urgency under this. We need to get all medium- and all long-term goals complete.

The last thing I will say is that this government needs to build more long-term care beds. At a minimum, the 2015 promise to develop a five-year strategy for long-term care, that was promised in 2017 and not delivered on, must be done. I hope to see that coming from the government soon. Thank you, Madam Chair.

THE SPEAKER: Just before we take our mandated 15-minute COVID-19 protocol break, I'll remind everybody that you can refer to me as Mr. Speaker, not Madam Chair. Thanks very much.

We'll now take our 15-minute COVID-19 break. The House will resume at 9:27 p.m.

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

[9:27 p.m. The House reconvened.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak just very briefly on Bill No. 92, which I and my colleagues in the NDP caucus will not be supporting.

I had the occasion just now to review some notes and some research that were prepared for us for second reading. At that time, we indicated, I think quite genuinely, that we were open to considering this bill and interested in what we would hear at Law Amendments Committee.

Of course, the provisions in this bill do reflect some recommendations from the long-term care expert panel and would assist with some workforce planning. But there is a problem with the sequence of where this government is taking action, and there is a problem of trust in the government's unwillingness to join us in really listening, in listening to those who appeared at Law Amendments Committee.

What we heard from a number of speakers, including those representing the NSGEU and CUPE is that they had concerns with this legislation; they wanted some changes to it. We, in the NDP caucus, attempted to make those amendments to do a number of things, including to name the Department of Health and Wellness and the minister as effectively the administrator of the Act, to mandate some consultation with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, and to remove fines. We were not able to get support from the government to make those changes.

I would say that even beyond that, yes, there is a problem in the sequence of where the government is taking action and also the speed with which the government is taking action. As the member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage just commented, there are a number of recommendations for quite urgent change in this sector, that have not been responded to.

So to start the government's action with a bill that basically sets out how the government will count CCAs instead of addressing the urgent need for increased wages, the urgent need for better staffing ratios, and improved standard of care in our long-term care facilities - it's the wrong way to start. We are starting too late but we're not starting by supporting the people who are doing this such important work at the front lines.

I certainly know people who have trained as CCAs and who are not working in the sector. It would be wonderful to create the sort of change that might attract people back to the sector. I think many people do go into this work because they enjoy caring for people. But when the conditions of your work make it impossible to do work that you feel good about at the end of the day, it is very difficult to stay in that job. I think that is what we've seen, and that's what we've heard from Janice Keefe and other experts on long-term care.

With those few words, I will cede my time and end by saying, again, how important the work of CCAs is and how difficult. I really appreciate the work of everybody working in the long-term care sector, and I do hope that we can fulsomely and comprehensively start to make the kind of changes that this sector and the people who rely on it require.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take some time to speak to Bill No. 92, the Continuing Care Assistants Registry Act.

As my colleague from Dartmouth North explained last night, this bill does little to improve the working conditions of CCAs, at best. At worst, it presents equity and privacy issues for those most critical and underpaid workers at the front line of home care and long-term care in Nova Scotia.

The amendments put forward by the New Democratic Party caucus attempted to clarify some of the concerns raised by the unions in Law Amendments Committee. One of the concerns raised was the powers left to the regulation in this bill. I would like to remind the House about a few concerns raised by Nan McFadgen, the president of CUPE Nova Scotia, as expressed in Law Amendments Committee on April 12, 2021, and I quote:

If there were different times, we might assign some faith for those regulations to be contemplated in the best interests of all Nova Scotians and that would include CCAs, the workers.

The relationship with this government and unions was, in fact, chewed up and spit out by the current government and as a result, faith is in short supply. Your anti-worker stance in multiple pieces of legislation is supported unanimously, so we know where you stand, and that is not in the best interest of workers.

We have no faith that you will contemplate the worker in the regulations. You will do what you want and, once again, the worker will be the casualty. Faith is a beautiful thing when it is mixed with mutual respect. That is not something that has interested this government for the past eight years.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to quickly go through a few of these incidents that Nan McFadgen is referring to 2014, Bill No. 37, health care sector, essential services, forcing nurses and other unionized health care workers back to work.

[9:30 p.m.]

In 2015, Bill No. 100, the Universities, Accountability, and Sustainability Act, allowed universities to ban strikes and limits academic freedom. Back-to-work orders against nurses and home care workers. The home care sector, stripped of its bargaining rights.

In 2017, Bill No. 148, the public sector wage freeze. Also in 2017, Bill No. 75, to impose contracts on teachers. In 2017 and 2018, strong-arming Doctors Nova Scotia in bargaining. In 2018, judges took the government to court over Nova Scotia's paying lower wages than was recommended by the tribunal.

In 2019, wage restraint was also applied to justices of the peace, and amendments to the Act removing requirements for government to accept recommendations regarding compensation from an independent commission on compensations. Also in 2019, a bill preventing Crown attorneys from striking.

So, Mr. Speaker, we can see why trust is in short supply - from the CCAs and other long-term care workers and, in fact, workers in Nova Scotia in general - when considering this piece of legislation, and any other, without addressing the core issues of wages and adequate staffing in the workplace.

While this government continues to publicly express its gratitude for frontline workers in health care and other public services, we also need them to show us the proof, or else that gratitude is simply empty.

This government's legislative track record falls far short of this, Mr. Speaker. Very short. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I will also rise to speak today to Bill No. 92, an Act to Establish a Registry for Continuing Care Assistants.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to home care and long-term care, we know that the conditions of work are the conditions of care. There is so much that needs to be done, and that could have been done in this legislative session, to improve the conditions for people who work and live in long-term care. As a representative of the NSGEU put it, of all the things that could be done to attract and retain CCAs, this is the smallest step possible, and it isn't even a good step.

I was disappointed that my colleagues from the government and the Progressive Conservative caucuses did not support our NDP caucus amendments to the bill, which addressed issues raised by the unions and members of the public at the Law Amendments Committee. The amendments that my caucus presented attempted to address some of the concerns raised by CUPE and NSGEU, who together represent over 6,000 of the CCAs working in this province.

The amendments brought forward by our caucus would have given a role to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, independent from government, who would be able to ensure that the information that's collected in the registry is collected and used appropriately.

The amendments that we put forward would have removed the \$50 fine from the registry and removed any possibility of fees being collected. They would have named the Department of Health and Wellness as the administrator of the registry instead of the Health Association of Nova Scotia, the employer group that currently hosts the voluntary registry.

They would have required consultation with unions - whoa - in developing the regulations. Imagine.

At the Law Amendments Committee, we attempted to have the bill sent back to the department in the hope that these concerns might be addressed, but that was voted down by the government members. These concerns are some of the reasons why our caucus will not be able to support the bill.

The conditions of work are the conditions of care. I want to speak briefly about the wages that CCAs make. CCAs, generally, are women. Many of them are women of colour. Some of them are women who may not have full immigration status. These mostly women are, in turn, caring for mostly women. Women live longer, on average, than men.

Stephanie Nolen, in *the Coast*, describes what it means to women who have lost their mothers at Northwood. She says:

“The COVID outbreak at Northwood has left deep scars, not only on the families who lost parents, siblings or children. Betsy Webb, for example, said her mother Lee survived COVID but after the chaos, isolation and fear of those months, she deteriorated mentally and no longer recognizes her daughters or grandson in photos. Cecilia Gray’s mother survived but, Gray said, her whole community has been damaged by the loss of matriarchs of Mulgrave Park and Uniacke Square. ‘We were directly impacted by the loss of elders, and we couldn’t mourn as a community, we couldn’t go to them, we couldn’t see them . . . It was devastating . . .’”

It is long understood that caring is women’s work. It is feminized work that we don’t value as a society for that very reason. This is one of the reasons that we seem to find the low wages provided in long-term care acceptable as a society. They must be acceptable, Mr. Speaker, because they continue to be low. No one is doing anything to raise the wage floor of CCAs.

I will note that, similarly, work in early childhood education - and guess what? That profession is dominated by women as well. What does it say about our society when we devalue the work of caring for children - our youngest children, our babies, and our older people and people with disabilities? It means that workers who are already precarious for socio-economic reasons are made doubly so by the precarious nature of work that they do as continuing care assistants, making as little as minimum wage or sometimes up to \$18 an hour, which is, in Halifax, still far short of the living wage.

At Law Amendments Committee, we heard from Jason MacLean, the President of the NSGEU, about all the people who enter the CCA profession wanting to help, wanting to care for people, with the best of intentions, but then who leave shortly after when they realize that they can make similar wages in retail or the service industry but without the mandated overtime and slim possibility of vacations, or who make less than the living wage but are required to use their own vehicle or their own money for transit fares to get from home care appointment to home care appointment. Imagine that. Imagine working for a company that says, you need to go and visit all these people today and care for them, but you need to pay for your own bus tickets to get to see them. It’s unbelievable.

We also know about the many people who are required to work in multiple facilities in order to pay their bills. Stephanie Nolen, again, in *the Coast* article describes how this works. She says, quote, “Staffing at a huge institution like Northwood runs much like the just-in-time delivery system at a car factory: the institution keeps as many people as possible on casual status, to avoid paying benefits. These workers, in turn, work multiple jobs in multiple institutions, to try to make rent.”

This is despite what was asserted recently by the Deputy Minister of Health and Wellness in a committee meeting - that people choose to work part-time in long-term care. In fact, it is more often a necessary strategy for facilities that are not funded adequately. I will make sure I make this point: it is not the fault of the administrators. It is a direct result of the funding and support decisions made by this government.

This government's funding cuts to long-term care and hard line on wages in the public sector have created these conditions, Mr. Speaker. The conditions of work are the conditions of care.

Injury rates for CCAs are among some of the highest of any occupation in the province. It's important not to lose sight of real experiences of CCAs, who are providing the bulk of direct care to older people and people with disabilities in our province. Again, Stephanie Nolen's piece in *the Coast* allows us an opportunity to do this, particularly for the people who were on the front lines of the COVID-19 outbreak at Northwood.

I'm going to echo what my colleague from Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage said. I'm going to tell the story - I'm going to quote how Stephanie tells the story of Matthew Nette, who signed up to help at Northwood in May last year. After only a few hours of training, he was deployed with the responsibility of a CCA. The article says:

“That meant using mechanical lifts to transfer fully immobile patients in and out of beds, lifting them on and off of toilets, changing those who used diapers and cleaning catheter sites. ‘It made me pretty uncomfortable: I really wanted to help, but I was really scared I was going to drop someone.’”

The work of CCAs is back-breaking, underpaid, and dangerous work. Funding minimum staffing hours to 4.1 hours per resident per day would mean that there are enough people to do the work safely. Refusing to do this has created dangerous conditions of work in long-term care and in-home care. The creation of a CCA registry at best does nothing to address the realities of CCAs' everyday working conditions, and at worst it punishes them with fines while being unclear about how their personal information will be used.

These are some of the incredible challenges in the workplace faced by CCAs that this government could have addressed this session but did not. So we in the NDP caucus will continue to wait for this government to make real improvements in the conditions of work and in the conditions of care.

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

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I want to thank the members for the comments related to this bill. I want to thank the Department of Health and Wellness, their staff in long-term care and Public Health officials and people in the industry, including the employers and staff who have worked since Northwood to ensure that COVID-19 has stayed out of every one of our long-term care facilities in the province and that that tragedy was not repeated here in Nova Scotia.

The members opposite will have this House believe that this piece of legislation is the only thing that has been done to serve our long-term care residents, and that is not true. This is an important piece. It helps with workforce management, particularly where less than 10 per cent of our CCAs are registered. This will help us manage the workforce better. The unions were actually consulted on this, both of them, and to the department they indicated their support for this legislation.

There are no fees attached to this for that staff, but this is not the only thing that this government is doing. Before or after Northwood, two reports were conducted, one Northwood-specific and one on the infection prevention and control. Department officials moved very quickly. We invested millions of dollars to bring in capital changes to our long-term care facilities to eliminate any rooms where there were over two people; to bring in PPE; to increase staffing; to increase cleaning measures, among other things. All of the recommendations in both those reports were acted on immediately, and that has been the priority over the last year - to preserve life and protect people in our long-term care facilities from COVID-19. Today we have been successful in doing that.

There have not been cuts to our long-term care system, as has been alleged, particularly in staffing. There have been cost savings found in bulk purchasing. Finding efficiencies in our procurement process, we have saved close to \$1.5 million for that. There was also a reduction in administration where we found savings. There have not been cuts to staffing. In fact, we have brought in a new class of employee - long-term care assistants to assist our CCAs - 200 of them have been deployed in our system over the last year. We have increased staffing in this sector.

Members opposite have discussed the issue around staffing ratios, and that we are not going to go with a standardized staffing ratio. What is going to happen is that we are going to use the interRAI system, which is an internationally acclaimed system to establish what the individual needs are of each patient and their acuity in our facilities and assign staff accordingly. This is very similar to how we are approaching education now, where we identify the needs of our students and deploy staff accordingly, which is why you will see staffing change from school to school every year. That is what is going to happen with our long-term care facility as well.

We have had recruitment and retention issues. This is why we have invested heavily in training incentives and reduced administrative fees to allow people who have work experience in the sector that is applicable to come back into the sector without fee and

facilitating that process for them. We have bursaries up to \$4,000 to help train people. There is a process for wages to go through collective bargaining in this province, and of course our CCAs will want to go through that process.

The members from the NDP brought up Nan MacFadgen's comments around labour. I do want to remind the House that, if it was not for our stance on the fiscal situation, to deal with a structural deficit that government after government created in this province - the greatest cost of which is our labour - if we did not take those actions, we would be in a much different fiscal situation today coming out of COVID-19, and we would not be prepared to rebound as quickly as we are.

I, for one, am quite proud of this government's record. When it comes to being prudent fiscal managers and making the right decisions on behalf of all Nova Scotians, no matter what the political pressure is from unions or other special interests, we made the right decisions. Now, coming out of this last year, where we had such an economic hit, we're seeing how critical and important those decisions were for all Nova Scotians.

We have invested in capital infrastructure in our long-term care sector, investing hundreds of millions into renovating old spaces, creating new ones, making them safe from infectious disease. We're never going back to the old system when it comes to that. We are creating hundreds of new beds, and we're not done with those announcements either. There will be more in the coming weeks.

We have for the first time reached the billion-dollar mark when it comes to investments. Investments in this budget are helping us further expand our home care efforts, which Nova Scotians have benefited from, funding to provide direct care so people can invest in their own community members to support them. We are currently undergoing a robust legislative review to ensure that there is standardization of quality and that operators in this sector are able to be held to account in relation to that standard. That legislative review should be completed next year, and there will be more robust changes coming forward to this House.

This is but one tool that we're using to improve our long-term care facilities. We have invested heavily to ensure that they're protected from infectious disease. We have increased human resource capacity. We've invested in healthier food and sourcing local food for our long-term care facilities. We're investing in the capital needs of that sector, and we're going to keep pushing to make sure that seniors under our care and the families who depend on these services get what they need, and that the employees who work for us get the supports that are necessary for them to do their job.

With that said, I move that we move third reading of Bill No. 92 and that it do pass.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 92. All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 95.

Bill No. 95 - Parenting and Support Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 95 be now read a third time and pass.

I just want to note the appreciation of all the staff for the work done in preparing this bill to modernize this legislation to bring it in line and consistent with the federal legislation. I think it makes it very much child-centric and focused on the children and that, I think, is what everybody's [inaudible]. So modernizing and standardizing the federal legislation is actually the hallmark of this legislation, and it is being done in the best interests [inaudible] and the families who have to [Inaudible] this piece of legislation.

I also look forward to hearing from my colleagues as we complete the final step for this bill.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

KIM MASLAND: It is a privilege to offer a few remarks this evening to Bill No. 95. Divorce and separation can be a time filled with tremendous disappointments, emotional turmoil, and a change for the entire family. Through these difficult times and legal proceedings, it is important that children's safety and best interests are paramount in amending and creating legislation to ensure the focus is on the child or the children.

This piece of legislation presented in this House by the Minister of Justice and his department is how legislation should be created. They identified a need for the existing legislation to be amended to bring our legislation more in line with the federal Divorce Act, the need for language updates to support positive parenting arrangements with words like "parenting time" and "decision-making responsibility" to replace words like "custody."

They listened to Nova Scotians and, through supportive consultation, they were able to even add more to this piece of legislation - more to reflect what Nova Scotians were looking for.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister of Justice and his department for the work that they have put forth into this bill and to add the Progressive Conservative Party caucus support.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I am pleased to rise and say just a few words in support of this bill. Whenever we can make changes to update legislation to obviously be in line with federal legislation, but also to acknowledge changing family structures and new understandings of parenthood, I think it is important and admirable that we do so.

I would echo the minister and my colleague in thanking the staff for the hard work put into this and, in particular, for the amendments that came in after consultation with Mi'kmaw communities. I think it was really wonderful to see the department respond to that and respond in a sensitive way.

The consultation was good, and we are pleased to support the bill.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Just very quickly. I would like to thank my colleagues who have spoken on this legislation, both this evening on third reading but also throughout the legislative process to date. I appreciate the recognition of the work and the consultation that has gone into this legislation, but also, again, recognizing the work of not just those of us in this Legislature, but those in the field, so to speak, in the department, who have done the groundwork to make it happen, but also those organizations and community groups that have provided input through the [inaudible] to make the bill what it is.

So, with those few words, I move to close debate on third reading of Bill No. 95.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 95. All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 85.

Bill No. 85 - Securities Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 85, amendments to the Securities Act, be now read a third time and do pass.

Amendments to the Securities Act will ensure that Nova Scotian investors gain more protections, consistent with best practices across the country. These new provisions will give the Nova Scotia Securities Commission stronger compliance and enforcement abilities. Statutory offences are being created for obstructing or interfering with hearings, investigations, or examinations and for aiding, abetting or counselling a person or a company to breach provincial securities laws.

These actions reflect Nova Scotia's commitment to harmonize with securities regulations across the country. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MURRAY RYAN: Mr. Speaker, for Nova Scotia to continue to encourage investment in our province, investors must have confidence in our regulatory framework and the integrity of the system. Bill No. 85 serves to increase this confidence through several avenues.

First, the bill is part of the result of changes made in other Canadian jurisdictions. This bill is intended to harmonize Nova Scotia's securities laws with these jurisdictions. Increased harmonization will decrease the possibility for confusion on the part of investors and places us on a level playing field in attracting investment.

The bill also provides for new statutory offences or an obstruction of securities hearings and investigations, as well as providing protection for whistleblowers who alert the commission of wrongdoing.

Any steps that serve to strengthen our securities regulations make Nova Scotia more attractive to investors and investment in our province. This plays such a key role in economic growth and our future.

With that, Mr. Speaker, the amendments put forward in this bill are acceptable. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and indicate the NDP caucus' support of this bill.

My colleague ran through the details, as did the minister. I don't think I need to do that again, other than to say that we were particularly pleased to see the whistleblower protection and that the best practices and recommendations from the Canadian Securities Administrators were followed.

We will be supporting this bill. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I now rise and move to close third reading on Bill No. 85, amendments to the Securities Act.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 85. All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 87.

Bill No. 87 - Pension Benefits Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 87, amendments to the Pension Benefits Act, be now read a third time and do pass.

It will be easier, faster, and less costly for Nova Scotians in need to access their locked-in pension funds in the future. These amendments and regulations will enable financial institutions to directly approve applications.

Nova Scotians who are requesting unlocking on the basis of low income will require less documentation. Through the regulations, we are eliminating a \$116.65 government fee to process applications. This is consistent with government's strong and ongoing commitment to reducing red tape. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

[10:00 p.m.]

MURRAY RYAN: This bill not only brings Nova Scotia in line with other jurisdictions with regard to financial-hardship clauses but also removes the superintendent from the process. It should be noted that Nova Scotia is currently the only jurisdiction that requires a superintendent of pensions to approve these claims.

The removal of the need to seek the approval of the superintendent of one's financial hardship and enabling a person to deal solely with their financial institutions to make this determination could serve to speed up the process and reduce a layer of stress and bureaucracy that the individual must deal with.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, the amendments contained within this bill will make for a more timely and efficient process for these types of claims. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Unlike the member for Northside-Westmount, I'm not an accountant. I don't have a finance background. When I look at these bills, I like to think about them from the perspective of my constituents and how they impact their lives. This is a good bill, at least as far as we understand it.

Especially with the onset of the pandemic in the early days, as people were losing employment and concerned about their future, I think many MLAs in this Chamber would have had people approaching them about accessing funds in their pensions. Even though theoretically that was possible, practically it wasn't really. It was just too difficult of a process. It was costly. It was complicated. It was time consuming, and it was very difficult.

The intent of this bill, as we understand it, is to simplify that and to remove the superintendent. We're certainly hopeful that that will streamline the process. Time will tell. It does, again, seem to be best practice.

We hope that people won't have to access their pensions because - of course, there's a reason that they have them - but that people will have access to their own funds in exigent circumstances is a good thing.

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

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Mr. Speaker, I now move third reading for the final time and that Bill No. 87 do pass.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 87. All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, this concludes the government business for today. I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow, Friday, April 16, 2021, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 11:59 p.m.

Following the daily routine and Question Period, business will include the continuation of the Committee of the Whole and Subcommittee on Supply, followed by Committee of the Whole House on Bills to consider Bill Nos. 98, 103, 105, and 112.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise to meet again tomorrow, Friday, April 16th, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 11:59 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned until tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.

[The House rose at 10:05 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 534**

By: Colton LeBlanc (Argyle-Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on December 12, 2020, Chandelle Madden and Matthew Atkinson welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Chandelle Madden and Matthew Atkinson on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 535

By: Colton LeBlanc (Argyle-Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on February 7, 2020, Erin Goodwin and Jocelin d'Eon welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Erin Goodwin and Jocelin d'Eon on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 536

By: Colton LeBlanc (Argyle-Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on December 27, 2020, Jessica and Andrew Comeau welcomed their twin boys into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jessica and Andrew Comeau on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 537

By: Colton LeBlanc (Argyle-Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on April 12, 2020, Keisha Deveau and Marcel d'Entremont welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Keisha Deveau and Marcel d'Entremont on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 538

By: Colton LeBlanc (Argyle-Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on September 29, 2020, Lauren and Jacob Muise welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Lauren and Jacob Muise on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 539

By: Colton LeBlanc (Argyle-Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on September 23, 2020, Natalia and Jared d'Entremont welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Natalia and Jared d'Entremont on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 540

By: Colton LeBlanc (Argyle-Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on April 15, 2020, Raven and Logan d'Entremont welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Raven and Logan d'Entremont on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 541

By: Colton LeBlanc (Argyle-Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on September 24, 2020, Rebecca Porter and Holden Nickerson welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Rebecca Porter and Holden Nickerson on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 542

By: Colton LeBlanc (Argyle-Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on October 16, 2020, Rejeanne and Brad Donovan welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Rejeanne and Brad Donovan on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 543

By: Colton LeBlanc (Argyle-Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on January 29, 2020, Shawna and Damien Pothier welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Shawna and Damien Pothier on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 544

By: Colton LeBlanc (Argyle-Barrington)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on January 7, 2020, Stacey Challoner and Trevor Vacon welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Stacey Challoner and Trevor Vacon on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 545

By: Colton LeBlanc (Argyle-Barrington)

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

Whereas five years ago Tusket resident Miguel d'Eon and relative Mark Dunkley came up with the idea of making and selling prints of iconic local area landmarks and items and embed them with maps of roads, rivers, and lakes; and

Whereas their new company, Saltwreck, was an immediate success with their prints being featured in hotels, stores, and gift shops across Atlantic Canada, with the bulk of their sales from their online stores; and

Whereas Saltwreck has gone national and is considering expanding throughout the world with new online stores offering similar product in other countries;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Miguel d'Eon and Mark Dunkley on their successful business venture and wish hem continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 546

By: Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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 McCulloch Education Centre went above and beyond their normal duties during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas this public service was done of their own accord and at personal risk to themselves and to their families; and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant extra work and time commitment on their part, preparing both in-person and online lesson plans and in extra cleaning and sanitizing of the school;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the administration, teachers, and staff of McCulloch Education Centre for being committed to serving our students and our community beyond their regular obligations, for putting their own health at personal risk, and for placing the needs of others before their own.

RESOLUTION NO. 547

By: Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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 Northumberland Regional High School went above and beyond their normal duties during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas this public service was done of their own accord and at personal risk to themselves and to their families; and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant extra work and time commitment on their part, preparing both in-person and online lesson plans and in extra cleaning and sanitizing of the school;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the administration, teachers, and staff of Northumberland Regional High School for being committed to serving our students and our community beyond their regular obligations, for putting their own health at personal risk, and for placing the needs of others before their own.

RESOLUTION NO. 548

By: Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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 Pictou Academy went above and beyond their normal duties during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas this public service was done of their own accord and at personal risk to themselves and to their families; and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant extra work and time commitment on their part, preparing both in-person and online lesson plans and in extra cleaning and sanitizing of the school;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the administration, teachers, and staff of Pictou Academy for being committed to serving our students and our community beyond their regular obligations, for putting their own health at personal risk, and for placing the needs of others before their own.

RESOLUTION NO. 549

By: Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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 Salt Springs Elementary School went above and beyond their normal duties during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas this public service was done of their own accord and at personal risk to themselves and to their families; and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant extra work and time commitment on their part, preparing both in-person and online lesson plans and in extra cleaning and sanitizing of the school;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the administration, teachers, and staff of Salt Springs Elementary School for being committed to serving our students and our community beyond their regular obligations, for putting their own health at personal risk, and for placing the needs of others before their own.

RESOLUTION NO. 550

By: Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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 Scotsburn Elementary School went above and beyond their normal duties during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas this public service was done of their own accord and at personal risk to themselves and to their families; and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant extra work and time commitment on their part, preparing both in-person and online lesson plans and in extra cleaning and sanitizing of the school;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the administration, teachers, and staff of Scotsburn Elementary School for being committed to serving our students and our community beyond their regular obligations, for putting their own health at personal risk, and for placing the needs of others before their own.

RESOLUTION NO. 551

By: Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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 West Pictou Consolidated went above and beyond their normal duties during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas this public service was done of their own accord and at personal risk to themselves and to their families; and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant extra work and time commitment on their part preparing both in-person and online lesson plans and in extra cleaning and sanitizing of the school;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the administration, teachers and staff of West Pictou Consolidated for being committed to serving our students and our community beyond their regular obligations, for putting their own health at personal risk, and for placing the needs of others before their own.

RESOLUTION NO. 552

By: Kim Masland (Queens-Shelburne)

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

Whereas on December 13th, 2020, Sarah Smith celebrated her 108th birthday, making her the oldest resident in Queens County; and

Whereas this incredible lady sets a shining example of strength, resilience, beauty, kindness and friendship;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in wishing beautiful Sarah Smith a very happy belated 108th birthday.

RESOLUTION NO. 553

By: Kim Masland (Queens-Shelburne)

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

Whereas the Kiwanis Club of Liverpool celebrated 90 years of serving the community of Queens on December 2, 2020; and

Whereas the incredible volunteers of this club are dedicated to improving the lives of children; and

Whereas Kiwanis empowers members to pursue creative ways to serve the needs of children, fighting hunger, improving literacy, and offering guidance;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating the Kiwanis Club of Liverpool on this milestone anniversary and thank these volunteers for all they do for our community.

RESOLUTION NO. 554

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 Danielle Kerr, a resident of Tantallon Woods and teacher at Atlantic Memorial - Terence Bay Elementary School, decided in January 2020, it would be the year to change herself and follow her lifetime goal of participating in the Blue Nose Marathon; and

Whereas Danielle started the year well with a training schedule by running four to five times a week, and never expected COVID-19 to cancel all marathons for the year; and

Whereas Danielle was determined to continue her dream and fulfill it with a positive community outcome by mapping her own marathon while collecting for the local food bank with her family following behind her on the marathon date, May 30, 2020, in a truck collecting 222 bags of food items from residents along the way for the St. Margaret's Bay Food Bank, in addition to receiving \$10,257 in donations to feed over 400 families;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly to join me in thanking Danielle Kerr for her community support and congratulate her on finding a way to enhance her own betterment while serving her community at a very difficult time.

RESOLUTION NO. 555

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 in 1994, Queen Elizabeth II created the Exemplary Service Medal program to honour the men and women who work in high-risk jobs that enhance Canada's public safety; and

Whereas James Wells and Kelsey Wells, from Brookside, were among the twenty-one Nova Scotian paramedics awarded the Emergency Medical Services Exemplary Service Medal by Lt. Governor Arthur J. LeBlanc for their dedication to the health and safety of all Nova Scotians; and

Whereas these paramedics have dedicated their careers to providing high-quality care to Nova Scotians in their time of greatest need, sometimes at their own personal risk, and as Francine Butts a recipient at the awards ceremony summed it up well by stating, "As a paramedic, you can share in life's most precious and unfair moments all in the same day with people you just met.";

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly to join me thanking and recognizing James Wells and Kelsey Wells and their colleagues for the extraordinary work they do to keep all Nova Scotians safe.

RESOLUTION NO. 556

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 Mabel Davis retired in the fall of 2020 from the Halifax Transition House Association (Bryony House) after 32 years of dedicated service to women and children; and

Whereas it is important to recognize the contribution Ms. Davis has made to women escaping intimate partner abuse by providing safe and secure housing to clients and their children who have faced a wide range of obstacles and challenges in their life; and

Whereas the programs, services, and support systems that Ms. Davis has helped to implement has helped those who are vulnerable to build hope, gain security, and become valued and respected members of our community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly to join me in thanking Ms. Mabel Davis for empowering women to flee abusive intimate relationships, break the cycle of abuse, and strengthen our community.

RESOLUTION NO. 557

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 in 2020, during the early days of COVID-19 and throughout the transition to home schooling, staff members at Ridgecliff Middle School rallied together to ensure all students felt connected, supported, and engaged through daily virtual class times, special on-line social events, made calls and sent emails to check on students having a particularly tough time with the changes; and

Whereas special thanks to Ms. Slaunwhite for writing a personal note to every single student; to Mr. Aucoin for the Trick-Shot-Challenge, which inspired an active lifestyle during COVID-19 restrictions and resulted in several Ridgecliff students being featured on Sportsnet for their talents; and

Whereas Ms. Muise created a Ridgecliff Kitchen Party to celebrate the arts, Mr. Moore and Mr. Abidi for producing a weekly show called The Ridge, which ran for 12 weeks and featured home learning and other strategies for students and parents, highlighted students positively contributing to our community, included students in the design and production of the show, and ultimately maintained a level of engagement with students and their families that went above and beyond their roles as teachers;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly to join me in thanking Ms. Slaunwhite, Mr. Aucoin, Ms. Muise, Mr. Moore, and Mr. Abidi - some of the talented teachers from Ridgecliff Middle School - for their dedication, support, and connection to their students through the COVID-19 home schooling.

RESOLUTION NO. 558

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 Yvonne Varner and Ray Steele have been outstanding and active volunteers with Trinity United Church for years and have extended their outreach and compassion well beyond the parameters of the church and into the community at large; and

Whereas Yvonne, the original organizer of the Community Christmas Tree lighting ceremony in Timberlea, has managed the project and worked with Ray to prepare this event by getting out the lights, ensuring they are in working order, putting them up on the tree, ensuring Santa arrives in an RCMP squad car, preparing cookies, hot chocolate, and carols to welcome the entire community; and

Whereas Yvonne and Ray have teamed up on a number of community events, such as collecting items for Feed Nova Scotia and the BLT School breakfast program; the Mitten Tree event to collect and deliver toys and warm clothes for Brunswick Street Mission; purchasing Christmas gifts for Adsum Centre residents, assisting in the purchase and delivery of items for the women at the Marguerite Centre, and delivering extra food from church dinners to both these facilities; organizing volunteers; and delivering food to local families during the COVID-19 pandemic lock down;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me thanking Yvonne Varner and Ray Steele for their outstanding work and deep commitment to the community.

RESOLUTION NO. 559

By: Lisa Roberts (Halifax-Needham)

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

Whereas Lara Cusson opened Café Lara to great success in November of 2018, quickly becoming a destination for community gathering and conversation in their space located at 2347 Agricola Street; and

Whereas Lara Cusson became a spokesperson and advocate for small businesses in the North End with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, advocating for better resources for the many small businesses in danger of permanently closing due to the many challenges of the pandemic; and

Whereas Café Lara hosted many vendors through pop-up events, displaying their goods in the shop and spreading the word about the need to shop local in support of shops that did have to close their brick and mortar stores because of the COVID-19 pandemic closures and related losses;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Lara Cusson for generously supplying a space for small business owners to operate markets and generate much needed income in their time of need, and for incorporating a spirit of community in her business and actions.

RESOLUTION NO. 560

By: Lisa Roberts (Halifax-Needham)

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

Whereas Scotia Pharmacy has been an integral part of North End Halifax since July 2011, providing essential goods and services; and

Whereas Peter Jorna and his staff work tirelessly to ensure that their customers can access medication, food, and other goods, including by providing free delivery for those who need it; and

Whereas Peter Jorna works collaboratively with other health providers working in harm reduction, treats his customers with respect, and his staff fairly;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly congratulate and thank Peter Jorna and the Scotia Pharmacy staff for all they have done for their community, before and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESOLUTION NO. 561

By: Tory Rushton (Cumberland South)

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

Whereas 2020 was a year like no other and there was still much need for rescue teams to be ready at a moment's notice; and

Whereas the Springhill Ground Search and Rescue team followed all public protocols that would see a safe and healthy environment for all if the team were to be put into action; and

Whereas the Springhill Ground Search and Rescue team continues to maintain a high level of professionalism and dedication to training and their community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize and thank the leadership and continued dedication of the Springhill Ground Search and Rescue Team, and wish them continued safety in the years to come.

RESOLUTION NO. 562

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance works to support Nova Scotia's seafood industry and the companies that are an essential part of our provincial economy; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance is working with its membership to find new seafood products and markets worldwide for our high-quality seafood; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance is working on research and market diversification for underutilized and under-marketed fish and seafood products in the European Union and other areas of the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the efforts and accomplishments of the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance for its efforts to help our companies diversify and strengthen their business in Europe and worldwide.

RESOLUTION NO. 563

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's aquaculture industry continues to produce seafood during the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing food security in the province; and

Whereas the Public Health measures put in place to combat the pandemic create a unique situation with both economic and social consequences for the aquaculture industry and our coastal communities; and

Whereas businesses such as We'koqma'q First Nation and Cooke Aquaculture continued to product and supply trout and salmon to local grocery stores, and Bill and Stanley Oyster Company delivered a retail oyster package for grocery when direct-to-restaurant sales declined;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the efforts and accomplishments of the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance for its efforts to help our companies diversify and strengthen their business in Europe and worldwide.

RESOLUTION NO. 564

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas the 49- foot Chief William Saulis sank in the waters of the Bay of Fundy when returning from fishing scallops, and all six crew members were tragically lost; and

Whereas there was a valiant search coordinated by the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre in Halifax and carried out by others who responded when the vessel's automated emergency beacon was activated on December 15th near Delaps Cove; and

Whereas community members rallied to support the families and friends in whatever way they were needed as the search continued for lost crew members;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize and express its deepest sympathy to the families of the lost crew of the Chief William Saulis and the entire community.

RESOLUTION NO. 565

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas the Centre for Marine Applied Research (CMAR) collects data on important environmental parameters to assist aquaculture operators in choosing optimal locations for fish, shellfish, and marine plant cultivation, and to improve productivity of current operations; and

Whereas since 2017, CMAR has measure the environmental conditions of coastal waters throughout the province such as temperature, dissolved oxygen, and salinity under the Coastal Monitoring Program, which supports science-based development of the aquaculture industry; and

Whereas CMAR maintains and supports more than 40 sensor stings in coastal areas form St. Mary's Bay in Digby County to Lennox Passage in Richmond County, and the raw data is available on Nova Scotia's Open Data Portal;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize the Centre for Marine Applied Research and its work to support the sustainable development of coastal resources in Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 566

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas a prolonged lack of rain through the Antigonish area during June to September 2020 resulted in extremely low water levels at Frasers Mills Fish Hatchery, and in late July, contingency planning took place to manage the risks associated with a prolonged drought that has not been seen since 2001; and

Whereas water use at the hatchery was reduced and reused over a period of weeks by increasing the fish density, early stocking of fingerling trout and salmon, moving stock to other hatcheries, and 5,000 speckled trout broodstock had to be transferred to cages that staff built and erected at Lochaber Lake to prevent losing all production for 2021; and

Whereas throughout this increasingly stressful scenario, staff remained committed to saving the 2020 stock and worked tirelessly to manage the fish onsite, secure the safety of fish transferred to cages, and bring them back for spawning by securing auxiliary pumps to pump reused water - a task that required refueling gas-powered pumps every three hours, all hours of day and night, seven days a week, for weeks on end;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize that this is an exceptional level of commitment and is a testament to the dedication and professionalism of the staff at the Frasers Mills Fish Hatchery.

RESOLUTION NO. 567

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas in 2019, Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture staff captured smallmouth bass from Piper Lake, a headwater lake of the St. Mary's River, marking the first occurrence of illegally introduced smallmouth bass in this important trout and salmon river that is connected to more than 100 lakes within the St. Mary's River; and

Whereas inland DFA staff immediately developed a rapid response plan with four objectives: containment, determine spread within the St. Mary's River, control by targeted removals, and eradication of all smallmouth bass from Piper Lake to prevent their spread into the St. Mary's system; and

Whereas DFA technicians and biologists worked to build the specialized equipment and get the required certification training, and senior staff consulted with other government agencies, the Mi'kmaq, and stakeholders to seek support, acquire permits, and keep them informed about the project;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the staff of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Lands and Forestry in their innovative and collaborative approach to successfully eradicating smallmouth bass and saving one of the most important salmon and trout rivers in Nova Scotia from this destructive invasive species.

RESOLUTION NO. 568

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas over several decades, acid precipitation has devastated fish populations in dozens of rivers in southwest and eastern Nova Scotia, which has resulted in the loss of valuable economic opportunities for rural Nova Scotians that the sportfishery provides; and

Whereas initial efforts to counteract the effects of acid rain by using a lime doser to add powdered lime directly into the river were unsuccessful; and

Whereas as a result of the leadership of Dr. Edmund Halfyard, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Salmon Association and other institutions and NGOs, this project has grown to encompass recover plans for eight major river systems and is widely recognized as the most successful acid rain mitigation project in North America;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the staff of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, the Department of Lands and Forestry, the Nova Scotia Salmon Association, and Dr. Edmund Halfyard for their commitment to restoring salmon and trout populations in Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 569

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

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

Whereas the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, under the Nova Scotia Seafood brand, launched a digital campaign building awareness of our premium seafood, generating leads for our seafood exporters in the key export markets of Spain and South Korea; and

Whereas due to the global pandemic, Nova Scotia seafood exporters pivoted from traditional export development activities, such as trade shows and trade missions, to digital campaigns that were vital for lead generation for our suppliers; and

Whereas the campaign generated 74 leads for Nova Scotia seafood exporters and the campaign successfully in-drove traffic to the Nova Scotia Seafood website, which saw a 564 per cent increase in site users and a 512 per cent increase in sessions over the previous 42 days;

Therefore be it resolved that all members this House recognize the export efforts and unwavering resilience of our Nova Scotia seafood exporters.

RESOLUTION NO. 570

By: Hon. Margaret Miller (Hants East)

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

Whereas Elmsdale Design & Print, in time of unspeakable tragedy, offered their services to help raise funds for families of the victims of the mass shooting; and

Whereas they raised over \$4000 to help ease financial burdens by creating a design of a tartan map of Nova Scotia and selling the design on different products; and

Whereas they are continuing their efforts to help those affected and will be offering more products in the future;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in applauding the compassion that businesses such as Elmsdale Design & Print showed their fellow Nova Scotians in their time of deepest sorrow.

RESOLUTION NO. 571

By: Hon. Margaret Miller (Hants East)

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

Whereas East Hants is deeply saddened and mourns the loss of Graham Isenor; and

Whereas Graham was an integral part of the sports community, being inducted into the East Hants Sport Hall of Fame not once, but three different times as an athlete, coach/manager, and builder; and

Whereas Graham was also a founding sponsor of the East Hants Sport Heritage Society and also was a generous supporter to any sport organization in need of financial support;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in honouring a man who dedicated his life not just to family, but to lasting memories he gave through his love of sports.

RESOLUTION NO. 572

By: Hon. Margaret Miller (Hants East)

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

Whereas Crafty Owl Artisans Market has taken off quickly since its concept inception; and

Whereas local artists now have a place they can proudly display and sell their wares at the shop located in Shubenacadie; and

Whereas Marianne Stewart is pleased with her business venture to-date and is excited to have her shop add more local artists and attract more customers;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Marianne on her growing business and her desire to help artists have a place to grow their clientele.

RESOLUTION NO. 573

By: Hon. Margaret Miller (Hants East)

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

Whereas it is with sorrow we mourn the passing of Merlin White; and

Whereas we shall always remember the amount of passion and hard work he poured into his community; and

Whereas Merlin built and maintained the ball field on Colbert Road, one of the many factors that led to Merlin's induction into the East Hants Sport Hall of Fame;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in paying tribute to Merlin White, whose passion will be remembered for many years to come.

RESOLUTION NO. 574

By: Hon. Margaret Miller (Hants East)

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

Whereas Elmsdale Design & Print, in time of unspeakable tragedy, offered their services to help raise funds for families of victims of the mass shooting; and

Whereas they raised over \$4000 to help ease financial burdens by creating a design of a tartan map of Nova Scotia and selling the design on different products; and

Whereas they are continuing their efforts to help those affected and will be offering more products in the future;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in applauding the compassion businesses such as Elmsdale Design & Print showed their fellow Nova Scotians in their time of deepest sorrow.

RESOLUTION NO. 575

By: Hon. Keith Irving (Kings South)

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

Whereas most parents are all too familiar with those nervous years when teenagers in the house announce their interest in getting a driver's licence; and

Whereas in Wolfville we have been fortunate to have the option of putting the delicate job of teaching our children to drive into the very capable hands of a local company, Apple Valley Driving School, owned by Martha Valiquette; and

Whereas for the past 15 years Martha has instructed thousands of our young citizens in safe driving practices, and many parents are indebted to her patient and skillful instruction;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend congratulations to Martha Valiquette on her retirement, and thank her for her contribution to keeping our community safe with skilled and alert drivers.

RESOLUTION NO. 576

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Agriculture)

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

Whereas Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month is March, which encourages students in all grades to learn and celebrate Canada's agriculture, began in Nova Scotia and is marking its 10th anniversary this year; and

Whereas by hearing stories of how our food is grown, students will better understand the importance of producing food locally and learn about the opportunities in agriculture at the same time; and

Whereas hands-on, curriculum-based lesson plans with an agriculture focus are currently being delivered at all Grade levels from P-12 in Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the important work that Agriculture in the Classroom - Nova Scotia is doing to promote an understanding of agriculture and the importance of locally grown food, which in turn encourages students to consider careers in the agriculture industry.

RESOLUTION NO. 577

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Agriculture)

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

Whereas women play an important and pivotal leadership role in the operations of the modern agriculture business of today; and

Whereas the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Canada's first female Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food welcomed panelists and participants to a discussion on Women

in Agriculture - Celebrating Women's Leadership in Agriculture, moderated by Faith Matchett, Farm Credit Canada; and

Whereas a panel comprised of Cathy Munroe of Bramble Hill Farm, Shivani Dhamika of Shivani's Kitchen, Martha Casey of Volta Labs, and Samantha Iannette of Tuckamore Homestead - all Nova Scotia women entrepreneurs and innovation leaders - explained their unique perspectives on entrepreneurship, leadership, and the importance of mentorship;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the efforts and accomplishments of the women who make significant contributions to Nova Scotia agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 578

By: Hon. Keith Colwell (Agriculture)

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

Whereas the planting, nurturing, and harvesting, followed by the packaging and processing of our agriculture products is necessary to ensure a sustainable supply of food for Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the agriculture sector of the Nova Scotian economy is dependent on a healthy and dependable number of Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) to work on our farms and in our processing plants; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, and Perennia staff collaborated and worked closely with farmers and processors;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly recognize the efforts and accomplishments of the men and women who work in these organizations and on the farms to maintain a healthy TFW workforce to ensure the security of our food supply.