



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Keith Bain

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First Session

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2021

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2021

Sixty-fourth General Assembly

First Session

9:00 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Keith Bain

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Angela Simmonds, Lisa Lachance

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

RESOLUTION NO. 24

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

Whereas October 18th to 24th is Waste Reduction Week in Canada and in Nova Scotia and is an opportunity to recognize that solid waste and the needless waste of resources are global threats to our environment, and to encourage innovation and new ways to reduce our environmental footprint and create cleaner, healthier communities; and

Whereas the Province of Nova Scotia is committed to supporting Nova Scotians, communities and municipalities in reducing our waste, conserving resources, and helping to create awareness about sustainable living; and

Whereas Divert Nova Scotia has been a leader in our province for over 25 years, helping to drive a culture of recycling, creating healthier and more environmentally sustainable communities through environment stewardship, education, and programming, and helping to make Nova Scotia a recognized global innovator in waste diversion solutions. Divert Nova Scotia, together with municipalities and communities, have organized events this week throughout the province that promote waste reduction, resource conservation, and sustainable living, thereby now driving a culture of refusing to waste;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature join me in thanking Divert Nova Scotia and our municipalities, communities and businesses for drawing attention to the importance of waste reduction and the circular economy, and that each of us in this House also commits to doing our part to make waste reduction a habit by reducing, repairing, reusing, recycling, and composting at work and in our homes.

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. 25

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

Whereas Nova Scotia's aquaculture industry continued to grow in 2020, including employment, which increased from 644 part-time and full-time jobs in 2019 to 877 jobs in 2020; and

Whereas the aquaculture production was valued at \$90.2 million in 2020, up 10 per cent from \$82.1 million in 2019; and

Whereas production volume increased 24 per cent to 12.6 million kilograms in 2020, from 10.2 million kilograms produced in 2019;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize that Nova Scotia's aquaculture industry delivers significant economic benefits in Nova Scotia, mainly within rural and coastal communities where well-paying full-time jobs are in need.

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.

With the unanimous consent of the House, we're going to revert back to Tabling Reports, Regulations and Other Papers.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and members. In my capacity as Attorney General of Nova Scotia, I hereby beg leave to table the amendments to Nova Scotia Civil Procedures Rules.

Also in my capacity as Attorney General of Nova Scotia, I hereby beg leave to table the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia's Annual Report.

THE SPEAKER: The reports are tabled.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 43 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 293 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Motor Vehicle Act. (Hon. Kim Masland)

Bill No. 44 - Entitled an Act to Provide for the Development of a Charter for Cape Breton Regional Municipality. (Hon. Derek Mombourquette)

Bill No. 45 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 38 of the Acts of 2011, the Medical Act, Respecting Sexual Misconduct. (Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin)

Bill No. 46 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 293 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Motor Vehicle Act, Respecting Municipal Speed Limits. (Braedon Clark)

Bill No. 47 - Entitled an Act Respecting Police Street Checks. (Suzy Hansen)

Bill No. 48 - Entitled an Act to Clarify the Title to Town of Lunenburg School Annex Lands on the Tannery Road. (Hon. Susan Corkum-Greek)

Bill No. 49 - Entitled an Act Improving Public Access to Automated Defibrillators. (Susan Leblanc)

Bill No. 50 - An Act to Amend Chapter 12 of the Acts of 1997, the Ardnamurchan Club Act. (Hon. Colton LeBlanc)

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

JONATANSON, DEBI: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize one of the most beloved members of the Nova Scotia film community, Debi Jonatanson.

Debi was the first female transportation coordinator in eastern Canada. She worked for over 30 years alongside her husband Kelly, her daughter Kristin, and her son Michael. Debi cherished her profession and embodied all that was good about the Nova Scotia film community.

Her quiet strength, resilience and kindness taught others about the importance of working together and taking care of one another. She was the “mum” to everyone in her film family and beyond.

On August 9th, the set called out a “Work Finish” for Debi. She worked to the very end and passed away peacefully, surrounded by her family. Her legacy of professionalism, kindness, and passion for her work live on in her daughter, Kristin, transportation coordinator, and her son, Michael, transportation captain.

[9:15 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

**HICKS, HANNAH:
NEW COLLABORATIVE ART SERIES - CONGRATS.**

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I’ve spoken about Bedford artist Hannah Hicks a number of times here in this Chamber. Hannah paints beautiful watercolours that could be found framed or on cards and other products in stores in numerous Canadian provinces, and even the Yukon.

Recently, Hannah began a new series called Hannah & Friends Collaborative Art Cards in celebration of Down Syndrome Awareness Month. The three other artists - Ava, Max, and Malcolm - have completed two black line drawings each, and Hannah provides the watercolours.

I really enjoy seeing the various designs as Hannah introduces the new cards to her fans online. They’re whimsical and sweet, which is not surprising for someone who describes herself as a happiness artist. I should note that Hannah donates some of the proceeds of every Hannah & Friends card pack to organizations that support people with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, people can find Hannah’s work online at hannahhicksart.com, and I want to congratulate Hannah on another thoughtful venture.

THE SPEAKER: The member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier.

RISING GAS PRICES: NEED FOR HIGHER INCOMES - RECOG.

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, people in Nova Scotia are being squeezed by rising costs and stagnant wages. Last night, gas prices in Nova Scotia hit a new record high, a minimum of \$1.47 a litre in HRM, with some gas stations in Cape Breton coming in above \$1.49 a litre. People are worried about the impact rising costs for gasoline and food

are having on their family's budgets, not to mention the rising cost of renting or buying a home.

Mr. Speaker, we need higher wages in Nova Scotia. We need a \$15 minimum wage. We need to move toward a living wage for every single person in our province. With prices on the rise, incomes must rise, too. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton East.

**TIERNEY, JANELLE: 1st SEASON WITH
C.B. CAPERS WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM - BEST WISHES**

HON. BRIAN COMER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Janelle Tierney of Sydney River on her first season with the Cape Breton Capers women's soccer team.

This year, Janelle made the transition from high school soccer to university level, even after suffering an injury to her hip last Fall. She has indicated she feels the team is coming together and improving each day and hoping to continue this route for the remainder of the season.

I stand here today to extend my best wishes to Janelle and her teammates on their continued determination and wish them all the best this season.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

CAPE BRETON MLAs - BEST WISHES

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I just want to rise in my place and really congratulate everybody in the House, but I do this every time to congratulate the kind of unofficial Cape Breton caucus of MLAs who are here. Some of us have been here for a number of years. We have a few new faces, too, as well, so I just want to say to all of you, I look forward to working with you.

I will recognize the two Cape Breton MLAs who are in Cabinet. I spent four years as a cabinet minister in Cape Breton, and I just want to say good luck to you. (Applause)

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

**WOZZLES: CANADA'S OLDEST BOOK STORE RELOCATION -
BEST WISHES**

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, on this last day of Small Business Week, I rise today to recognize Wozzles, Canada's oldest children's bookstore, which first opened in

1978. Over the years, children and their big people have been able to share their curiosities. Wozzles's staff research and fulfill customers' orders all over the world.

Wozzles was Bookseller of the Year, and twice selected as Specialty Bookseller of the Year by the Canadian Booksellers Association, won the silver award from the Halifax Chamber of Commerce in 2009, and won gold in both 2017 and 2018 in the Coast Best of Halifax Awards.

Wozzles is moving this weekend, and Halifax Citadel-Sable Island's loss is Halifax Chebucto's gain. I ask that the members of the House join me in recognizing the impact of Wozzles on family reading in Nova Scotia and send our best wishes for a successful move.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

MOREHOUSE, JOHN & NANCY: LOSS OF HOME - BEST WISHES

HON. JILL BALSER: I wish to share my remorse for John and Nancy Morehouse as they lost their home due to a house fire on October 5th in Digby while they were away at their daughter's surgery at the IWK. The family has no insurance for their home and are starting over on a limited income.

The local community has come together to collect money, clothing, and household items for the family. There has also been a GoFundMe page created for individuals to donate. When communities come together, a spirit of cooperation takes hold and residents work together. There's nothing else like it. And that is exactly what has happened for John and Nancy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature join me in conveying best wishes to Nancy and John and their family. It won't be easy, but my hope is that they have great success in building their new lives.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

**LAYES, MARY:
RECIP. OF SANOFI BIOGENIUS GRANT - CONGRATS.**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: I rise to recognize Mary Layes, a science teacher at Five Bridges Junior High School in Hubley. On behalf of the school, Mary applied for a grant and won \$50,000 to improve science learning.

Five Bridges Junior High was one of only four schools in Canada to be awarded the prestigious Sanofi Biogenius Grant. Part of the funding from this grant will go towards refurbishing the science lab, and the science team will be busy consulting with students to

determine what other upgrades will be incorporated, creating a more accessible and collaborative space.

Students are also hoping to purchase devices to explore and promote coding, maker kits, and more support to roll out a new science curriculum. This funding will also enhance more hands-on learning and exploration in the classroom.

Sanofi Biogenius Canada is a national youth science initiative that started in 1993. It started as a science-based competition for Canadian high school students and has grown to offer grants that aim to improve access to science equipment and learning, resources to create more interest in science, technology, and engineering.

I'd like members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Mary Layes on her accomplishment for receiving this grant and improving the quality of the science program at Five Bridges Junior High.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HMCS KOOTENAY: 52nd ANNIV. OF EXPLOSION - RECOG.

HON. STEVE CRAIG: I rise today in commemoration of the 52nd anniversary of the explosion and fire on board HMCS *Kootenay*.

While on manoeuvres off the coast of England, the starboard gearbox exploded. The resulting smoke and fire led to nine deaths and 53 injuries among the 240 crew members on board the vessel. All members were based in Halifax at the time of the explosion.

The HMCS *Kootenay* stands as the biggest loss of life during peacetime for the Canadian Forces. If you live in Nova Scotia, it is very likely that you or someone you know is related to a member of that crew. My cousin's husband, Leading Seaman Pierre (Pete) Bourret, lost his life that day.

It is a memorial that touches so many. It is a day that we honour on October 23rd every year.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing HMCS *Kootenay* Day, tomorrow.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): I suggest a moment of silence in memory of the tragedy.

THE SPEAKER: We join in a moment of silence.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

**N.S. PUBLIC HEALTH MOBILE UNIT:
ORGANIZ. OF CLINICS - THANKS**

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to acknowledge Nova Scotia Public Health, more specifically the mobile unit. This past weekend, I saw them in action myself. A mobile clinic was held at St. Thomas Baptist Church in North Preston on Sunday. I want to thank the amazing team: Heather, Sue, Emma, Meg, Kyle, Tariq, and Aswan - thank you for all your work in our community.

I would also like to acknowledge Holly Gillis, the Public Health director of the mobile health unit. Holly has been active in our community organizing the clinics since the beginning of COVID-19 and has continued to support us through every wave, so thank you.

I ask the members of the House of Assembly to join me in recognizing the amazing work that Nova Scotia Public Health is doing for our communities to stay safe.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

**DART. S. SMALL BUSINESSES:
OPER. DURING PANDEMIC - RECOG.**

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, on the last day of Small Business Week, I rise again to recognize the small businesses in Dartmouth South. We are so lucky in Dartmouth to have a small business community largely made up of locals who live in our community. We also have the creative and responsive Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission team that works tirelessly to bring events and people to the downtown core year-round, often together with Alderney Landing.

Small businesses and their customers have had to adapt to the constantly changing rules for safe operation during this pandemic and yet continue to show a profound dedication to helping each other and the community. These entrepreneurs have demonstrated grit and resilience as they have taken on the extra burdens this pandemic has created in order to allow their patrons to enjoy the things that help them feel some semblance of normalcy: dining out, shopping, self-care, and safe gathering.

Please join me in thanking the downtown Dartmouth small business community for keeping us well cared for, entertained, and very well-fed.

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

**MASTODON RIDGE:
25th ANNIV. FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR FOOD BANKS - RECOG.**

LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the outstanding community contributions of Mastodon Ridge. Situated halfway between the North Pole and the equator, Mastodon Ridge has operated since 1991 as a community hub, a farmers' market, and a gathering place for family fun.

To celebrate its 25th anniversary and recent renovations, Mastodon Ridge hosted a fundraising event from October 1st to 3rd where all mini-golf proceeds raised went to support food banks in the Colchester area. Bill Hay, the owner of Mastodon Ridge, kicked off the fundraising weekend with a \$25,000 donation to Feed Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members to join me in recognizing and celebrating Mastodon Ridge for 25 years of community contributions.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour.

**WALKERS LIVESTOCK FEED & SUPPLIES:
COM. SERV. - CONGRATS.**

HON TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I stand today to bring awareness to Walker's Livestock Feed & Supplies, affectionately known by all of us as just Walker's. Everyone knows the big red barn. They are a family-owned-and-operated business that has played a major role in the Cole Harbour community for the past 39 successful years.

They supply everyone from a full working equestrian farm, your child's pet hamster, to helping you get the greenest lawn in the neighbourhood. The Walkers run their business with a staff of five very hard-working, community-driven individuals. They strongly support the "live local, support local" model.

They have a huge Christmas tree lot every year with some of the proceeds going to Christmas Daddies, just to name one of the organizations they support. Next year will be their 40th year in business and I can't wait to celebrate that huge milestone with them.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of the House to join me in congratulating Walker's on being a long-time member and a huge supporter of the community of Cole Harbour.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**50 THINGS ART ADVENTURE:
EAC 50th ANNIV. CELEB. - CONGRATS.**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring the House's attention to an amazing province-wide art adventure called 50 Things. It's a collaboration between Zuppa Theatre and the Ecology Action Centre and 50 artists or art collectives from around the province, and it celebrates the 50 years of the Ecology Action Centre.

[9:30 a.m.]

The art adventure is a downloaded app that provides them with a map of Nova Scotia and clues to where 50 art projects are located, and they literally are everywhere in the province. There is video, audio, visual arts, sculpture, and more, and all are focused on environmental issues that the Ecology Action Centre has worked on or taken on over the last 50 years. The app provides accessible aids for the seeing and hearing impaired so that more people can enjoy the art.

50 Things is fun, innovative, challenging, and quite beautiful. Congratulations to Zuppa, the EAC, all the artists, and all of the art-adventuring members of the public who have been taking in the project.

I encourage everyone here and everyone out there to download the app and go find some art. The project has been extended to October 31st.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

**D'EON FAMILY: BRANCHES POCKET COMMUNITY PROJECT
IN W. PUBNICO - CONGRATS.**

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate local entrepreneurs from my constituency on establishing a pocket community in West Pubnico. The Branches Pocket Community project is evolving through the hard work of several d'Eon family members, including Adam d'Eon, his sister Monique d'Eon and her husband Carl d'Eon.

This new pocket community offers energy-efficient homes in a community setting, proving hassle-free retirement living for active downsizers.

There is a total of six units on site now, with hopes of getting the next two duplexes by 2022. There is room for approximately 16 additional units. Each unit is grouped around a shared green space. The construction of the community building is under way, which will provide an ideal space for tenants to hold social gatherings.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of this House to join me in congratulating the d'Eons and their team on the achievement and wish them continued success in their future endeavours.

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

EASY STREET DINER: OPENING - CONGRATS.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring attention to the Easy Street Diner on Dutch Village Road in Fairview. The restaurant, which boldly opened this year in the middle of a pandemic, brings a new flare to diner style while keeping menu staples but adding a little panache, such as vegan entrees, to make it their own and offer today's modern tastes.

The location housed the long-time Fairview family restaurant the Astoria, and a tip of a hat to them: Easy Street named their event room the Astoria Room. The décor is bright and in a style that baby boomers remember fondly of the 1950s and 1960s and one that Zennials can still love without any irony.

Owners Kelly-Jo Beck and Lalanya Kaizer worked tirelessly to create a place of comfort and community, and to carve their unique style into the area which is undergoing an amazing redevelopment.

With silent partner Stuart Lally managing the finances of the business, the power couple took on the renovations themselves to create their unique spot in Halifax's vibrant restaurant community, getting rave reviews from their growing list of patrons. Make sure when you go that you try the hamburger: it's Colleen-approved. If you know, you know.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**ROSS, ALEX: FAMILY OVER FAME
ONLINE CLOTHING RETAIL BUS. - CONGRATS.**

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge a young man who I am super proud of and highly respect, Alex Ross, a small business owner and clothing line guru, a young man who is a designer and a rapper - aka Cunny Ross - who was raised by his mother, grandfather and grandmother, in Uniacke Square, where he learned the importance of family. Now he is the brains behind the brand Family Over Fame.

Family Over Fame is an online clothing retailer and the spinoff project from Ross's music career. Alex Ross has been working on Family Over Fame for over five years, shifting focus from music and taking the business very seriously, as it has had a boost of growth.

Alex Ross describes himself as a family man. He says that a lot of people forget about family when they attain fame, he reflected. I feel like a lot of people can relate to the brand because if you don't have family, then what do you have?

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the members to congratulate and wish Mr. Alex Ross great success in all of his future endeavours.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

**HANRAHAN, RON/ISENOR, EARL/LEDWIDGE, FRANCIS:
FIRE DEPT. SERV. - THANKS**

JOHN A. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, volunteer fire departments are crucial organizations in rural communities. Thanks to these dedicated and hard-working volunteers in our community, we know we can rely on their services when called upon.

Today, I wish to recognize Ron Hanrahan, Earl Isenor of Lantz, and Francis Ledwidge of Enfield for their incredible 50 years of service within the community fire departments.

On behalf of the residents of Hants East and the members of this Legislature, I wish to thank these gentlemen for their dedication and service.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

FRIDAY NIGHT OMAHA CREW: BACKBONE OF N.S. - RECOG.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, politics can isolate and shrink your circle of friends. That's why it's important to keep your real friendships close.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the Friday Night Omaha Crew: Rick Jollimore, Greg Bowdrige, Q, Jordan Caslow, Kenny MacFarlane, Johnny Bones, Craig Currie, Rudy, and Dan. This motley crew are hard-working tradespeople and working class, some of whom have made big mistakes in their youth that could have defined them, but they proved the doubters wrong.

Believe me when I say that we don't always agree in politics. In fact, Jordan had a Progressive Conservative sign in his yard during the last election, which I quickly took down. In the end, this crew is salt-of-the-earth, hard-working Nova Scotians - the backbone of our province. To the Friday Night Crew, remember: If you look around the table and you can't find the suckers, it's you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier.

BEC BEARS BOYS & GIRLS SOCCER TEAM: CH'SHIP WINS - CONGRATS.

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the BEC Bears.

Wednesday was a day of celebration for two Breton Education Centre soccer teams. The BEC boys and girls captured the school Sport Nova Scotia Highland Region Division 2 championship titles at the Francis MacKinnon Memorial Field in New Waterford.

The girls team shut down the Dalbrae Academy Dragons in Mabou, 5-0.

The BEC Boys defeated the Strait Area Education Recreation Centre Saints of Port Hawkesbury, 3-2 in overtime.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating both teams in capturing the school Sport Nova Scotia Highland Region Division 2 championship titles.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Tracadie.

**AVERY, JUDE: RECIP. OF BUSINESSWOMEN OF EXCELL.
OF YR. AWARD - CONGRATS.**

HON. GREG MORROW: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Mr. Jude Avery of Larry's River. Jude was recently awarded the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia Award of Excellence for contributions to L'Acadie et la Francophonie de la Nouvelle Écosse.

A retired educator, Jude has continued his passion for his Acadian history, culture, and language by being a champion for the Acadian community. He applied this extensive knowledge while writing his first book in 2003, titled *The Forgotten Acadians*. Jude has been one of the key founders of Festival Savalette, a Summer festival in his Acadian village of Larry's River, and various other community groups.

A dedicated husband, father, and grandfather, Jude is certainly deserving of his award and with another book about to be published, he will continue to carry the torch for his Acadian heritage.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Jude Avery on receiving this much-deserved award. Congratulations, Jude.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

HUNTLEY, LIZ: RECIPIENT OF BUSINESSWOMEN OF EXCELLENCE OF THE YEAR AWARD - CONGRATULATIONS.

HON. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, each year the Annapolis Valley Chamber of Commerce recognizes exceptional women from across the Annapolis Valley who pursue excellence in their respective fields and in their community at the Women of Excellence awards.

Today, I rise to congratulate Liz Huntley, owner of the Swimwear Hut in New Minas, who was awarded the Business Woman of Excellence of the Year 2020-2021. This award recognizes a businesswoman who has demonstrated a positive attitude, outstanding leadership, adaptability, volunteerism, entrepreneurial spirit, and mentorship.

Liz has undergone great personal risk to grow her business while weathering the pandemic, responding to variable consumer tastes, and competing with the increase in e-commerce stores.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Liz Huntley being awarded the Business Woman of Excellence for 2020-2021 and wish her continued success as an entrepreneurial leader in our community.

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

**SPRING GARDEN AREA BUS. ASSOC.:
SUPPORT OF BUSINESS SUCCESS - RECOGNITION.**

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, as a part of Small Business Week, I would like to commend the Spring Garden Area Business Association.

The Spring Garden Area Business Association is the voice of the Spring Garden area, representing member businesses to various levels of government and other key stakeholders in the community. It preserves and enhances the essence and experience of the Spring Garden Road area for members, residents, and visitors by supporting business success through community partnership and resources.

Spring Garden Road is undergoing a positive and exciting transformation. Imagine Spring Garden Road will enhance the street and improve the experience for residents and visitors alike to stroll, shop, and enjoy this popular destination.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to recognize the valuable work of the Spring Garden Area Business Association.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

**CLIFFS OF FUNDY GEOPARK:
RECIP. OF LT. GOV.'S COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARD - RECOG.**

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the UNESCO Geopark in Cumberland and Colchester Counties.

The Geopark has been chosen to receive this year's Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award which is presented to four communities each year. This award is another way to celebrate and show the excellent civic and community spirit shown by people and their communities.

The UNESCO Cliffs of Fundy Geopark spans 165 kilometres of scenic shoreline from Apple River to Portapique River. It boasts over 40 geosites in the stunning examples of the Earth's history like the Wasson Bluff fossils, the minerals, Cape d'Or, the Three Sisters, Five Islands fault, and many more.

Mr. Speaker, this is where your Bay of Fundy experience starts. Please join me in recognizing the UNESCO Cliffs of Fundy Geopark as one of this year's recipients of the Lieutenant Governor's Spirit Award.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Dartmouth.

MICHAUD, EMILY: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

LORELEI NICOLL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Emily Michaud, a community volunteer with the Portland Estates and Hills Residents' Association. In 2020, Emily had a vision to create a free library as a beneficial addition to her community. Her idea was recognized in October of that year, when the Birches Park Little Library was completed after the approval of HRM and the help of community volunteers.

The little library makes books available to residents of all ages. Emily has also been instrumental in keeping up to date the community message centre bulletin board over the past two years.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize volunteers such as Emily who continue to promote and enrich the strong sense of community that exists in Portland Hills and the Cole Harbour area and all the youth in our respective communities across Nova Scotia who are engaged and step up in various ways to get involved and improve the lives of others.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

DELECTABLE DESSERTS: SUCCESS IN BUS. - CONGRATS.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, the first time I tried Delectable Desserts, their delicious and beautiful baked goods were included in one of ACCE's - that's Arts Community, Culture, and Economics - Blackout Boxes, featuring products from Black-owned businesses in HRM.

Located in the Burnside Business Park, Delectable Desserts is co-owned by a couple and parents to four . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. I believe this is the member's third member's statement.

The member can finish, but the Clerk does have two recorded. You can finish.

SUSAN LEBLANC: May I start again?

THE SPEAKER: Yes, please.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, the first time I tried Delectable Desserts, their delicious and beautiful baked goods were included in one of ACCE's - that's Arts Community, Culture, and Economics - Blackout Boxes, featuring products from Black-owned businesses in the HRM.

Located in the Burnside Business Park, Delectable Desserts is co-owned by a couple and parents to four, Dennis and Melissa Mbeba. This family-owned small business makes everything from scratch and with love, including their specialties: buttercream layer cakes, cheesecakes, mousse/truffle cakes, and mini cakes.

Opening their doors in 2017, Delectable Desserts also made giving back to the community a priority and central to their business model. They have partnered with the Change is Brewing company, which advocates for racial inclusion in the craft beverage industry, to create both Black and Indigenous Futures cakes, with funds going back into the community.

As Small Business Week ends, I would like to congratulate Delectable Desserts for their success and thank them for their truly delicious creations.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

**NEWPORT & DIST. RINK COMMISSION:
N.S. VOLUN. AWDS. LUNCHEON RECOG. - CONGRATS.**

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Newport and District Rink Commission and their volunteer board of directors for recently being recognized at the 2021 Nova Scotia Volunteer Awards Luncheon by Lieutenant Governor Arthur J. LeBlanc.

Following the collapse of the original rink on April 1, 2015, these volunteers showed that through working together, much can be achieved for a common purpose. After much hard work and fundraising, the new facility opened in September 2016.

I can't go without also mentioning facility manager Shane Rogers, who worked so closely with me during my time as registrar of the West Hants Minor Hockey Association.

I would ask that all members join me in congratulating both the board of directors of the Newport and District Rink Commission and facility manager Shane Rogers on their volunteer service award and incredible hard work.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

**HALIFAX ARMVIEW RESTAURANT & LOUNGE:
PARTIC. IN HFX. BURGER WEEK - RECOG.**

ALIDUALE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity - this week is Small Business Week and it is Burger Week, and Halifax Armdale constituents have one of the best restaurants in the city. The beauty of this week, Burger Week, is that every dollar that has been raised goes to Feed Nova Scotia.

This House has made decisions, due to COVID-19, to small businesses to close their doors. Now their doors are open.

I will encourage every single member of this House to see Halifax Armview Restaurant and Lounge today after we leave this House, because it's lunchtime.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

BRUNSWICK STREET MISSION: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, I will be going to get Burger Week.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize a community space in Halifax Needham: Brunswick Street Mission. It has been a staple in our community for as long as I can remember.

[9:45 a.m.]

I grew up on Brunswick Street, just a few blocks down in Uniacke Square. We would call it the “grey church” when we were younger. It would be a place for us young people to come and cook and do activities in their gym. It was and still is a community hub.

My mom would access the food bank and the clothing bank when we were younger, and coming into this space we never felt like we didn’t belong. We were always welcomed with a smile, and that meant a lot when your family didn’t have much. To be treated with dignity is all anyone can ask for.

Inspiring hope and dignity, the Brunswick Street Mission continues to inspire a better quality of life through a ministry of care that addresses physical, emotional, practical, and spiritual needs for those experiencing poverty.

I ask that all members join with me in acknowledging the amazing service provider in my Halifax Needham community, the Brunswick Street Mission.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

**HADHAD, ALAA, OMAR & SANA:
RECIPS. OF CDN. CITIZENSHIP - CONGRATS.**

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: I rise today to bring congratulations to Alaa Hadhad and her children, Omar and Sana, who on October 12, 2021, received their Canadian citizenship.

Alaa, Omar, and Sana are Syrian refugees who, along with other family members, made Antigonish home. The Hadhad family were experienced and successful chocolatiers for almost 30 years in Syria before their business was destroyed by bombings. After they moved to Canada, they founded their new chocolate business, the renowned Peace by Chocolate.

It is a privilege for Antigonish to welcome new citizens who bring their unique skills, culture, and traditions to enhance our community. I ask all members to send their congratulations to Alaa, Omar, and Sana as they celebrate being Canadian citizens. (Applause)

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

**1971 SACK. LITTLE LEAGUE ALL-STARS:
SACK. SPORTS HER. HALL OF FAME INDUCTION - CONGRATS.**

BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the 1971 Sackville Little League Baseball All-Stars, who yesterday were inducted into the Sackville Sports Heritage Hall of Fame. This is the first official team that's been inducted since 2014.

I'd recognize Randy Pulisfer, Fred Williams, Larry Woodland, Reggie Oake, Billy MacLellan, Steve Lane, Eddie Peverill, Darrell Jessome, David Wiseman, Thayer Maxwell, Doug Nickerson, John Keizer, Mike Fredericks, Gary Erskine, Jimmy Jenner, Chris Scott, Charlie Clarke, and Steve Williams. Also, coaches Hugh Wiseman, Wally Lemon, Frank Symington, Tom Kelly, Les Mayo, and Harold Lane.

They were inducted into the Sports Heritage Hall of Fame for a superior performance in a 1971 Amherst Invitational Little League tournament. I want to congratulate them on their success in 1971 and thank them for their service to the community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**ALLEN, D./GALLEY, T./LANGILLE, B./AKIN, J./VEINOT, K.:
EHS LONG SERV. AWD. RECIPS. - CONGRATS.**

CHRIS PALMER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate five individuals from Kings West for receiving their Emergency Health Services Long-Service Award.

Emergency Health Services front-line staff were honored through a pre-recorded virtual Long-Service Award ceremony in September. Douglas Allen, Tara Galley, and Bruce Langille received their award for 20 years of service. Jonathan Akin and Kathy Veinot received their award for 25 years of service.

Mr. Speaker and all members of this House, please join me in thanking these hard-working paramedics, and indeed all paramedics in Nova Scotia, for their dedication and commitment to saving lives and coming to the aid of Nova Scotians across this province in their time of need. We can never thank them enough.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

LOCAL HEROES: SAVING OF UNCLE'S LIFE - THANKS

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize local heroes Gary Lowther, Jonah and Jaden Chapman, and Justin Keating. They saved my cousin's life.

Mr. Jimmy Smith worked by his father's side for his entire life. Unfortunately his father, my uncle Wendell Smith, passed away this last February. Recently Jimmy was working alone splitting wood, a practice he has done for years, but something went very wrong and he had a life-threatening accident. Thankfully these men heard his cries for help and saved his life by stopping the bleeding.

I also want to thank our paramedics and all first responders who helped. He was taken by Life Flight to the QEII, where his life was saved but he did have his leg amputated.

Tomorrow, in true Cumberland fashion, our community is coming together for a fundraiser to support Jimmy in the days ahead for his recovery. His family and community will be there for him, like he has always been there for us.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

**COMEAU, DENISE/DEVEAU, KENNETH - DK FARM:
NOUVEAU CENTRE ÉQUESTRE - FÉL.**

RONNIE LEBLANC: M. le président, aujourd'hui j'aimerais profiter de cette occasion pour féliciter Denise Comeau et Kenneth Deveau de la Ferme DK Farm pour l'achèvement de leur nouveau centre équestre. Il y a douze ans depuis la couple a décidé de s'acheter deux chevaux après une balade à cheval une après-midi en Colombie-Britannique.

L'idée de leur entreprise a commencé à germer après qu'ils ont fait construire leur écurie dans leur arrière-cour et ils ont commencé à participer à des concours de chevaux dans la catégorie reining. Avant l'expansion de leurs opérations l'été dernier, ils gardaient en pension et élevaient des chevaux. Désormais, ils pourront entraîner des chevaux dans leur nouvelle bâtisse.

Ferme DK Farm, une entreprise de Clare en pleine croissance, a pris racine il y a douze ans sur un sentier montagnard et a évolué à partir d'un passe-temps que Denise et Kenneth adorent.

Both ones in French here, so I am going to have to pass. (Laughter)

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

**BAIRD, PAGE:
RECIP. OF BIBLE HILL OUTSTANDING COM. SERV. AWD. - THANKS**

DAVE RITCEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Page Baird, a deserving recipient of the Village of Bible Hill's Outstanding Community Service Award. Page Baird

exemplifies outstanding community service. He serves as both the Chair of the Farm Equipment Museum as well as the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Committee.

For more than 27 years, Page has worked tirelessly at the Museum, building displays, repairing artifacts and machinery, organizing volunteers, travelling around the province to inspect donated artifacts, and doing anything else that is required. Today, the Farm Equipment Museum is recognized as having one of the finest collections of farm-related artifacts in Eastern Canada, thanks to the dedication of Mr. Baird's efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Page Baird for his continued dedicated service to the Truro area.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

MOHAN, RATNAM: COM. SERV. - THANKS

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a dedicated volunteer in my community, Ratnam Mohan. Since coming to Canada in 1996, Ratnam has been an active member of the community. She served as president and vice-president of the Indo Canadian Association of Nova Scotia and the South Indian Cultural Association. During her time, Ratnam coordinated a successful Indian gala musical event which saw many popular artists from India come to Canada to share the wonderful Indian culture in Nova Scotia.

Ratnam also volunteers her time at the Keshan Goodman Public Library to teach English through the ESL program and has always been a dedicated volunteer at my annual barbecue.

I would like to thank Ratnam for her work in our community and also for sharing wonderful Indian culture in Nova Scotia.

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

CROWELL, JASON: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. BRIAN WONG: Mr. Speaker, I stand today to recognize Jason Crowell for his commitment to the community of Fall River and area. Jason is a successful business person in the aerotech sector and is continuously looking for ways to expand his business and hire more local people from the community. In addition, he always has several high school co-op students giving real-life experience in his shop.

He works tirelessly to help any organization in the community at their request and he is very involved with the Fall River and Area Business Association. He can even be seen installing flower pots all along our Highway No. 2. There are dozens of them. He will

install them, he will ensure they are watered, and if a young person isn't available to do that, he will be seen in the tractor going along and watering them himself. He also ensures the installation of our community Christmas tree and makes sure that the generator there is always full of gas.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking my dear friend Jason Crowell for his tireless commitment to Fall River and area.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

**SAKALAUSKAS, HERBIE:
WORK FOR POINT EDWARD HALF MARATHON - CONGRATS.**

FRED TILLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Herbie Sakalauskas, race director for the inaugural Point Edward Half Marathon. The race will take place on Saturday, October 23rd, starting at the Riverview Y Service Club. The race will travel through the communities of Westmount, Edwardsville, and Point Edward, finishing at Breton Brewing.

Herbie has worked very hard to get this race up and running, lining up volunteers, and advertising the race, and I urge all residents of Northside-Westmount to come out and cheer on the runners in this great marathon. Please join me in congratulating Herbie and wishing all the runners a great race.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Passage.

JOHNSON, COLTEN: HEALTH CHALLENGES - WELL WISHES

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring recognition to 14-year-old community member Colten Johnson. Colten was diagnosed with osteosarcoma and has been facing serious health challenges related to this cancer since June 2021.

While there was a setback recently that required Colten to have a surgery followed by a round of chemotherapy, his family is very hopeful and optimistic that the cancer will not return.

On Saturday, September 18, 2021, community members Mandy Raftus, Felix Perry, and others held a Photo With Santa fundraiser for Colten, raising over \$800. All funds were given to the family to aid with associated costs.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in sending well wishes to Colten Johnson and his family.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

JESSOME, HON. BEN: BIRTHDAY WISHES

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to get in at the end of the day here. I do want to wish a very happy birthday to the member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville. I also, in particular, want to recognize him as the second-best MLA who graduated from Charles P. Allen High School in either 2005 or 2006.

But in all seriousness, the member is a great guy, a dedicated MLA, as we all know, and cares deeply about his community and his family, so I wish him all the best. (Applause)

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

KEDDY, WILLARD ELWOOD: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember Willard Elwood Keddy of Martin's River. Mr. Keddy passed away October 1st, 2021, at the age of 96.

He certainly packed a lot into his life. Mr. Keddy was a WWII veteran, having served in the U.S. army as a corporal in the Transportation Corps. After returning from the war, he founded Harold Keddy and Sons General Building Contractors with his father and brothers.

Mr. Keddy was the youngest official elected councilman in Brookhaven, a Freemason, a Shriner, a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a life member of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 24, a life member of Lions Clubs International, an honorary volunteer firefighter, and a member of St. Martin's Anglican Church in Martin's River.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Keddy was a wonderful member of our community, and we give our condolences to his family as we mourn his loss.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

**ANNAP. HOME BLDG. CTR.:
RECIP. OF BEST HOME HARDWARE BLDG. CTR. AWD. - CONGRATS.**

CARMAN KERR: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate an exceptional business and family that have been offering excellent customer service to Annapolis residents for almost 40 years.

Annapolis Home Building Centre has recently been named Best Home Hardware Building Centre for the Atlantic Region at the recent Proud of My Home Achievement Awards and celebration. This award recognizes excellence in staff performance, customer

service, interior and exterior presentations, staff training and participation, and dealer network incentives.

Annapolis Home Hardware Building Centre employs 35 people, with the majority of staff having been with the company for more than 10 years. I invite all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating owners Rob and Joanne Lawrie, managers Robert Gennette, Victoria Cook, and Darren Rodwell, and the whole Home Hardware team on being named Best Home Hardware Building Centre in Atlantic Canada.

[10:00 a.m.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: We begin at 10:00 a.m. and we will go until 10:50 a.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: MUN. PLANNING - JURISDICTION

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Yesterday my colleague, the member for Cole Harbour-Dartmouth, asked the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing about the Regional Plan and informed the minister just how much consultation went into these planning documents that have been in place and the emphasis that they put on considering the environment, climate change, and community well-being. This is the essence of what municipalities do in planning, especially HRM, with over 200 staff in the planning and development area.

My question to the Premier is: Who does he believe has jurisdiction on planning?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Obviously, we announced a very comprehensive housing plan this week. We're proud of that plan.

We have a housing crisis in this province. We need more housing supply and we're going to work closely with the municipalities on making sure that appropriate housing developments go forward. We'll work closely with the municipality on that, but the member knows that we also established a task force to make sure that appropriate projects move forward on a timely basis because we need supply in this province.

IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, the concern is a lack of awareness of the Regional Plan. There is, of course, work to do to work with municipalities. There are ways that we can ensure that service standards are met.

We are aware of the task force, Mr. Speaker, and that was not something recommended by the Affordable Housing Commission. My question to the Premier is: Who advised creating this task force? What does the membership look like of this task force?

THE PREMIER: Quite simply, Mr. Speaker, we determined as a government that there are actions necessary on the housing file. It has been for too long now that action has been missing. It won't be missing under this government. We are a government that takes action.

The membership of the task force is anticipated as five people. In the case of HRM, we expect that two of those people would be appointed by HRM, two by the province, and a chairperson appointed by the province. That's the makeup of the committee.

IAIN RANKIN: What we're asking for is to ensure that the government understands that planning is under the domain of the municipality and that we should support them in the work that they've done, significant consultation over time, that has just been updated this past summer.

We have other groups that are concerned. The Ecology Action Centre is concerned about development in areas identified in the Halifax Green Network Plan. I'll table that, Mr. Speaker. That's a good planning document that ensures proper development, that considers to ensure that there's protection around Sandy Lake, Blue Mountain-Birch Cove, Purcells Cove Backlands, et cetera, Mr. Speaker.

My question directly to the Premier is: Will he ensure that the Green Network Plan and the Regional Plan are respected and not overridden?

THE PREMIER: I can assure the member what we understand is that there's a housing crisis in this province. What we understand is that there are supply issues in this province. What we understand is it's time to take action.

We've been very, very clear that appropriate housing development should move forward and of course we'd do that with respect to the environmental process. This is the type of nonsense that was tried in the election campaign. Nova Scotians saw through it. They know what this government stands for and it's for progress and moving forward in the appropriate manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

PREM. - POLICE STREET CHECKS: END - COMMIT

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Street checks are illegal. The independent legal opinion asked for by the Nova Scotia Human Rights

Commission is clear: There is no power for the police to conduct street checks in HRM. Street checks are not reasonably necessary for the police to execute their duties. However, the previous government established a loophole that allows this practice to continue.

My question to the Premier is: Can we either agree that street checks are illegal and end them, or not? There is no in-between. Will the Premier commit to closing the loophole in the ministerial directive and end street checks for good?

THE PREMIER: Absolutely. I completely agree with the member and I completely agree with the Wortley report. There's no place for street checks in our society.

We'll take steps to close that loophole. I know the minister is working with the department to make sure it's properly closed. I know that the member tabled a bill today. We'll look at that. We'll work with the Opposition.

There's no place for street checks in Nova Scotia or in our society.

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, recently I was disturbed to learn that the RCMP had refused to issue an apology for its heavy use of street checks, despite acknowledging the disproportionate harm it has caused Black communities.

I know that a number of the members of this government were similarly dismayed. The Minister of Justice and the Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs both said they were disappointed with the decision to not use an apology.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the Premier was also very disappointed. I would like to ask the Premier: Will he condemn the RCMP's refusal to apologize for the harm that they have caused Black communities in Nova Scotia through their use of street checks?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's question. I was surprised by the RCMP's position. What I would say is that as a province, we've apologized. I just can't say it strongly enough: There's no place for street checks in this province or in our society. We as a province have apologized and others should take appropriate actions as well.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: LTC FACILITIES - COMMIT

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, the previous government had committed to rebuilding 24 long-term care facilities over two announcements - the previous government under myself and Premier McNeil. Projects were announced across every region of the province in places like Pictou County and, in the Minister of Health and Wellness's area, the R.K. MacDonald.

I'd like to ask the Premier: Are they committed to all 24 of these projects?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I think this House and Nova Scotians know our commitment to fixing health care across the spectrum. They know our commitment to investing in seniors to make sure that seniors can age with dignity in this province. Those are commitments that we absolutely stand by. We will be opening, and we're very focused on building and opening, more and more single beds and appropriately staffing those facilities.

This is a commitment of our government and we will certainly be upholding that commitment.

IAIN RANKIN: On the topic of more, when we released that last announcement, a press release went out from the PC Party at the time that said, "this doesn't even start to scratch the surface of what is needed" in terms of infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. I'll table that.

Along with the commitment of those 24 new sites and the 500 new beds that we committed to in the Central Zone, I think the reference at the time was flippant that we should add a zero to those beds that were added to the sites.

I would like to ask the Premier: How is his plan different? How many more new beds? Can he say for sure that he'll have those 2,500 new beds in three years?

THE PREMIER: It was missing a zero and we put that zero on in our election platform, which I know those members have read because they've raised a lot of points from our election platform during this sitting, for sure.

I'll just say it again: We're committed to investing in Nova Scotians. We're committed to investing in seniors. We're committed to investing in long-term care homes, including staffing. We'll get what is possible done.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

EECD - SCHOOLS: VACCINATION CLINICS - PLANS

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development has said on multiple occasions that COVID-19 vaccines will not be offered to students in schools.

I'd like to table two documents. One of them is from Citadel High hosting a vaccine clinic on Wednesday, October 20th from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Also, a document from the Nova Scotia Health Authority with questions and answers for parents on school-based COVID-19 vaccine clinics.

My question to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development: Is there a plan to expand on the COVID-19 vaccine clinics that are starting in the HRM, and will they expand into different grades and ages?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: Mr. Speaker, my thanks to the member opposite for the question. I have no recollection of saying that COVID-19 vaccines would never be offered in schools. (Interruptions) I can absolutely confirm that vaccination clinics have been offered already in schools.

With respect to the question of whether a rollout of vaccines to children under the age of 12 would occur in schools, I believe that there have been a lot of comments made by Public Health and by Dr. Strang on that. I will say that we are committed to supporting Public Health endeavours to get Nova Scotians vaccinated. We're working with Public Health on all sorts of options in relation to that, and we'll take our lead from them on that.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I appreciate the answer from the minister. As a follow-up, I'm going to ask the minister: Can she update the House on the success of the vaccine program in schools, and how many students have been vaccinated to date?

BECKY DRUHAN: I can say the program has been very successful. Uptake has been excellent, and we have had great feedback. I don't have the numbers available, but I can work with Public Health and see if those can be made available to you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

H&W - AMBULANCE OFFLOAD: PILOT PROJ. - UPDATE

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Nova Scotians are very well aware of the pressures on our ambulatory system and the pressures that we have with off-load times in particular at the QEII. This is impacting ambulance response time across the province.

In July, our government did announce that we would be beginning a pilot project with two teams at the QEII for off-load and for patient flow assistance. Can the minister please inform the House with an update on the status of that pilot?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, we know off-load times are important, and it's certainly an access and flow issue throughout the whole system. There is a team that has been stood up and is working well at Dartmouth General, and we continue to stand up the teams in the Halifax area.

We've also increased transfers by adding 28 non-paramedic drivers. We'll be adding to support timely transfer and free up beds in in-patient units. We are pleased with the early progress of both of those programs.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Yes, this government did expand the pilot to remove non-emergency transport from paramedics that we began. I do think that's a good move. But specifically, the minister mentioned Dartmouth General, but at QEII can the minister please confirm for the House if those four new full-time equivalent positions for off-load and patient flow management at the QEII have been staffed? Those staffings were supposed to have happened in August and an update would be greatly appreciated.

MICHELLE THOMPSON: I don't have those details with me today in terms of the exact number of whether the positions have been filled. I know that they have been reallocating staff, so I will get back to the member.

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

PREM. - TRC CALLS TO ACTION: PROG. - REPORT

GARY BURRILL: My questions are for the Premier. In the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, residential school survivors and their descendants shared their truths about colonialism and the residential school system and their enduring impacts.

A reconciliation calls for measured, honest steps in the work that lies ahead, and this means a clear accounting of progress on the TRC's calls to action. Will the Premier commit, in the course of this coming mandate, to reporting regularly to this House on progress towards the implementation of the TRC calls to action, and when can we expect that first report?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for this very important question. Those recommendations are near and dear to us as a government and to Nova Scotians, and the department is already making progress on that. The minister can provide further details if the member is interested. What I would tell the member is we, like all Nova Scotians, take those recommendations very seriously.

GARY BURRILL: One of the most important of the calls to action is the recommendation to governments to fully implement Jordan's Principle and ensure that all Indigenous children have equitable access to government-funded services. This is so relevant for us here in Nova Scotia, where communities that are a majority Indigenous have some of the highest rates of food insecurity, child poverty and homes in need of major repair.

My question to the Premier is: When will the government provide full, transparent and regular reporting on progress toward the implementation of Jordan's Principle in Nova Scotia?

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure the member that through the Department of L'nun Affairs, it's an incredible department of individuals that

have incredible skill sets working towards the 94 calls to action. There are approximately 55 that are actually provincial-related and after having a meeting two weeks ago with the Assembly of First Nations, I can assure the member that those issues are on our agenda. We're working collectively and collaboratively together.

[10:15 a.m.]

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, the government in the introduction to the Throne Speech said that we would like to begin by acknowledging that we are gathering in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaw people. This is a very incomplete formulation. We are, in fact, gathered on the unceded and unsundered traditional territory of the Mi'kmaw people.

My question to the Premier is: Will he acknowledge in this moment, in this place, that the land we stand on is unceded and is unsundered?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I assure the member that the language in the Throne Speech was the same as it has been in Throne Speeches for a number of years. There was no change to that language.

I know the member has tried to create a narrative that there were words intentionally omitted or things were changed. It's actually the language of the Throne Speech that has been used for a number of years. It's language from the department and there were no changes in the Throne Speech.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Dartmouth.

PREM.: HRM TRANSPORTATION PLAN - ADOPT

LORELEI NICOLL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier said in his response to the Leader of the Official Opposition today that housing has taken too long, and the task force will be working on a timely basis. Therefore, it only makes sense that this task force would not see the need to reinvent the wheel, pun intended, when it comes to HRM's Integrated Mobility Plan for transportation.

My question to the Premier is: Will this government adopt HRM's existing adopted transportation plan as it applies to HRM's growth plan? Yes or no?

THE PREMIER: Maybe. We're going to put a transportation task force together to look at the real issues. The reality is that the world changes. The reality is that the population of this province is growing tremendously, and we've put forward some very ambitious goals to double the population of this province.

All studies from the past are relevant. What we do know is we have to make decisions based on today's information and look forward with some vision. We'll work closely with the municipality. This task force will look at the reports that exist, of course, but will we make decisions based on what we know today and what we see for the future? Yes, of course we will, Mr. Speaker.

LORELEI NICOLL: It was mentioned and responded to my question in that regard for yes or no yesterday from the minister and it was basically, I wanted to know if they actually are going to adopt anything. A "maybe" does not work. That is an insult to the people who worked and were consulted when these plans were created in the municipality.

My question to the Premier is: Yes, or no? Not maybe.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, imagine with an issue as complex as housing and transportation if we could distill something down to yes or no. Wouldn't the world be a wonderful place?

The reality is this: For a government that is interested in real solutions, real solutions are complex and they take time. We'll look at all the information that's necessary and we'll come up with the right way forward, unencumbered by anything except trying to find a real solution to real problems.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

DOJ: STREET CHECKS LOOPHOLE - CLOSE

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the member for Halifax Needham, for raising the question about street checks and even in putting the bill forward, so I want to thank you.

I also want to thank the response from the Premier and because I'm a new MLA I did some homework. I just want to make sure we're going back to the same question and I understand the commitments here today.

The African Nova Scotian Decade of People of African Descent Coalition put forward some recommendations, which I'll table, for the Police Services Act. Among those recommendations is on the way the Minister of Justice can close this loophole. Also, because of my background in law and justice, I am not new to this information or this discussion.

The current activity, reasonable suspicion, has no legal threshold and so the new recommendation of amending this and introducing reasonable suspicion has a legal threshold. Will the minister commit to closing this loophole permanently?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Thank you so much. My goodness, I appreciate that, and I look forward to working with you. You could actually offer me a retainer as you work through this process.

Even more importantly, what we could do today, Mr. Speaker - the Minister of Justice could do what the previous government did and authorize a directive today. So, I'm asking if the minister will actually do that and commit to offering a directive, introduced by Minister Furey, to close the loophole for today?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: As I said previously in this House and I'll say again, we are committed to closing the loophole.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

DCS: HOMELESSNESS PLAN - ELABORATE

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I guess race relations are not as complicated as housing, so we got a yes or no answer on that one.

We know that 400 homeless people in HRM, along with many more across the province, are in this government's housing plan. Their solution for the homelessness is to find a hotel partner to put individuals up to solve the housing crisis.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Community Services is: How will you identify the homeless? We have people who are living in the woods, we have people living in parks, and, also, have you contacted hotels yet, and will people be given individual rooms for their privacy and safety?

THE SPEAKER: Again, I'll stress to the member not to use the word "you." You ask the question of the minister.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, the member knows that we have been working very hard with municipalities across the province and service providers and organizations to end homelessness. We have a by-name list that allows us to have navigators on the ground getting those numbers. This is a very fluid issue, and we do our best to get numbers from the service providers.

Approximately, right now, we do know we have about a thousand people in this province who are homeless, but due to our announcement this week, we are going to reduce those numbers.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I want to thank the minister for the answer, but Mr. Speaker, the promise was to eliminate homelessness, not reduce homelessness.

Mr. Speaker, the by-name list is - actually, you have to voluntarily put yourself on that list. That's another thing that the minister should know. I would like to know, with over 1,000 - it's actually closer to 1,500 people - experiencing homelessness across the province, there are many places from one end of this province to the other that do not have hotels or motels that are available for homelessness. This is what we're hearing from our providers.

What is the plan for finding room for these people? We're hearing a lot of words. Will the minister table the hotels, the individuals who are being put in those hotels, and where those hotels are across the province?

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, there's a lot in this member's question, or questions. I believe the member knows that we are doing our very best. I don't know where he got his number of 1,500. Maybe he has been going around and counting himself.

What I want everyone to know is that we are working very diligently with our service providers, and out of the \$10 million - over \$10 million - announcement this week, over \$4 million is going toward shelters and organizations across this province to ensure that people are not sleeping in the cold. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

DOJ: HOMELESS SHELTER REMOVAL - INVESTIGATE

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

On August 18th, Halifax Police put on body armour and riot gear and deployed pepper spray in downtown Halifax as they removed emergency shelters where people were living in front of the former Halifax Library. A petition with more than 2,000 names calling for an independent review of police actions has been submitted to the Halifax Police Commission.

The minister is new at his job. He may not know that the Police Act provides the minister with the ability to order an investigation into any matter related to policing, including an investigation respecting the operation and administration of a police department.

I would like to ask the minister: Will the minister agree to order an independent investigation into the actions taken by Halifax Police on August 18th?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member, I am familiar that the Halifax Police Commission with Halifax Regional Municipality is seeking some clarification in regard to that and what their abilities are. The Department of Justice will not be acting on that until there comes a request from that commission.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: It is true that the responsibilities of the commissioner are unclear, but the responsibilities of the minister are very clear and laid out in legislation. He could order that review today if he wanted.

It has been widely reported that on August 18th, a number of Halifax police officers were not wearing name tags and some had thin blue line patches on their uniforms - and I will table that. During the afternoon, the Canadian Association of Journalists shared on social media that they were concerned about the limits police were placing on reporters covering the dismantling of the shelters, and they emphasized that reporters have the right to be there - and I will table that. The Police Act is clear: Police services are to be delivered in a manner consistent with community values, needs, and expectations.

I would like to ask the minister: Does the minister think that the actions taken by Halifax Police on August 18th are consistent with community needs, values, and expectations?

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member, I believe most of what you have quoted is from media and hearsay. (Interruptions) I will wait to hear exactly what comes out as fact from the review that the Halifax Police Commission is doing.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

DOJ: WORTLEY REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS - IMPLEMENT

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice took the lead and established the Wortley Report Research Committee with representation from community, HRP, RCMP, Human Rights Commission, and others to review the race-based data collection models on police stops, and the establishment of a permanent data collection system to record information on all civilian stops.

The determination of the authority to collect the race-based data, in which stops are included and also how information collected is stored within the Department of Justice, has not been completed. Can the minister please provide an update to the House on this?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Through you to the member, Mr. Speaker, at this time I cannot. As I said previously, I am committed to addressing all the recommendations of the Wortley Report. It is something that is in the minister's letter and we will be working towards doing that throughout the next four years.

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, another important action coming out of the Wortley Report, which is under the direction of the Department of Justice, is working with a partnership with community to both develop an African Nova Scotia justice plan and an Indigenous justice strategy to help address the broader issues of systemic racism in the criminal justice system.

Could the minister please provide an update on the status of these two strategies and when they will be tabled in the House? Mr. Speaker, hopefully it will not be in four years.

BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, although not in my mandate letter, I have said in the House previously that the Department of Justice and myself as minister are still very committed to both of those justice plans as we move forward, and I look forward to updating the House as we move forward on the plans.

[10:30 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

EECD: J.L. ISLEY SCHOOL - SAFETY CONCERNS

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, since the opening of the new J.L. Ilsley High School, I've received dozens of emails and texts from concerned parents and staff about the safety of their students and staff. Videos have circulated about students being jumped and teachers being assaulted, and some say the safety of the school this year is the worst it has ever been.

This school, unbelievably, was opened with no security cameras or fire detectors. I reached out to HRCE and I was told that they will not answer the questions due to privacy. Does the minister feel that the safety of our youth should take a back step . . .? (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic has the floor.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: My question is: Will the minister look into this? Does she feel that the safety of our students and staff should take a back seat to the school opening?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: Today is the first time I've heard from the member on this issue. I will say that the safety of students is of fundamental and paramount importance to myself and to the department. We are committed to ensuring that our students and our schools are safe, welcoming, and supportive environments. I take the question very seriously.

I can say that the school passed inspection upon opening. That includes clearance by the fire marshal, which means the sprinkler systems were working. We have security guards on staff. As with any new build, there's some ongoing final cleanup, but I was not aware of the issues until the member raised them today. I'm certainly happy to follow up on that.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I appreciate the answer, but we all know that a few security guards do not replace smoke detectors.

Mr. Speaker, the new high school in Spryfield opened this year with a lot of great fanfare. One of the things missing is a regulation-sized sports field.

This government identified physical activity in their platform as one of their top priorities. Recently, HRM committed \$250,000 toward building this field. The previous government committed to covering the rest of the funds to ensure our kids at J.L. Ilesley have a sport field to call their own.

Will the current government and the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development reassure the people of Spryfield that they will follow through on this commitment?

BECKY DRUHAN: I'm curious why that planning and support wasn't put in place when the prior government was in place. If, in fact, that was the commitment . . . (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development has the floor.

BECKY DRUHAN: If, in fact, that was the commitment that was made.

I'm a little surprised that the follow-up question to the really important question of safety was on a ball field. I'll take that question away and get back to the member.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

JUSTICE - SEX. ASSAULT CASES: CROWN PROS. - TRAINING

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

The Nova Scotia Public Prosecution Service has adopted an enhanced prosecution model for two areas under the Canadian Criminal Code: sexual violence and human trafficking. As part of the enhanced model, the Public Prosecution Service has dedicated

two Crown Attorneys for sexual violence offences. These positions were created in January 2018 in alignment with the province's sexual violence strategy.

My question to the Minister of Justice is: Who actually decides if a sexual assault case is tried by a Crown prosecutor with expertise in this area? Shouldn't all Crown prosecutors be trained with expertise in sexual violence and assault?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, currently the decision on who tries the case is done within the Public Prosecution Service. I believe that currently we have two prosecutors who are trained and assigned to that. As a subsection of their role, it's also to help to educate and train other prosecutors.

We have a current grant in and are looking at, in the upcoming budget, asking for additional funding specific to training.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Thank you to the minister. It takes a lot of courage for a victim of sexual assault to report their perpetrator in the first place; in fact, many victims will not even come forward because of public persecution and shaming.

There is also at least a perception of a low success rate in first getting charges laid by the police and secondly in actually getting a conviction in the courts. Many victims stay quiet, and because of that their perpetrators continue with harming more victims. It's sickening, and the cycle of harm and abuse continues.

My question to the Minister of Justice is: Can the minister tell us, is there a correlation between sexual assault cases ending with a conviction when tried by a Crown prosecutor with training in sexual violence and assault versus a Crown prosecutor with no special training in this area?

BRAD JOHNS: I think all survivors of sexual assault really need to be treated with sensitivity, respect, and compassion, and I do think that training in this area is very important. Currently, I don't know if there's a correlation. My assumption would be that there is and that's why two Crowns have actually been assigned specifically to this, but I can certainly confirm what the numbers are and let the member know.

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

SNSIS - HOUSING PLAN: LANDLORDS - DETAILS

LISA LACHANCE: My question is the for the Premier. Yesterday, Dalhousie Legal Aid released details of the rental situations faced by students in Halifax - and I'll table that. A landlord admitted in court to charging a \$75 application fee for the privilege of being considered as a tenant and collecting two months rent as a security deposit, three

months from international students, all of which is illegal under the Residential Tenancies Act.

Can the Premier point to what measures in his housing plan will ensure that landlords no longer get away with this kind of illegal behaviour?

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: I'm aware of that situation. I read that this morning in the paper. The invasive and unscrupulous behaviour of that specific landlord is completely unacceptable. I believe some of the amendments that we've introduced this session specifically to the Residential Tenancies Act will improve the Act and outlines improvements to rental protections.

I do agree that there needs to be modernization and improvements ongoing to this specific Act. I've said it in this House before and look forward to bringing more amendments to this specific Act in the future.

LISA LACHANCE: It's very nice to implore landlords to follow the law, but they simply aren't. This is why Hayley Inglis had to sleep with a flashlight every night to try and keep the mice out of her bed and go to Small Claims Court to get justice. That's why I had to contact multiple landlords at the end of August and tell them that they couldn't change the terms of a legal lease.

Community legal worker Mark Culligan explains "... the situation keeps getting worse." The law is very clear that these leasing practices are illegal, but landlords just keep ignoring tenants' rights. "Nova Scotia needs a system of landlord licensing or administrative fines."

I will ask again: What exactly is the Premier going to do to ensure that landlords are not let off the hook again and again?

COLTON LEBLANC: Again, modernization of the Residential Tenancies Act is needed. That's why I'll continue to engage with tenants and landlords to ensure there is a balance for their needs and their rights to bring future amendments to this legislation. As I mentioned on the floor yesterday, there is a need that's been identified by my colleague from the NDP to improve the clarification of the rights of tenants. That's something I brought back to the department and we're working on.

In regard to the improvements of communications, I think the underlying point here is that the Residential Tenancies program is efficient and cost-effective when there are disputes between tenants and landlords, and in this case the landlord made an appeal to Small Claims Court and we've seen that has been resolved from there.

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

EECD - BROAD ST. SCHOOLS: BOUNDARY REV. - UPDATE

HON. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

One of the most topical issues in my community pertains to enrolment challenges throughout. The previous government, our government, was responsible for enabling the Broad Street Schools, and I know that there is a pending boundary review that's being discussed. Certainly, from what I understand, this can be a very difficult, challenging experience for communities, and I'm wondering if the minister will provide the House with an update on the pending boundary review?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question.

Boundary reviews are done by the regions in collaboration with school advisory committees. We anticipate that that particular boundary review will be done this coming Spring, and at that time, the region will be reaching out to the SACs to advise them. That process seeks and considers community feedback and is involved in a consultation.

We're excited for that to happen, and we look forward to it beginning in the new year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

BEN JESSOME: Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker, can the minister clarify that we're still on track for a Fall opening? With a boundary review to take place in the Spring, that just seems like a pretty tight timeline when trying to manage all of those expectations between parents, school stakeholders, et cetera.

I'm wondering if she can clarify that, and, dually, if there's an opportunity for her or to direct staff to meet with the MLAs whose catchment areas will fall into that boundary review, prior to its release?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have no update that there's a change in that timeline at this time. If there is, I'll certainly provide an update on that.

Mr. Speaker, I'm more than happy to meet with the MLAs concerned to have a discussion around that. I will say, again, the review is done by the region and not by the department, but I'm still happy to have a discussion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

ECC: ELEC. VEHICLE REBATE PROG. - CONTINUE

HON. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, the mandate letter of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change requires the minister to work with the auto and gas service industries to sell 30 per cent zero-emission vehicles by 2030. Electrifying our transportation sector should be a priority, and an urgent action is required.

In February, on Day 1 of the previous government, we announced a rebate program to encourage Nova Scotians to purchase electric and plug-in hybrids, as well as e-bikes. Recent stats have revealed this has increased the number of electric vehicles in the province by 50 per cent in seven months.

My question for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change is: Will the minister be continuing this rebate program until 2030 to help meet this 30 per cent target, and are there other policy tools the government is considering?

HON. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my honourable colleague for the question.

As the Premier has consistently said, we are moving forward, not backward. To that point, Mr. Speaker, climate change mitigation and adaptation is a priority of this government, so yes, policies like that will continue to move forward, along with the new framework that we'll be bringing forward in the days ahead via legislation.

KEITH IRVING: Thank you. I'm happy to hear that the rebates will be continuing.

I did note in the Progressive Conservative election platform that only \$7.4 million is allocated to their environment initiatives. Part of it is to contribute \$272,000 toward the cost of installing 210 charging stations. That's \$1,250 per charging station at gas stations.

No question that increasing the number of charging stations is part of the solution to getting more EVs on the road. Unfortunately, the cost presented in the platform is based on a cost of \$1,200 per charging station. This estimate indicates that the plan is to install level 2 chargers that take four to six hours to charge a car, where level 3 chargers charge a car in 30 to 60 minutes and their cost is \$50,000 to \$100,000 . . .

THE SPEAKER: Question, please.

KEITH IRVING: I assume the minister does not expect Nova Scotians to spend six hours at the gas station. Therefore, will the minister request an increase to the budgetary commitment for a level 3 charging program?

TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, we all acknowledge in this House that we are in a climate emergency. What the honourable member has outlined is part of the path moving

forward. As we continue to clean and green our society, all those options are certainly on the table and are part of the ongoing discussions.

[10:45 a.m.]

Climate change mitigation and adaption is a priority to Nova Scotians, and I want to assure the honourable member that what you've outlined in that question are the conversations that are still taking place within the department.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

NRR: RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS - UPDATE

CARMAN KERR: Mr. Speaker, this question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables. Last session, in the Spring, the past Liberal government announced Bill No. 97, an amendment to the Electricity Act. This permitted customers and consumers to generate renewable, low-impact electricity for themselves. It also led to large scale community solar gardens, I think Berwick, Antigonish, and Mahone Bay being those projects.

My question to the minister is: Could the minister update the House on these projects?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. As with any change in the Electricity Act and regulations around electricity, two important key factors for our government are the environment and the ratepayers.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to inform the member opposite that those projects are moving forward with this. There are other projects that are in and around that piece of legislation that the previous government did enact - they were still out communicating with stakeholders. I want to stay committed to what our government committed to: By 2030, 80 per cent of our electricity will be renewables.

CARMAN KERR: I want to thank the minister for that response. While the government explores large-scale projects to increase renewable energy, such as the Atlantic Loop, it's imperative that government continues to fund smaller projects like these.

My question to the minister is: Will the government commit to fund and generate local projects and have these projects been identified?

TORY RUSHTON: I thank the member opposite again for the question. I appreciate the collaboration as the member is new in the House and we've had many dialogues on different issues within the department.

What I can say to the member is there are project initiatives moving forward and stay tuned in the very near future: There are going to be more announcements coming.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

H&W: VIRTUAL CARE PROVIDER CHOICE - EXPLAIN

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The COVID-19 pandemic made clear that virtual care is an essential way forward for patients to access primary care. It's a good thing to make sure that patients continue to have access to doctors. This government extended a \$1.3 million contract to Maple without bothering to tender it to other providers.

My question to the Premier is: Can the Premier please explain why he does not believe there should be an open bidding process on the \$1.3 million to a private corporation?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, we recently expanded that service with the current provider because we need to have timely access. We have backlogs in our emergency rooms. They are an experienced provider and they have done a good job and I have faith in the procurement process that we undertook in the department.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, the founder of the company that this government has passed a contract to has made comments that signal that he is fundamentally opposed to universal health care. Dr. Brett Belchetz has told *Rebel News* that the Canadian health care system was fundamentally broken because the cost to . . . (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. There is a lot of talk going back and forth in the House.

The honourable member for Dartmouth North has the floor.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Thank you. I'm not sure how much was recorded so I'm going to say, the founder of the company that this government passed the contract to has signalled that he is fundamentally opposed to universal health care. He told *Rebel News* that the Canadian health care system was fundamentally broken because the cost to patients is always zero dollars.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is: Does he agree with Dr. Belchetz's sentiment?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm not thankful for the question. Of course, we don't believe that. We're trying to create universal mental health care, we're

trying to expand services, we're trying to fix a health care system that has been deteriorating for a number of years. So that is absolutely ridiculous.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I think we're pretty much out of time but to the Minister of Education, the question I was going to ask you yesterday, I'll ask you next week.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, will you please call the order of business, Public Bills for Second Reading.

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 37.

Bill No. 37 - Fair Registration Practices Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration.

HON. JILL BALSER: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 37 be now read a second time.

I am pleased to rise today before this House to read for the second time Bill No. 37, amendments to the Fair Registration Practices Act. This Act was introduced in 2008 to govern how people are registered when they apply to become a member of a regulated body. Everyone who works in a provincially regulated occupation must be registered with a regulatory body. The work of these organizations has broad impact on professionals throughout Nova Scotia, from licensed hair stylists to engineers, from pipefitters to nurses and a wide variety of other licensed professionals.

Regulatory bodies and professional associations provide important functions to oversee and set the standards for specific industries and practices. There have not been any significant changes made to the Fair Registration Practices Act in over a decade. Typically when the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration conducts a review of a regulatory body, the organization is asked to provide detailed responses about their registration

practices and include supporting documentation. The review officer makes sure that processes are fair and clear for people applying for a certification.

Like a lot of our work, we take a collaborative and educational approach. We look to help regulatory bodies improve practices whenever possible or necessary. Our end goal is to make sure that all individuals who want to practice in Nova Scotia understand what they need to do when they apply for certification. While collaboratively we recognize that this current process created unnecessary administrative burdens on regulatory bodies and department staff, the process was often repetitive, outdated, and in some cases requirements were unclear.

To develop these proposed amendments, we consulted with the 47 regular bodies in Nova Scotia that cover 57 occupations and 21 designated trades. In total, 33 of the 47 organizations provided us with critical feedback through a survey. Many also participated in focus groups led by Research Nova Scotia.

The proposed amendments were based on this feedback and will reduce and clarify information that regulatory bodies and professional associations must include in their reporting. Specifically, this includes the information for the Fair Registration Practices Act review reports, non-compliant action plans, and annual registration information. It also extends the time required to submit review reports from two years to five years.

We know from consultations with the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness that these efforts will cut red tape for regulatory bodies. We know from our consultations with regulatory bodies and associations directly that these changes are welcome. One example of feedback we heard comes from the Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists. The college represents more than 370 registered counselling therapists throughout the province in providing safe, competent, and ethical mental health services. Part of its mandate is to ensure that only properly educated and fully qualified individuals are granted licence to practice in Nova Scotia.

I think we can all agree, Mr. Speaker, this is very important work. The College tells us these amendments will allow them more time for internal review of registration processes. That means they can focus on the work, as a self-regulating professional body is responsible for serving and protecting the public interest without unnecessary administrative burdens. In fact, the executive director and registrar, John Hubert, feels the most impactful change is the change of frequently reporting. In Mr. Hubert's words:

The five-year cycle will allow regulators who have proven to be sustainably compliant more time for ongoing review and evaluation of registering practices. This will improve its transparency, impartiality, objectivity, and procedural fairness.

As a whole, we have heard that these amendments are impartial and fair. It aligns with my department's mandate and provides solutions that improve the ability of regulatory bodies and professional associations to do what they do best: serve and oversee the needs of licensed memberships.

I am pleased to introduce this bill in the House today at the close of Small Business Week. I welcome response from my colleagues and members of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

ALI DUALE: Mr. Speaker, I can say this is something I'm very happy to see my colleagues address this issue. Particularly because this is a reality: This province is one of the most red-tape provinces. As this government indicated in their Throne Speech, to attract business communities and to increase our small businesses, I'm very happy to see this regulatory change.

I attended the briefing on this bill yesterday. I was very happy to see this kind of action is taking place. I did ask the question yesterday about the 47 regulatory bodies that have been surveyed. Personally, I'd like to see that report. That will give us a real indication of exactly what these bodies have said about this issue.

We look forward to these kinds of actions and this kind of regulatory easing for small communities for their issues. I'm pleased and I look forward to working with the minister on this kind of issue and this kind of work that most of the small business community is interested in. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier.

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that these are housekeeping amendments that came out of the consultation, as was just mentioned, with the 47 regulating bodies in Nova Scotia. That consultation took place, I believe, in 2019 so I'm glad to see that these updates are moving forward now in 2021. Sometimes government moves slowly, as we've heard many times before.

I do look forward to hearing more about the impact that this bill will present in Law Amendments, as it's my understanding that there are only three other provinces that have similar legislation. I do look forward to hearing from the regulating bodies about how this will impact them and hearing if they have any more thoughts or ideas that they would like to suggest to us and to government.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat. Thank you.

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

The honourable Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration.

HON. JILL BALSER: Thank you to the members opposite. I do really look forward to being able to share the information that was brought out through this report. Of course, reducing red tape is such an important thing. We really want the regulatory bodies to be able to do the great work that they need to do and that those that are getting certified understand what they need as well.

I'm really pleased that the members opposite are in support because, again, we really want to be able to reduce red tape and knowing that this is a step forward is going to be able to see those improvements right away.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move to close debate on Bill No. 37. (Applause)

[11:00 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 37.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

THE SPEAKER: All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

We will have a short recess while the committee sets up.

[11:00 a.m. The House resolved itself into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Angela Simmonds in the Chair.]

[1:01 p.m. The CWH on Bill rose and the House reconvened. The Speaker, Hon. Keith Bain, resumed the Chair.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. If we can just finish the final report of today's proceedings. The Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

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

Bill No. 4 - Public Archives Act.

Bill No. 13 - Police Act.

without amendments, and

Bill No. 11 - Protecting Access to Health Services Act.

which was reported with certain amendments by the Law Amendments Committee to the Committee of the Whole House without further amendment and the Chair has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House.

The committee also reports progress on Bill No. 1.

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

THE SPEAKER: That concludes the business for today. The next sitting of the House is Tuesday, October 26th between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

All those in favour? Oh, it's already done?

The motion was already done so we stand adjourned until Tuesday at 1:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 1:03 p.m.]